

# Idioms

## Figurative Language

## Task Cards & Activities

### What is an idiom?

An idiom is a figure of speech. Idioms are expressions that mean something different from the literal meaning of the words in the phrase.

### What do idioms mean?

Different idioms mean different things and can't be understood by looking in a dictionary. English spoken idioms are often learned by paying attention to the clues where they are used to learn what they mean.

Idioms are a piece of language.

### Let's dive in!

#### Learning about idioms

**Idiom:** Let's dive in!  
**Meaning:** The word *dive* means to jump into water first in a head-first position. Since idioms can't be taken literally, as a culture, people use "let's dive in" to mean "let's get started".

**Idiom:** Don't chicken out!  
**Meaning:** The idiom "don't chicken out" means not to be afraid to do something.

### Common Idioms

Idioms	Their Meanings
Break a leg	Good luck
Let the cat out of the bag	Share a secret
Piece of cake	Something easy
Costs an arm and a leg	It is expensive
All ears	Listening
Under the weather	Feeling sick
A dime a dozen	A thing that is common
Bending over backwards	Willing to do anything
Spill the beans	Share a secret
A breath of fresh air	A relief
In a pickle	In a tough situation
Spill the beans	Share a secret
A breath of fresh air	A relief

### Common Idioms:

Idioms	Their Meanings
Scapegoat	Someone who takes the blame for something
Spitting image	Looks the exact same
Kick the bucket	Die
Every cloud has a silver lining	Even in the worst situations, you can find something good
On the fence	Undecided about something
On the same page	People agree on something
Kill two birds with one stone	Get two things accomplished at the same time
Out of the blue	Something that happens unexpectedly
Apple of my eye	Very cherished or loved
At the drop of a hat	Able to do something immediately
Beat a dead horse	Talking about the same thing over and over

## Lesson #3 of 8

1. Match the definition to the correct idiom.

Remain joyful, happy

Keep your chin up  
Don't ever spill milk  
Don't let the horses  
Don't let the fire

17. Match the idiom with the correct definition.

Idiom: A breath of fresh air

- A. To get to the point
- B. To understand details in a situation
- C. Patience
- D. A relief, something enjoyable

18. Match the idiom with the correct definition.

Idiom: Hold your horses

- A. Make a bad situation even worse
- B. Be patient
- C. A rare happening
- D. Get married

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Draw a picture to match the literal meaning of the idiom. Don't forget to have fun!

You are driving me up the wall

I am bending over backwards for you!

I am feeling under the weather

Kirsten's Kaboodle



3rd-6th Grade

# What is an idiom?

An idiom is a figure of speech. Idioms are expressions that mean something different than the words in the phrase might indicate.

## What do idioms mean?

Different idioms mean different things and can't be understood by looking in a dictionary. Learning English spoken idioms can be done by paying attention to context clues where they occur and by learning what they mean.

**Idioms are  
a piece  
of cake!**



Let's dive in!

Learning about Idioms:

**Idiom:** Let's dive in!

**Meaning:** The word dive often refers to jumping arms first in a body of water. Since idioms can't be translated literally, as a culture, people learn that "let's dive in" means "let's begin!"

**Idiom:** Don't chicken out!

**Meaning:** The idiom "don't chicken out" has nothing to do with the animal called a chicken. Instead, it means "don't give up!"



