



Open-Sky
School

Category
ENGLISH



Activity

Idioms and Expressions

MATERIALS
Idioms written on pieces of paper or index cards

DURATION
60 MINUTES

Activity Summary

This activity introduces students to the meaning of several idioms and expressions in the English language in connection to nature. Students will better understand how language works when they put idioms into action. Students are invited to act out the expressions, and thus use their body language to convey their meaning.

Preparation

Here is a list of idioms and expressions in relation to nature:

- On cloud nine
- Come rain or shine
- Go down in flames
- Throw caution to the wind
- As right as rain
- Under the weather
- Barking up the wrong tree
- Break the ice
- Once in a blue moon

Choose some of these idioms that lend themselves well to the location where the activity will take place. 

Preparation (continued)

Write the chosen idioms on index cards or pieces of paper. You can laminate the cards, if you wish. Familiarize yourself with the meaning of these idioms and conduct a quick search about their origins.

Idiom	Meaning
On cloud nine	Feeling ecstatic, or very happy
Come rain or shine	No matter what
Go down in flames	Something that goes very wrong or fails miserably
Throw caution to the wind	Taking a risk
As right as rain	Something that happens perfectly
Under the weather	Feeling sick
Barking up the wrong tree	Looking for an answer or solution in the wrong place
Break the ice	Saying or doing something to make people feel more comfortable, i.e., when you meet someone new
Once in a blue moon	Something that rarely happens

<https://www.ef.com/wwen/english-resources/english-idioms/>

Hang the cards on trees or shrubs so students can read them.

Steps

A. Familiarize yourself
Once you arrive at the chosen place for the activity, let students circulate and read the cards to familiarize themselves with the idioms or expressions written on the cards.

B. Act it out!
Tell students:
Form teams of 2 or 3 students.

Designate a first team and say:
It's up to you to choose a card without showing it to the other students and act out the idiom or written expression on the card. Choose elements in nature, if they can be useful, and act out the expression without using your words.

When a spectator would like to guess the idiom, they raise their hand, but must wait until the team has finished acting out the expression to guess what it is.

C. Reflect
All students reflect together on the meaning of the idiom.

Conduct research on the origin and meaning of different idioms and expressions. How many new ones can your students find?

RETURN
TO GROUP

REINVESTMENT:

Ask: *Do you use idioms in your daily life?* Ask your students to choose an example. Stimulate discussion by asking a few questions related to each idiom students' propose.



Adapted from:
© Wauquiez, S., Barras, N., & Henzi, M. (2020).
L'école à ciel ouvert: 200 activités de plein air pour enseigner (pp. 69-72). Silviva: France.

To learn more <http://salamandre.org/>