

Notes/Reflections:  
Southern Expressions List:

The porch light is on, but no-body's home. (not very smart)	I'm more nervous than a long-tailed cat in a room full of rock-ing chairs	She's as purty as a speckled pup. (very pretty)
Well, butter my buns and call me a biscuit. (surprised)	He's got a burr in his saddle. (very angry)	Happy as a dead pig in the sunshine. (very happy)
If his brains were dynamite, he couldn't blow his nose. (not very smart)	Don't pee on my leg and tell me it's rainin'! (don't lie to me)	If that boy had an idea, it would die of loneliness. (not very smart)
I'm just tickled pink that you'll be able to join us. (happy and excit-ed)	If you lay down with dogs, you get up with fleas. (avoid bad com-pany)	She's as lost as last year's East-er egg. (confused)

Acting Like an Idiom List:

"A blessing in disguise"	Something that seems bad, but is actu-ally good	Tripping and falling on the floor, you find the diamond earring you lost.
"Driving me ba-nanas"	Making me feel irritated, agitated, maddened	Your screaming baby brother is making it impossible to study.
"Beating around the bush"	Not saying what is important; procrast-inating	You have to get your parents to sign your failed math test but you keep nervously talking about the weather.
"Taking candy from a baby"	Easy and effortless	You ask grandma for money to go to the movies and she gives you \$50.
"Actions speak louder than words"	The things you do say more about you than what you say	You tell your girlfriend you love her but you flirt with everyone.
"Butterflies in your stomach"	The anxious feeling you have before something important is known as butterflies in your stomach.	You are next in line to jump off the high dive at the swimming pool.

Idiom/Literal Scene List:

"Eat like a horse"	Someone who eats a great deal of food.
"In the same boat"	People in the same bad situation
"Pull the wool over someone's eyes"	To deceive or fool someone
"Talk turkey"	To talk seriously, usually about a business deal
"Beating a dead horse"	Trying to convince people to do or feel something without any chance of succeeding.

Technology Extension:  
Students can type their Idiom Scenes into a play template.  
Students can videotape their scene and add music and setting elements with backgrounds in iMovie

Technology Resources:  
- iMovie

Idea contributed by: Susi Purcell

2020-2021 © ArtsNOW  
10 Glenlake Pkwy., Suite 130  
Atlanta, GA 30328  
Phone: 404.688.2480  
Fax: 404.688.2424  
www.artsnowlearning.org

Playwriting/Theatre • Idioms/Figurative Language • Understanding • Theatre



Understand figurative language and bring idioms to life with theatre!

## Idiom Imaginings

Use theatre to explore the world of idioms by having students bring these sayings to life as they walk the idioms throughout the room using their body gestures and facial expressions.

### Essential Question:

How can finding the true meaning of an idiom help us understand language throughout our everyday lives?

### Process:

#### What's an Idiom?

An idiom is a group of words that means something different than the individual words it contains. Idioms create images to help us understand the meanings beyond the literal meanings of the words. We can use theatre to help explore the world of idioms.

**Physical Warm-Up : Idiom Milling** (Explain the meaning of each of the following idioms before you begin.)

- Tell students that this is a silent game when they are milling. Sound will only be added when they act out an idiom.
- Tell students that they will be walking around the room all at the same time and to please be aware of their personal space and not touch each other.
- Explain that you will be calling “freeze”. When you call “freeze”, the students should stop in their tracks and freeze their bodies. Then you will call out one of the idioms and they should act out the meaning of the idiom using their bodies, faces and voices.
- Ask students to walk around the room at a normal pace. Let them walk for about 30 seconds.
- Call “freeze” and then one of the below idioms. Let students act them out for a few seconds and then call “freeze” again and another idiom.
  - You are “sick as a dog” (to be violently ill)
  - You’re a “stiff-necked” person (formal and uptight)
  - You are “on your last legs” (close to dying)
  - You’ve lost your “get-up-and-go” (low physical energy; extremely tired)
  - You’ve got the “world at your feet” (everything is going your way)
  - Someone has really gotten “under your skin” (they have really annoyed you)

**Vocal Warm Up : Cat Got Your Tongue?** (Southern Expressions Idiom list located on last page)

- Have students stand in a line, shoulder to shoulder, across the room from a wall.
- Tell students that you will be doing a vocal warm up to help them to project their voices. (Actors warm up their voices and breathe in order for the audience to be able to hear their stories)
- Have students yell “hello” across the room all at the same time. Then ask them to take their voice, put breath behind it and push their voice, not yell, across the room.
- Now explain that you will call out an idiom. They then need to repeat and project that idiom to the wall opposite them. You will need to go slowly when giving them these idioms. You can also break them up into parts.