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**Don't  
chicken out!  
Let's dive in  
to idioms!**

# Common Idioms:

Idioms	Their Meanings
Break a leg	Good luck
Let the cat out of the bag	Share a secret
Piece of cake	Something that is easy
Costs an arm and a leg	It is expensive
All ears	Listening carefully
Under the weather	Feeling sick
A dime a dozen	A thing that is easy to get
Bending over backwards	Willing to do anything to help
Drive up a wall	To irritate or bother someone
Bite your tongue	Remain silent (don't talk)
In a pickle	In a tough situation
Spill the beans	Share a secret
A breath of fresh air	A relief, something enjoyable
Go the whole nine yards	Finish something to the very end



# Common Idioms:

Idioms	Their Meanings
Pulling your leg	Tricking someone
Coming clean	Telling the truth
Lending an ear	Listening
Cut to the chase	Get to the point (leave out the details)
On pins and needles	Anxiously waiting for something
Hit the nail on the head	Doing or saying something exactly right
Pain in the neck	Something annoying or irritating
Give someone the cold shoulder	To be unfriendly to someone
Pass the buck	Avoid responsibility, blaming someone else
Pig out	Eat an excessive amount
Take a rain check	Accept the offer at a later time
When pigs fly	Something that will never happen
Crack up	Laugh

# Common Idioms:

Idioms	Their Meanings
A taste of your own medicine	You get treated the same way you treat others
Down to the wire	Approaching the last moments of something
A toss-up	An outcome that go either way
Back to square one	Starting all over again
Pull the wool over your eyes	Try to trick or deceive you
Between a rock and a hard place	All choices are bad in a situation
Go the extra mile	Put forth more effort than necessary
Beat around the bush	Avoiding the topic or issue
Add fuel to the fire	Make a bad situation even worse
Blue moon	Something that rarely happens
Curiosity killed the cat	Curiosity can lead to danger or trouble
Go out on a limb	Taking a chance

# Common Idioms:

Idioms	Their Meanings
Hit the books	Study for something
Hit the sack	Go to bed or to sleep
Tie the knot	Get married
Hold your horses	Be patient
Got it in the bag	A sure success
Over the top	Something that is excessively done
Knows the ropes	Understands details in a situation
Keep your chin up	Try to stay happy or joyful
Head over heels	Very excited, in love
Have a chip on your shoulder	Getting angry or irritated very easily
Pull the plug	Put an end to something
Pipe down	Be quiet
Something smells fishy	Knowing something isn't right, someone is being deceitful
The whole nine yards	All of it, everything
Butterflies in my stomach	Feeling really nervous or anxious

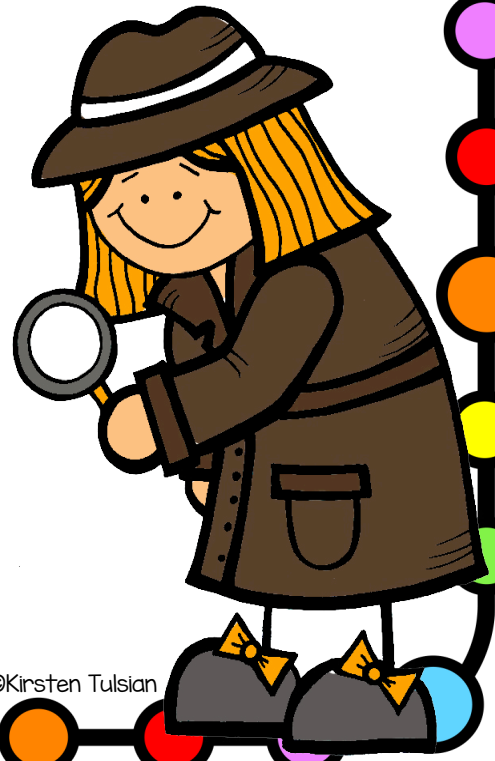
# Common Idioms:

Idioms	Their Meanings
Scapegoat	Someone who takes the blame for something
Spitting image	Looks the exact same
Kick the bucket	Die
Every cloud has a silver lining	Even in the worst situations, you can find something good
On the fence	Undecided about something
On the same page	People agree on something
Kill two birds with one stone	Get two things accomplished at the same time
Out of the blue	Something that happens unexpectedly
Cry over spilt milk	Complain about something in the past
Apple of my eye	Very cherished or loved
At the drop of a hat	Able to do something immediately
Beat a dead horse	Talking about the same thing over and over again
Burning a hole in your pocket	Spending a lot of money and/or spending it quickly



# Idioms

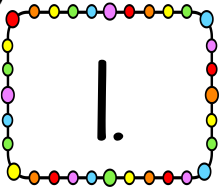
## Task Cards



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Follow the instructions  
on each task card and  
record your answers  
on the answer sheet.

