

Idiom Lesson Plan 1: Understanding Idioms and Figurative Language

Goal:

The goal of this lesson is to understand the concept of idioms, and, more broadly, of figurative language, and to see it in action.

Snapshot:

- Have a student volunteer to explain the definition of a word
- Use a dictionary to have the student look up the definition
- Use this example to introduce the definitions of *figurative* and *literal*
- Define the term *idiom*
- Have students draw the idioms
- Group the students together to discuss their drawings

Lesson Plan:

Grade Level: 3-5

Time Frame: 45 minutes

Objectives:

To learn about figurative versus literal language, and to understand the concept of idioms.

Knowledge:

- Learn the concept of an idiom

Skills:

- Identify idioms and other figurative language when they are being used
- Identify, define, and use the new vocabulary words
- Compare and contrast the figurative and literal meanings of phrases

Attitudes:

- Appreciate the importance of figurative language in speaking and writing.

Essential Question:

- What is an idiom?

Materials and Resources:

Some idioms that can be used in the independent/ group activity: bite the bullet, break a leg, call it a day, cutting corners, miss the boat.

Linkage and Integration Across Subject Areas:**Vocabulary to be Developed in Lesson:**

Idiom- an idiom is a phrase with an underlying meaning that is generally agreed upon by a large group of people. The meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced by the phrase's words alone.

Literal- the exact meaning of words

Figurative- using words in a way that is different from their literal meaning.

Procedure:**Introduction:**

1. Write the following sentence on the board: "My friend has tons of toys in her room."
Ask a student to explain what the sentence means i.e. that it means your friend has many toys.
2. Then, if you have a dictionary in the classroom, ask a student to look up the word "ton." The definition provided will be: "a unit of weight equivalent to 2,000 pounds."
3. Ask the students, when I say my friend has "tons of toys" do I really mean that she has over 2,000 pounds worth of toys?

Vocabulary Development:

4. Use this example to introduce the concept of figurative language. Write the words “figurative” and “literal” on the board along with their definitions.
5. Engage students by asking them to offer examples of figurative language
6. Finally, introduce the concept “idiom,” by explaining what an idiom is and how it is a special type of figurative language

Independent Work/ Group Work Activity

7. Write down a few common idioms (from materials and resources) on slips of paper and hand each student one slip of paper. Assign the same idiom to 2-4 students.
8. Ask the students to draw a literal picture of the idiom.
9. When the students are done with their drawings, they will join in a circle with the other students who were assigned the same idiom, and compare their drawings. They will also discuss what the idiom might mean *figuratively*.
10. After allowing the students to discuss with one another for a few minutes, reveal the figurative meaning of the idioms to the group.
11. Have the students draw a new picture, this time to illustrate the figurative meaning.
12. Finally have the students compare the figurative and literal drawings.

Conclusion

At this point, you may want to discuss what your students have learned from this activity. You may want to ask questions such as:

Why is it important to learn about idioms? Why might people choose to use idioms? Is it sometimes possible to figure out what an idiom means based on the words or the context?