

Grade 5 Playlist: Idioms, Adages, Proverbs

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5.B*:

- Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.

Welcome

Authors often use idioms, adages, and proverbs to express their ideas. These common expressions can help to show an author's point of view or summarize the moral of a story. Recognizing and explaining these expressions helps people better understand an author's message.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- recognize and explain the meanings of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.

Exploring the Standard

A Closer Look: Idioms

An **idiom** is an expression whose meaning goes beyond the meaning of the individual words. Idioms often do not make a lot of sense if people try to understand them literally. For example, the idiom *at the drop of a hat* means "instantly." The idiom does not actually refer to dropping things or to hats. For this reason, the meaning of common idioms needs to be learned.

Speakers of a particular language often learn idioms by hearing them in conversation and by coming across them in reading. Idioms are different across languages, so people learning a new language often have trouble with idioms because they are not literal.

This chart lists common idioms with their meanings.

Common Idioms	Meanings
<i>Break a leg!</i>	Good luck on stage!
<i>on the ball</i>	quick to handle or respond to events
<i>The ball is in your court.</i>	It is your decision.
<i>to call it a day</i>	to declare the end of a task
<i>to hit the road</i>	to leave a place
<i>a piece of cake</i>	easy; simple
<i>to pull someone's leg</i>	to tease someone
<i>to spill the beans</i>	to tell someone's secret
<i>to have eyes in the back of one's head</i>	to perceive something that one cannot see
<i>to shoot the breeze</i>	to chat
<i>under the weather</i>	sick



Watch!

These videos explain the meaning of more common idioms:

- *barking up the wrong tree*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1iI5N7g8Js>
- *a chip on one's shoulder*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nX3bVc-XIFl>
- *a taste of one's own medicine*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPrmdZcjD-A>

There are two main ways to learn idioms: memorizing them and using context clues in surrounding text to determine their meaning. When using context clues, look for key words and phrases in the text that relate to the idiom. Think about the words in the idiom and how they match up with other words in the surrounding sentences.

Read!

This website describes strategies for figuring out the meaning of idioms:

- http://mhschool.com/lead_21/grade5/ccslh_g5_lv_6_3f_l1.html

Watch!

This video shows how a reader uses context clues to figure out the meaning of the idiom *to know (something) like the back of one's hand*:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoVX34RqC4M>

Practice!

Practice using common idioms by playing this game. It can be played with either one or two players:

- <http://www.guia.com/cb/7374.html>

A Closer Look: Proverbs and Adages

Proverbs and adages are other kinds of common expressions. A **proverb** is an expression that tells a bit of practical wisdom. An **adage** is a proverb that has been used for a long time. Proverbs and adages are meant to teach a lesson or offer a truth about life.

Like idioms, proverbs and adages can be used in conversation or in writing. They are also unique to a particular language. Unlike idioms, however, proverbs and adages generally have more literal meanings. Their meanings match more closely to the meaning of the individual words that make up the expression.



Teaching Notes: Idioms, Adages, Proverbs

The goal of L.5.5.B is for students to both recognize and explain common idioms, proverbs, and adages. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Choose another one of Aesop's fables to read as a class. (Find a collection of the fables here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19994/19994-h/19994-h.htm>) Point out that the fable ends with a proverb that tells the moral of the story. Discuss with students how the events and characters in the story help to show the meaning of the proverb.
2. Divide students into groups, and assign each group a proverb or adage that you have already discussed together. Ask each group to write a short story or fable that shows the meaning of this proverb.
3. Have students keep an "idiom log" for one week. Students should record idioms that they hear in conversation or read in texts. Ask students to try to determine the meaning of each idiom. At the end of the week, have students share examples of idioms from their log.

Teaching Idioms to ESL Students

Idioms can be particularly challenging for English language learners since their meaning is not literal. These resources describe strategies for teaching idioms to ESL students.

- This page lists Activities teachers can use to introduce and practice idioms in context: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Wu-TeachingIdioms.html>
- In this lesson plan, students use the Visual Thesaurus to learn the meanings of idioms: <https://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/lessons/learning-idioms-in-esl/>

Additional Resources

Consider using these resources to teach L.5.5.B.

- In this lesson plan, students learn proverbs from around the world and explore their link to specific cultures. Students also compare proverbs from different cultures: http://rwtverio.ncte.org/lessons/lesson_viewdb5d.html?id=185
- In this lesson plan, students share proverbs they already know, and then interview family members to find examples of additional proverbs. Students also collaborate to develop a definition of proverbs: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/proverbs-introduction-184.html?tab=4#tabs>

