



Idiom of the Week

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hang in there

Word Story

The little Wordly boy was having trouble with his friend. They had gotten mad at each other, and the friend refused to make up. Mrs. Wordly told her son to *hang in there*, and that things would work out soon if he just kept being friendly.

When you *hang in there*, you stay with something and keep trying even if it's very difficult.

Talk About It

- ✧ Why do you think people say *hang in there*? What does the word *hang* mean?
- ✧ Tell about a time when you *hung in there*. How did things turn out?
- ✧ Can you think of other expressions that use the verb "*hang*?" What do those idioms mean? (hang on, hang up, hang together, hang loose...)

Do It

Use the monkey bars or another bar on the playground. How long can you *hang in there*? What's your record? Have a friend count for you.

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keep an eye on

Word Story

Mrs. Wordly asked her oldest daughter to *keep an eye on* the younger ones while she went to the store. The older girl was used to taking care of her younger brothers and sisters.

When you *keep an eye on* something, you watch it closely and carefully.

Talk About It

- ✦ Who most often *keeps an eye on* you after school? Is their eye actually touching you?
- ✦ If your mom asked you to *keep an eye on* the time, what would she mean?
- ✦ What else might you *keep an eye on*? (the weather, a pot on the stove, your dog)

Picture It

Draw a picture of you *keeping an eye on* something. What are you watching so carefully and why? What might happen if you don't watch carefully?

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give it your best shot

Word Story

One of the great things about the youngest Wordly boy is that he always gives things his *best shot*. He never cuts corners or does things halfway. He works hard and gives every new challenge his best effort.

When you give something your *best shot*, you are trying your best.

Talk About It

- ✧ How do you think this expression came to be? What type of *shot* do you think the expression originally meant?
- ✧ Tell us about a time when you gave something your *best shot*, even though it was hard or you didn't really want to try it.
- ✧ What usually happens when you give something your *best shot*?

Do It

Let's pick something from the classroom that we will each try to draw. Once we decide on the object, I will have you *give it your best shot!*

Idiom of the Week

Idiom of the Week is designed to introduce children to idioms so that they will begin listening for them and making them a part of their everyday language. An idiom is a commonly used expression that means something different from what it appears to mean. If something is “a piece of cake,” for example, it is not literally a piece of cake; it is something that is easy. The English language is filled with idiomatic expressions, and knowing what idioms mean is an important part of a child’s growing knowledge and fluency with the language. Idioms can be especially difficult because there are two levels of meaning: the literal level and the idiomatic level.

Recent research has established that children at the same grade level can have vastly different vocabularies and oral language skills. Some children come from language rich environments where words and their meanings are explained to them daily. Other children’s environments are language deprived. Still others speak a language other than English at home. *Idiom of the Week* and its sister book *Word of the Day* (Primary Concepts, 2006) help

put your foot down

Word Story

Mrs. Wordly felt she just had to *put her foot down* when the children started coming into the house dripping wet. They had been playing a game of tag in the sprinklers; then they began using the front hallway as base. They were dripping all over the floor, and Mrs. Wordly had to tell them to keep the game outside.

If you *put your foot down*, you firmly say that something is not allowed.

Talk About It

- ✧ What does your mom *put her foot down* about? How about your dad?
- ✧ What does *putting your foot down* have to do with being firm or strict?
- ✧ What do these expressions about feet mean? (best foot forward, put your foot in your mouth, get off on the wrong foot)

Act It Out

Pretend you are being strict with a little child, and they are not listening. You tell them one more time, and stamp your foot a little bit (*put your foot down*).

young children learn words and expressions orally in the primary grades so that they will be able to understand what they read in 3rd grade and above.

Like *Word of the Day*, *Idiom of the Week* is comprised of short oral activities. You can easily combine the two. For example, you could introduce a word each day Monday through Thursday and then finish with an idiom on Friday. There are more than enough idioms in this book to introduce one per week for the entire year. You can work through the book, starting with “get the show on the road” and ending with “wrap it up,” or pick and choose lessons.

More important than knowing the meanings of all of the idioms in this book is the goal of appreciating idioms, and to enjoy language in general. Learning about idioms is a great way to help young children begin to see the fun in word play. Idioms in this book appeal to young children’s sense of humor and fantasy.

think it over

Word Story

Mrs. Wordly gave each of her children several options for summer activities to sign up for. She asked each child to *think it over* and let her know their top choice.

When we say we’ll *think it over*, we mean we will think carefully about something before making a decision about it.

Talk About It

- ✧ What does *over* mean? Why do we say think it over in this expression?
- ✧ What kinds of things do you need to *think over* or decide about?
- ✧ How about grown-ups? What types of things do they need to *think over*?

Tell a Story

Tell us a story about a time that you had a decision to make and needed to *think it over*. What were you deciding about? What were your choices? What did you decide to do?