**Improv Warm Up: Acting Like an Idiom** (Acting like an Idiom list located on last page)

- Ask students to get into one large circle. Discuss the list of idioms with them. Ask them what they think the idiom means.
- Make sure to clearly state the meaning of each idiom before proceeding to the next one.
- Get into the middle of the circle to demonstrate acting out an idiom. (Example on last page)
- Start by reading the idiom and discussing the meaning then act it out. Making sure to add dialogue.
- Ask students if they believed you. Ask them what you did to make them believe you. (Remind them that we use our bodies, voices, faces, minds and hearts to tell a story and that we need to exaggerate all of these to get our story across.)

- Now explain that you will call out an idiom and its meaning and then students can raise their hands to come into the middle to act it out.
- Once the student gets into the middle of the circle, you will call “action” and the student will act it out.
- When they are done, you will call “freeze”.

- The actor can then take a bow and get back into the circle. Encourage the other students to clap.

**Improv in Action: Idiom/Literal On Your Feet** (Idiom/Literal Scene list on last page)

- Ask students to pair up . Assign each pair one of the idioms listed on the last page.

- Explain that they will be acting out the idiom meaning and then they literal meaning of their idiom. Call each group up

- Explain the meaning of each idiom before they begin. Then call “Idiom Action” and they will start their first scene. Then you will call “Literal Action” and they will start their second scene.

### Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their participation throughout the lesson. Look to see if they

use or attempt to use their bodies, voices, faces, minds and hearts in their storytelling. As-

essment can also be made by seeing they understand the meaning of the idioms.

## Idiom Imaginings

### Materials

-Idiom List

-Southern Expressions List

-Acting Like an Idiom List

-Idiom/Literal Scene List

### Vocabulary

**Idiom** – a group of words that means something different than the individual words it contains.

**Figurative language** - a word or phrase that does not have its normal every day, literal **meaning**. It is used by the writer for the sake of comparison or dramatic effect. Authors use similes, metaphors, hyperbole, and personification to make their stories more interesting.

**Storytelling** – bringing a story to life so that someone believes your story. Actor’s use their body, voice, face, mind and hearts to tell strong stories.

**Pantomime** - an acting technique that conveys emotion through non-verbal communication. Occasionally referred to as 'the art of silence,' pantomime relies on facial expressions, body language and gestures.

**Facial Expression** – how an actor uses his or her face (eyes, cheeks, mouth, chin, nose) to convey meaning.

**Body Gestures** –any movement of the actor’s head, shoulder, arm, hand, leg, or foot to convey meaning.

**Physical Warm up** – exercises that an actor uses to warm up and loosen up their body so that they can use body gestures to help convey meaning.

**Vocal Warm up** – exercises that an actor uses with their voice to warm up their voices so that they can project and articulate words.

**Vocal expression** – how an actor uses his or her voice to convey character.

**Improvisation** – Making it up as you go along. Not planned. Impromptu acting based on the following circumstances: who -the characters; what - the action; where - the place; and when - the time the action takes place.

**Dialogue** - The words spoken by the actors during a play.

**Emotion** - A state of feeling such as: angry; sad; excited; nervous; happy.

**Scene** - A division of a play or of an act of a play, usually representing what passes between certain actors in one place.

**Script** - The play in written form.

**Project** - using your breathe to get a small voice across the room as a big voice so that your story can be heard.

### Classroom Tips

This lesson can be done with desks as they are already arranged in the classroom but it’s always fun to push desks back and get students on their feet in a circle. You can also create a little performance “stage” at the front of the classroom.

## Georgia Standards of Excellence: (Core Curriculum & The Arts)

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### GRADE 3

**ELAGSE3RL4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases both literal and non- literal language as they are used in the text. **ELAGSE3W3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations. **ELAGSE3L3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. a. Choose words and phrases for effect.**ELAGSE3L5:** With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings. Distinguish the literal and non-literal meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps).

