

## Idiomatic Phrases

**Companion Text:** The Jakry Kids: Curiosity Shop, by Lin Jakary & illustrated by Ryan Olson

**Subject Area & Grade Level:** Language Arts, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Materials:** Internet or library access (optional)

### *Objectives*

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain what an idiomatic expression is
- Identify idiomatic expressions in text
- Recognize that language patterns vary from place to place

### *Pre-Reading*

Ask students if they have ever baked a cake. Ask them to imagine the tastes of each individual ingredient—flour, sugar, butter, eggs, salt, baking powder. Ask, “Does a cake taste like any one of the individual ingredients, or like a whole, new thing?” (Like something new completely) Explain that today’s lesson will focus on words and how the way they are grouped can cause them to seem like entirely new words.

### *During Reading*

Read the story once through without stopping. Then, ask students if they noticed a group of words in the story that meant something different as a group than they would have meant as individual words. Define these groups of words as “idiomatic expressions.” If necessary, read the story again, and then ask students if they noticed it that time, and what it means. (“fit as a fiddle”, p.15, meaning very healthy)

### *Post-Reading*

Ask students to each think of an idiomatic phrase, but don’t tell anybody what it is. Allow students to flip through dictionaries or search the internet for ideas if available. Then, have students draw a picture illustrating the idiomatic expressions they chose. You can then invite anyone who would like to share their drawing to do so, and allow the rest of the class to guess the expression. (Don’t make sharing mandatory, as it could foster artistic competition more than raise awareness of idiomatic expressions.) Finally, share the following idiomatic expressions from other English-speaking cultures, and see if students can guess their meaning:

- “on the wallaby track” (Australian, unemployed)
- “turn the crack” (Scottish, change the subject of conversation)
- “across the pond” (British, on the other side of the Atlantic ocean, i.e., the U.S.)
- “to go spare” (British, to get very angry suddenly)

