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Extension Activities

Name _____ Date _____

Idioms in the News

When deciding on a news article to read, the first attention grabber is the headline. A news story may have a better chance of catching a person's interest if it has an interesting title. For example, the headline "Skateboarders Go Over the Edge" may lead the reader to think some skateboarders fell off a cliff. But if "Over the Edge" is used as an idiom, the article may explain how skateboarders did something wrong, or pushed their limits. The only way to find out is to read the article!

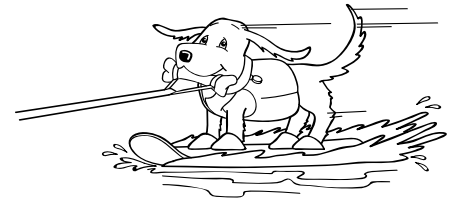
Directions: Read these story lines. Create an interesting headline that uses an idiom to catch the reader's attention.

1. Families line up a full day in advance outside a ticket office to be the first people in line to purchase concert tickets that will sell out quickly.

News-worthy headline: _____

2. A boy teaches his dog how to water ski.

News-worthy headline: _____

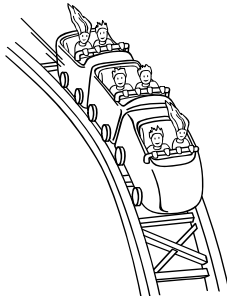


3. The local zoo discovers that two of its penguins have disappeared.

News-worthy headline: _____

4. Your school cafeteria installs a real barbecue smoker (or an ice cream parlor, or any other new and interesting food creation).

News-worthy headline: _____



5. A nearby playground opens a mini-rollercoaster.

News-worthy headline: _____

Bonus! Choose one of the headlines you just wrote, or think of one of your own. Write a news story for the headline. Use at least three additional idioms or expressions in the news story.

Idioms About Animals

This unit highlights idioms related to animals. Below are two lists of idioms that focus on animals. The first, *Ten to Teach*, presents the 10 expressions introduced and taught in this unit. The second, *More to Mention*, offers additional expressions in this theme that you may want to mention or use to create additional activities.

Ten to Teach

1. straight from the horse's mouth
2. the cat's meow
3. squirrel away
4. monkey around
5. hoof it
6. all bark and no bite
7. goose is cooked
8. take the bull by the horns
9. play cat and mouse
10. bark up the wrong tree

More to Mention

- ▶ dog-eat-dog*
- ▶ horse of a different color*
- ▶ eat crow*
- ▶ cry wolf
- ▶ whole hog
- ▶ chomping at the bit
- ▶ hit the bull's-eye
- ▶ get one's goat
- ▶ have goose bumps
- ▶ bird's-eye view
- ▶ cry crocodile tears

*These idioms are also included in the story but are not highlighted individually in the unit.

Using This Unit

Begin by reading to students the basic *Ten to Teach* idioms. First, ask students if they have ever heard or used any of these expressions, and if so, how and where. Next, read the expressions again, and this time ask the students to listen for anything they have in common. Be sure they see that all the expressions refer to animals. Teach or review the definition of an *idiom*—an expression that means something other than what the words actually say. If you like, read the list a third time and let students speculate on what each idiom might really mean.

On the next page is a story that includes the *Ten to Teach* idioms (along with three *More to Mention* idioms). Note that the story is not intended to be an example of good writing; it would not be natural to use 13 idioms in such a short piece. The purpose of the story is simply to use all the expressions in context. The story is at approximately a 3.4 reading level. Use this information to read it aloud to students, have them read it, or both. This reproducible page includes the story and questions for students to answer related to the idioms used.

The final five pages of the unit introduce the basic *Ten to Teach* idioms individually, two to a page. These can be reproduced and used as is, or cut apart into separate cards. Use these after the story to reinforce the meanings of the idioms or to test students' understanding of them. Or, use them before the story as preparation for reading or for scaffolding as needed.

Optional: Use one of the ideas or activities in the introductory section of this book as an extension or follow-up to the unit.

Name _____ Date _____

Below is a story that includes 13 idioms about animals. Can you tell what they mean?

Case Closed

I've been a police detective for 25 years, and in this **dog-eat-dog** world, I thought I had seen it all. Coming from anyone else, you might not believe this story. However, I am going to give it to you **straight from the horse's mouth**.

A couple of years ago, a man had a pet that he thought was **the cat's meow**. It wasn't a cat, though. It wasn't even a dog. It was an alligator. At first he thought it was cool. It was just a baby and only a foot or so long. He kept it **squirreled away** in his backyard. Then, when people would come over, he'd **monkey around** with it and they would **hoof it** out of there. He'd just laugh because Alley was **all bark and no bite**.