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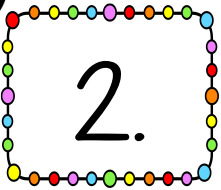
Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Remain joyful, happy

Idioms

- A. Keep your chin up
- B. Cry over spilt milk
- C. Hold your horses
- D. Add fuel to the fire

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Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Remain silent (don't talk)

Idioms

- A. Burning a hole in your pocket
- B. On the fence
- C. Bite your tongue
- D. Back to square one

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3.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Good luck

- A. Beat a dead horse
- B. Down to the wire
- C. Go the extra mile
- D. Break a leg

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4.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Something that is easy

- A. Pipe down
- B. Blue moon
- C. A piece of cake
- D. Over the top

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5.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Willing to do anything to help

- Idioms
- A. Knows the ropes
  - B. Bending over backwards
  - C. Out of the blue
  - D. Spitting image

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6.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Facing a tough situation

- Idioms
- A. The whole nine yards
  - B. Hit the sack
  - C. Tie the knot
  - D. In a pickle

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7.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Accept the offer at a later time

Idioms

- A. Take a rain check
- B. Pain in the neck
- C. Hit the nail on the head
- D. Have a chip on your shoulder

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8.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Feeling sick

Idioms

- A. In the bag
- B. Under the weather
- C. Cut to the chase
- D. Go out on a limb

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9.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

**Able to do something immediately**

Idioms

- A. When pigs fly
- B. Curiosity killed the cat
- C. A toss up
- D. At the drop of a hat

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10.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

**Very cherished or loved**

Idioms

- A. Scapegoat
- B. On the same page
- C. Apple of my eye
- D. Pass the buck

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11.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Listen carefully

Idioms

- A. Pull the plug
- B. Crack up
- C. All ears
- D. Have a chip on your shoulder

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12.

Match the definition with the correct idiom.

## Anxiously waiting for something

Idioms

- A. On pins and needles
- B. Something smells fishy
- C. Beat around the bush
- D. A breath of fresh air

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13.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

**Idiom: Let the cat out of the bag**

- Idioms
- A. Try to trick or deceive
  - B. Share a secret
  - C. All choices are bad in a situation
  - D. Very excited, in love

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14.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

**Idiom: Hit the books**

- Idioms
- A. Telling the truth
  - B. Finish something to the very end
  - C. Curiosity can lead to danger
  - D. Study for something

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15.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

**Idiom: Kill two birds with one stone**

Idioms

- A. To be unfriendly with someone
- B. To irritate or bother someone
- C. Accomplish more than one thing at a time
- D. Something expensive

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16.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

**Idiom: Lending an ear**

Idioms

- A. Listening
- B. Tricking someone
- C. A thing that is easy to get
- D. To eat an excessive amount

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17.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: A breath of fresh air

- Idioms
- A. To get to the point
  - B. To understand details in a situation
  - C. Patience
  - D. A relief, something enjoyable

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18.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: Hold your horses

- Idioms
- A. Make a bad situation even worse
  - B. Be patient
  - C. A rare happening
  - D. Get married

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19.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: Pig out

- A. Eat an excessive amount
- B. Look exactly the same
- C. Share a secret
- D. An outcome that can go either way

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20.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: Driving someone up a wall

- A. Curiosity leading to danger
- B. Taking a chance
- C. To irritate or bother someone
- D. Sharing a secret