Getting Started

Take a few minutes each week to introduce the new idiom. Write the idiom on the board for the class to see. Then use the notes on each page to present the idiom to the class.

Word Story

Children who are familiar with *Word of the Day* will recognize the Wordly family. As you might expect from their name, the Wordly family has a strong vocabulary. Each idiom is introduced with a story about the Wordly family in which the idiom comes into play. Read the word story and then briefly summarize what the idiom means in words the children can understand.

Talk About It

Ask your students questions, like those listed, that get them to think about the idiom and what it means. Help them use the idiom in different situations. If children use the idiom incorrectly in a response, rephrase their answer so the usage is correct.

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for keeps

Word Story

The oldest Wordly boy was sorting his old things, trying to get rid of the things he didn't need anymore. He gave his special baseball cards and his bottlecap collection to his little brother who exclaimed, "*For keeps?*"

If you are given something *for keeps*, you may have it as your own.

Talk About It

- ✧ Have you ever given anyone something of yours *for keeps*? What was it and who did you give it to?
- ✧ What do you have that was given to you *for keeps*?
- ✧ What other expressions do we have that use the word *keep*? (keep your head, keep your word, keep your fingers crossed...)

Act It Out

Work with a partner. One of you get something small from the classroom, and pretend you are giving it to your partner. Have a little conversation, using the word *keep* as many times as possible!

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Make It Meaningful

Suggestions are provided for active ways for children to build meaning. Sometimes children act out or draw pictures to show the meaning of the idiom. These short activities are intended to help children remember the idiom in a context they understand.

Next Steps

After you have introduced the idiom, challenge the children to find a way to use it several times over the next week, either at home or at school. Brainstorm some ways the children can do this.

Word Jar

After an idiom is introduced, write it on a 3" x 5" card. Keep a large jar in your classroom and put each new idiom in it before you move on to the next one. You may wish to combine the idioms with *Word of the Day* word cards, all in one jar. Periodically, pull out a card and see if the children can remember what the idiom means. Ask them to use it in a sentence.

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in no time

Word Story

The Wordlys were so anxious to get to the baseball game that they got ready *in no time*. Everyone got dressed and put on sun screen very quickly, and nobody forgot their hats or gloves!

If something happens *in no time*, it happens very fast.

Talk About It

- ✧ What kind of special event could make you get ready *in no time*?
- ✧ Is there really such a thing as *no time*? Could something happen *in no time*?
- ✧ How else could we say that something happened really fast? (lickety-split, in a flash, like that...)

Do It

Think of three things you can do *in no time*. Then show us how fast you are.

Assessment

Assess children's appreciation for idioms by listening to them talk and noting whether they are trying to use idioms in their oral language. You might also challenge the children to be "idiom catchers." Have them listen for these fun expressions and share new ones with the class whenever they discover one. "Idiom catchers" can write their idioms on note cards and add them to the Word Jar.

sneak up on

Word Story

The Wordlys' dog loves to try to *sneak up on* birds at the birdbath. He crouches low, moves slowly and silently through the grass, then pounces at the last second. The birds always fly away, and the dog usually ends up getting wet.

When you *sneak up on* someone, you try to reach them without being seen or heard in order to startle them.

Talk About It

- ✦ What describing words could we use to talk about someone who was sneaking?
- ✦ Are you any good at *sneaking up on* people? What do you do to surprise them at the end?
- ✦ What animals often *sneak up on* things? Why do they do it?

Act It Out

Let's show how we look when we're *sneaking up on* someone. How does your body look? How do you move? How do you sound?

get the show on the road

Word Story

The Wordlys were getting ready to go out for a day at the beach. Everyone was anxious to get started, but it was taking time to get everything packed and ready. “Let’s *get the show on the road!*” boomed Mr. Wordly happily.

To *get the show on the road* means to hurry up.

Talk About It

- ✧ Have you ever heard the expression *get the show on the road?* Who said it and what were they talking about?
- ✧ How do you think this expression might have come about?
- ✧ What type of show would go on the road?

Do It

When it’s time for recess, I’ll say, “Let’s *get the show on the road!*” That will mean to clean up quickly and line up at the door.

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in the same boat

Word Story

“Well, at least we’re both *in the same boat,*” Mr. Wordly said to his little boy who had just scraped his knee. Mr. Wordly had an achy knee from playing soccer, so they each knew how the other felt.

If two people are *in the same boat,* it means they are in similar situations.

Talk About It

- ✧ Is there someone who’s *in the same boat* as you in some way?
- ✧ Can you think of any characters from books that are *in the same boat?*
It can be two characters from the same book, or from different books.
- ✧ What famous person would you like to be *in the same boat* as? Why?

Tell a Story

Make up a story about two very different animals who are somehow *in the same boat.* How do the characters meet? What makes their situations similar? Can they help each other?

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