But, as time passed, Alley grew. Soon he was more than six feet long. Now that's a **horse of a different color**. The man came to realize that if the police found out that he had Alley, his **goose would be cooked**. It was time to **take the bull by the horns**.

Late one night, the man and his buddy wrapped Alley in a blanket and carried him to the edge of a lake in a nearby neighborhood park and set him loose. They thought he would never be seen again, but he was—and by a lot of people. For a while, Alley seemed to **play cat and mouse** with the officials to avoid being captured. That's where I come in. I didn't catch Alley, but I did catch the guy who put him there. Believe me, when I got to the bottom of this, that guy had to **eat crow**. He was **barking up the wrong tree** with me!

It took a while, but both the criminal and Alley were caught, and both are behind bars—one in jail and the other at the zoo!

Read or listen to the story again. Then answer these questions about the idioms. To help you find them, the idioms are in **dark print** in the story.

1. At first, did the man think his pet was loud and frightening or wonderful?

2. Which idiom explains that the man took charge of his growing gator?

3. According to the man, was Alley fierce or friendly?

4. Would you have **hoofed it** along with the other visitors? Explain.

5. Would you **monkey around** with an alligator? Explain.

Idioms About Animals (cont.)

Name _____ Date _____

Idiom ► **straight from the horse's mouth**

Meaning ► information directly from the source, not from someone else

How It Is Used ► My brother told me that our parents were going to take us to King's Amusement Park next weekend, but I didn't believe him. I decided to ask my dad, so I'd hear it *straight from the horse's mouth*.

Which Is Right? ► Read the two selections. Choose the one in which *straight from the horse's mouth* is used as an idiom. Circle the number of your choice.

- 1 Paul had just shown Polly how to put a bridle on his horse, Fawn. When Polly went to remove the bridle, she pulled it *straight from the horse's mouth*.
- 2 There were rumors that we would be having a class party on Friday. I asked our teacher so that I'd hear it *straight from the horse's mouth*.

Idiom ► **the cat's meow**

Meaning ► really great

How It Is Used ► Gina had always liked bejeweled clothes and shiny jewelry. When she spotted a pair of jeans with gold, blue, and green gems, she exclaimed, "Those jeans are *the cat's meow!*"

Which Is Right? ► Read the two selections. Choose the one in which *the cat's meow* is used as an idiom. Circle the number of your choice.

- 1 As they left the theater, Jenna and Anne talked excitedly about the great scenes in the movie they had just seen. Anne told Jenna that her favorite part was the big musical number at the end. Jenna agreed: "That scene was *the cat's meow*," she said.
- 2 Hilary had one important job when she watched her neighbor's house. When she heard *the cat's meow*, she knew to let him in for food and water.

Name _____ Date _____

Idiom ► **squirrel away**

Meaning ► hide things or put them away for a later time

How It Is Used ► Fran couldn't help but notice that her good markers kept disappearing. She spied on her little sister, Agnes, as Agnes snuck into her room, took two markers, and then *squirreled them* away in her own art box.

Which Is Right? ► Read the two selections. Choose the one in which *squirrel away* is used as an idiom. Circle the number of your choice.

- ❶ Peter kept asking his mom for pennies. He placed them in a sock, and hid them in the back of his drawer. When Peter's mom was putting his clothes away, she discovered his bundle of pennies. She figured that he must be *squirreling them away* to save up for a new toy.
- ❷ Hugh's stuffed animals were all over his bedroom floor. He had nearly finished putting them all back, when he heard his mom call from the living room, "Hugh! Come put this *squirrel away!*"

Idiom ► **monkey around**

Meaning ► fool around; goof off; play instead of work

How It Is Used ► Freddie and his friends were splashing and squirting one another in the pool. His sister Terry and her friends did not want to get wet. They asked the boys to stop *monkeying around*.

Which Is Right ► Read the two selections. Choose the one in which *monkey around* is used as an idiom. Circle the number of your choice.

- ❶ Bonnie and her mom loved the zoo. When they entered the primates area, they found themselves surrounded by apes, chimps, and lemurs. Bonnie pointed out a feisty *monkey around* the banana tree. He called and screeched until Bonnie threw a peanut for him.
- ❷ Jake and his friends were enjoying their time on the beach. Before long, they were kicking sand and tossing one another into the water. The lifeguard blew his whistle and instructed them to stop *monkeying around*. If they didn't, they would be asked to leave the beach.