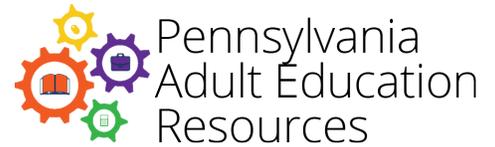


Workshop Topic:

# Figurative Language: Idioms

CREATED BY



**CCRS Reading Anchor 4:** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

**Language Anchor 5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

## NELP Predictors of Later Success

- **Oral language:** the ability to produce or comprehend spoken language, including vocabulary and grammar
- **Reading readiness:** usually a combination of alphabet knowledge, concepts of print, vocabulary, and phonological awareness



**Objective:** At the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Recognize several commonly used idioms
- Explain how the use of idioms can enhance meaning in writing or speaking

## Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- Index cards

## Welcome/Ice Breaker:

Greet parents as they come in. Build rapport and break the ice.

Ask parents what kinds of activities they did with their children that week. Were they able to incorporate any of the material they learned at their previous session in their activities with their child?

Ask each parent to write a sentence using the word back up. Possible ways this word could be used: a clogged drain, a traffic jam, moving in a backwards direction, to give support to someone, evidence, duplication of work, alternative plan, or to be in a tense disposition. Learning word meanings is fun! We can help our children learn that words can mean more than the literal meaning we might first think of.

## Topic Review:

Idioms are one type of figurative language. Idioms are challenging! Identifying idioms when reading or listening will help increase vocabulary and aid in understanding. Using idioms in writing will make it more interesting to your reader. Idioms are generally not used in formal writing but are used in fiction, informal writing, and in conversations.

## Opening Activity:

Have some fun with this interactive about idioms: <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/idioms/>

## Central Ideas and Practice (Content and Strategies):

Today we are going to learn about figurative language. Figurative language is language that is not literal but it must be “figured out.” In literal language the words convey meaning exactly as defined. When I say car, house or bed, you know exactly what I mean. Your house, car, or bed may not look like mine, but we all know what those words mean. There is a generally accepted picture we have in our head about these specific items. With figurative language the reader or the listener must figure out what is meant. For example, when I say “She has a sweet tooth,” the meaning is not literal. Her tooth is not sweet or made of sugar. It does mean that she likes to eat sweet things. Becoming aware of how we use figurative language helps children recognize this type of language in reading or listening.

There are several types of figurative language. Let’s watch this short video as an introduction to the various types. Introduce the YouTube video about figurative language. (Turn off the subtitle/close caption view so parents aren’t distracted by the words.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOrcxEUw9WE>

Remind parents to make a note of a spot or spots where they would ask their child a question or make a comment. Show the video again, pausing at the spots parents indicate. Ask what questions or comments they would make at that point. Remind parents to ask open-ended questions to encourage children’s deeper-thinking when they respond.

Idioms are expressions that have unique meanings and cannot be understood from the individual meanings of their components. Idioms are particularly difficult for English language learners. Many word idioms have multiple meanings which adds to the confusion. Idiomatic expressions cannot be understood from the literal meanings of their words. The phrases must be figured out. In fact, idioms can incorporate other figurative language forms—similes, metaphors, or hyperbole.

Idioms can be lots of fun to learn! Think about the following idioms:

If we want to make this happen, we have to stick together.

Because Landen was such a good swimmer, his coach went to bat for him.

Holly has a beautiful garden; she really has a green thumb.

I am not sure about that! It sounds fishy to me. We should check it out!

Jessie crunched the numbers for us; it is really a bargain!

Les could not make heads or tails of the note.

Josh caught a cold last week when he was traveling.

Jordan was down in the dumps when she couldn’t go with her friends.

Tracy changed her mind about the job offer! She decided to stay in her current position.

Sharon arrived at 9:00 A.M. for the meeting and got the ball rolling.

Have the parents work in pairs or small groups to figure out the meanings of each of these idioms or talk through the sentences as a large group. Ask the parents to draw a picture showing the literal meaning of the idiom to help in understanding the true meaning.

## Application

Ask the parents to create a matching game with idioms using note cards. They can make the game with pictures or drawings placing a drawing or picture on one card and the idiom on the other so that the two could be matched. They can practice playing the game with each other in Parent Time, and then

play the game with their older children at home. Parents can use the idioms from the interactive, the video, or the sentences from the lesson. Here are other possible idiomatic expressions that can be used:

get a bird's eye view  
to crack a smile  
caught my eye  
give her a hand  
keep an eye out for  
drive a hard bargain  
glued to his seat  
state-of-the-art  
dot all the I's and cross all the t's  
skating on thin ice  
dawned on me  
a piece of my mind  
wrong side of the bed  
a frog in my throat  
barking up the wrong tree  
got a kick out of  
had her hands full  
drop me a line  
know the ropes  
forever and a day  
off the top of my head  
burned the midnight oil  
monkey around  
be on the road  
lost his temper  
rolling in the aisles  
get cold feet  
to sleep on it  
felt like a million dollars

### **Connection to Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time®:**

- *Infant/Toddler Content or Strategies*  
You can help infants and toddlers begin to understand figurative language by using idioms when talking to them. Use phrases like, “Did you catch some Z’s?” or “Are you so hungry you could eat everything in the fridge?” and explain what you mean! Watch for idioms in the books you read to your child, point them out, and talk about them.
- *Preschool Content or Strategies*  
Continue modeling the use of idioms with preschool aged children. “My goodness, it was raining cats and dogs when we got home!” Be sure to explain what you mean! Watch for idioms in the books you read to your child, point them out, and talk about them.

- *Elementary Content or Strategies*

When you hear or use idioms, point out that the meaning is not literal but you are using an idiom to make your point. Watch for idioms in the books you read to your child, point them out, and talk about them

- *Middle School Content or Strategies*

Encourage your middle school students to look for idioms in their reading, in conversations, or programs they watch. Challenge them to find and write down 5 examples in one week! Watch for idioms in the books you read to your child, point them out, and talk about them.

Ask parents to watch YouTube video about figurative language at home with their older children. Ask them to play the card matching game they made at home with their children. Infants/toddlers and preschoolers are not ready for these.

### **Wrap up/Closure:**

Review with parents how listening for and identifying idioms when children are reading or listening can help increase children's vocabulary and aid them in understanding what they are reading.

Suggest that the parents make want to make an idiom jar at home! Every time someone uses an idiom, drop a coin in the jar. When the jar fills up, use it to buy a new book for the family to enjoy.

### **Facilitator Resource: Vocabulary**

Literal - you mean exactly what you say

Figurative - what you say is not actually what you mean

Simile - a comparison between two things using "like" or "as" (ex: he's as fast as a speeding bullet)

Metaphor - causes one thing to become another (ex: the man is a speeding bullet)

Personification - giving human characteristics to nonhuman objects (ex: the guitar sang a beautiful song)

Hyperbole - an extreme exaggeration (ex: he has been walking for days and days [when he has only been walking for 5 minutes])

Symbolism - an object represents another object or idea (ex: a heart symbolizes love)

Idiom - a common expression that cannot be understood by the meaning of its words (ex: it's raining cats and dogs)