#### GRADE 4

**ELAGSE4W3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations **ELAGSE4L4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. a. Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or re-statements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

#### GRADE 5

E5RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes. **ELAGSE5L5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings .a. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context. b. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs. **ELAGSE5W3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

## Georgia Standards of Excellence: (Core Curriculum & The Arts)

### THEATRE ARTS

#### GRADE 3

**TA3.CR.1:** Organize, design, and refine theatrical work. a. Create characters with specific traits (e.g. physical, vocal, emotional) that respond to imaginary circumstances. b. Collaborate with an ensemble to rehearse, refine, and question a theatrical work. d. Use theatre vocabulary (e.g. character, setting, dialogue, point of view, plot, conflict, resolution). e. Apply sensory elements in creating and portraying characters. **TA3.CR.2:** Develop scripts through theatrical techniques. a. Use imagination to create, revise, improve, and/or add ideas to a scripted or improvised work. b. Use a playwriting process. d. Create an organizing structure appropriate for purpose, audience, and context. **TA3.PR.1:** Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate a character’s thoughts, emotions, and actions. b. Use body and movement to communicate a character’s thoughts and emotions. c. Collaborate and perform with an ensemble to present theatre to an audience. d. Create and perform characters based on imagination. e. Identify and explore character choices and relationships in a variety of dramatic forms (e.g. narrated story, pantomime, puppetry, dramatic play). **TA3.RE.1:** Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member. a. Participate as audience. b. Demonstrate appropriate theatre etiquette. **TA3.RE.2:** Critique various aspects of theatre and other media. a. Identify artistic choices through participation and observation. b. Interpret what is seen, felt, and heard in a theatre or performance experience. c. Compare and contrast theatre experiences.

#### GRADE 4

**TA4.CR.1:** Organize, design, and refine theatrical work. a. Create characters with specific traits (e.g. physical, vocal, emotional) that respond to imaginary circumstances. d. Define and use theatre vocabulary (e.g. character, setting, dialogue, point of view, plot, conflict, resolution). e. Apply sensory elements in creating and portraying characters. **TA4.CR.2:** Develop scripts through theatrical techniques. a. Use imagination to create, revise, improve, and/or add ideas to a scripted or improvised work. b. Use a playwriting process. c. Create scripts that include setting, point of view, sequence of events, and cause and effect. d. Create an organizing structure appropriate for purpose, audience, and context. e. Develop scripts based on stories (e.g. personal, imaginary, real).

**TA4.PR.1:** Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate a character’s thoughts, emotions, and actions. b. Use body and movement to communicate a character’s thoughts and emotions. c. Collaborate and perform with an ensemble to present theatre to an audience. d. Create and perform characters based on imagination. e. Identify and explore character choices and relationships in a variety of dramatic forms (e.g. narrated story, pantomime, puppetry, dramatic play). **TA4.RE.1:** Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member. a. Participate as an audience. b. Demonstrate appropriate theatre etiquette. **TA4.RE.2:** Critique various aspects of theatre and other media. a. Identify artistic choices through participation and observation. b. Interpret what is seen, felt, and heard in a theatre experience. c. Compare and contrast theatre experiences.

#### GRADE 5

**TA5.CR.1:** Organize, design, and refine theatrical work. a. Use imagination to create a character with specific physical, vocal, and emotional traits. c. Identify and implement solutions to technical problems in a theatre experience. e. Make artistic choices in portraying character thoughts and emotions.**TA5.CR.2:** Develop scripts through theatrical techniques. a. Use the dramatic writing process to develop scripts based on various materials and sources. b. Apply dramatic elements (e.g. plot, point of view, conflict, significant events) in creating scripts. c. Utilize evidence from given circumstances to create characters and scenes. d. Create an organizing structure appropriate for purpose, audience, and context. **TA5.PR.1:** Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions of a character. b. Use body and movement to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions of a character. c. Collaborate and perform with an ensemble to present theatre to an audience. d. Perform a range of appropriate dramatic strategies (e.g. flashback, foreshadowing, dialogue, suspense). e. Communicate and explore character choices and relationships in a variety of dramatic forms (e.g. narrated story, pantomime, puppetry, dramatic play). **TA5.RE.1:** Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member. a. Participate as audience. b. Demonstrate appropriate theatre etiquette.

## National Art Standards

### THEATRE

**TH:Cr3.1.3:** b. Participate and contribute to physical and vocal exploration in an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work. **TH:Pr4.1.3:** b. Investigate how movement and voice are incorporated into drama/theatre work. **TH:Pr5.1.3:** a. Participate in a variety of physical, vocal, and cognitive exercises that can be used in a group setting for drama/theatre work. **TH:Cr.1.1.5:** a. Identify physical qualities that might reveal a character’s inner traits in the imagined world of a drama/theatre work. c. Imagine how a character’s inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/ theatre work **TH:Pr4.1.5:** a. Describe the underlying thoughts and emotions that create dialogue and action in a drama/theatre work. **TH:Pr5.1.5:** a. Choose acting exercises that can be applied to a drama/ theatre work. **TH:Re7.1.4:** a. Identify artistic choices made in a drama/ theatre work through participation and observation.