**Idioms: Pairs of Adjectives**

*Solve these anagrams.*

**CATINNIE** and **NMDROE**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**ROF TEBTER** or **ROF ESWRO**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Idioms: Pairs of Nouns**

*Circle the correct option.*

Bed and Breakfast / Breakfast and Bed

Friend or Foe / Foe or Friend

Soul and Heart / Heart and Soul

Earth and Heaven /Heaven and Earth

**Idioms: Collective Noun Phrases**

*Fill in the sentences with the words in the box.*

School Colony Herd Swarm Drove Litter Pack Flock Flight

1. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of ants**
2. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of cattle**
3. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of birds**
4. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of sheep**
5. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of pigs**
6. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of puppies**
7. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of wolves**
8. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of bees**
9. **A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of dolphins**

**Idioms: Compound Adjectives**

These adjectives are always made up of hyphenated words. Here are two typical examples in current use.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ driver.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ job.

**Idioms: Adjectives and Noun phrases**

*Match the two halves.*

1. An iron A. Blanket
2. Second B. Tale
3. An ivory C. Tower
4. A tall D. Thoughts
5. A wet E. Will

**Noun Phrases**

*Finish these noun phrases.*

1. A bolt from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. A bull in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. A cuckoo \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. A feather \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Idioms From Special Categories**

**Colours**

*Find expressions that contain colours.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Red** | **White** | **Blue** | **Black** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

[You can also focus on categories such as parts of the body, animals, and food items]

**Origins of Idioms**

A very important element is to provide students with roots so they can understand the origin of idioms. This semantic approach has opened students’ minds to this topic. The data below have been adapted from the bibliography suggested. This activity is preceded by other activities; as with matching idiom meanings, here you can provide origins for famous idioms and check comprehension and retention afterward.

In the next pair-work activity, students are asked to use their prior knowledge to fill in the table below. In a second step, after sharing their attempt with the rest of the pairs, they can be asked to check their work against information that can be obtained online or in selected reference books. (See references below for books and link.) All text provided below, in the Origin and Meaning columns, is from Terban (1998).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| IDIOM | ORIGIN | MEANING |
| Every cloud has a silver lining. |  | There is something good in every bad situation. |
| Gild the lily. | William Shakespeare used a similar expression in his play “King John.” “To gild refined gold, to paint the lily…is wasteful and ridiculous excess.” Over the years, the saying got shortened to just “gild the lily.” *Gild* means to cover with a thick layer of gold. Why did Shakespeare use a lily? Because it is already a beautiful flower and covering it with gold to make it more beautiful would be unnecessary. |  |
| Go fly a kite.  |  | Go away, leave, stop bothering me! |
| It’s Greek to me. | William Shakespeare used this phrase in his play, “Julius Caesar.” In the play, which takes place in 44 BC, a Roman who spoke only Latin said that he had heard another man speaking Greek, but he could not understand what he was saying. |  |
| Head and shoulders above someone. |  | Far superior, much better than. |
| Head over heels in love. | This expression goes back to the ancient Romans and means that being in love with someone makes one’s emotions topsy-turvy, upside-down. |  |
| Hit the jackpot. |  | To be very lucky, to achieve amazing success. |
| It takes two to tango. | In the 1920s, tango, a dance style, became popular in the United States, and so did this expression. Just as it takes two dancers to do the tango, there are certain activities that need the cooperation of two people in order to work. |  |
| Keep up with the Joneses. | In 1913, a popular comic strip called “Keeping Up With the Joneses” appeared in many American newspapers, starting with *The New York Globe*. The cartoon was about the experiences of a newly-married young man, and the cartoonist based it on his own life. He chose the name Jones because it was a popular name in America. The name of the comic strip became a popular expression that meant to try hard to follow the latest fashion and live in the style of those around you. |  |
| Kick the bucket. |  | To die. |
| Kill two birds with one stone. |  | To do two things by one action, to get two results by just one effort. |
| Let the cat out of the bag. | Centuries ago in England, you might have bought a costly pig at a farmer’s market. But, if the merchant was dishonest and put a worthless cat into the bag instead of a piglet, you might not find out until you got home and let the cat out of the bag. (Related expressions : buy a pig in a poke, spill the beans.) |  |
| Mad as a hatter. |  | Completely crazy, strange, eccentric. |
| Pull your leg. | In the late 1800s, people sometimes tripped other people by catching their legs with a cane or running a string across the sidewalk. Sometimes it was just for fun, at other times robbers did it to steal from the victim after he or she had fallen. |  |
| Raining cats and dogs. |  | To rain heavily. |