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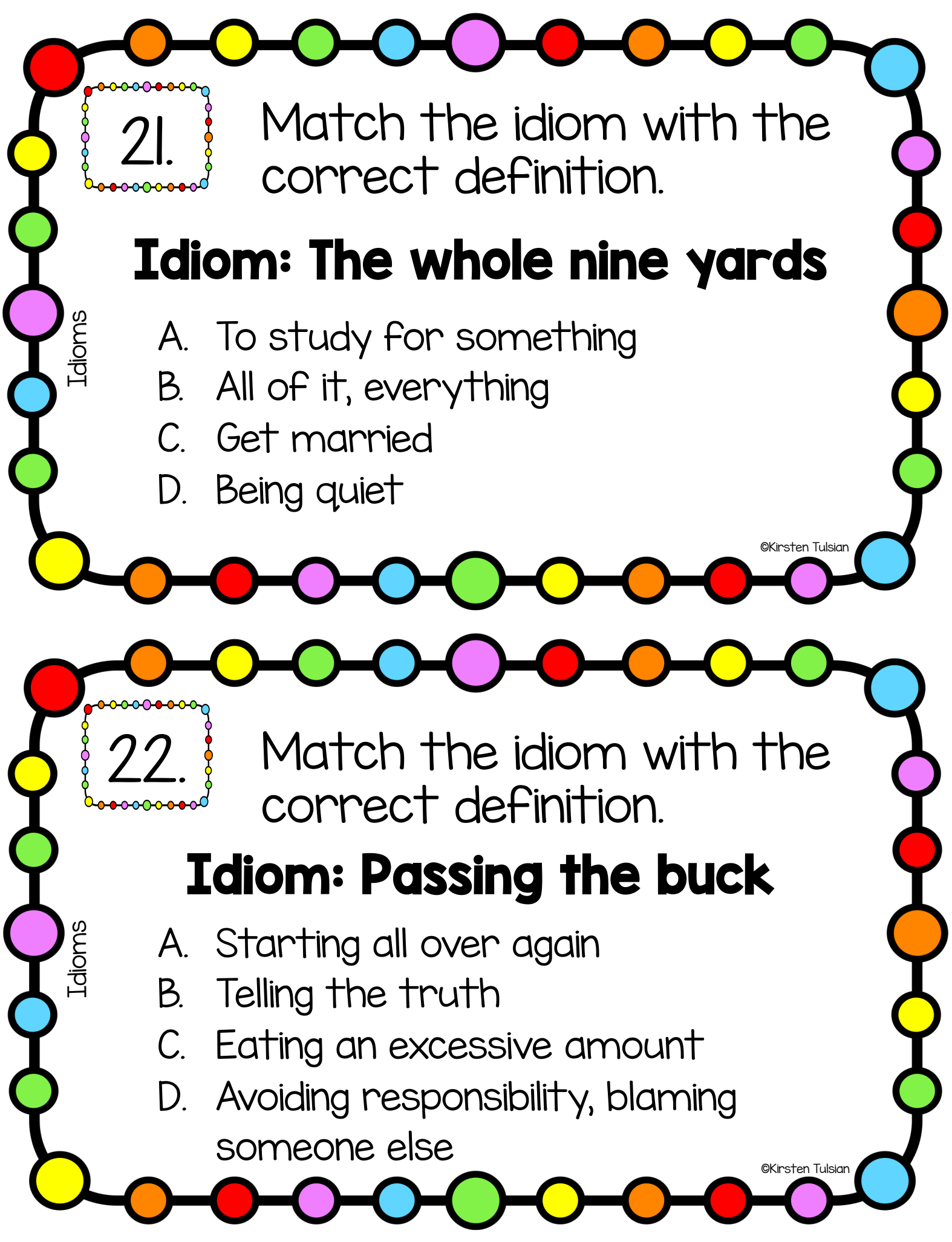
21.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: The whole nine yards

- Idioms
- A. To study for something
  - B. All of it, everything
  - C. Get married
  - D. Being quiet

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22.

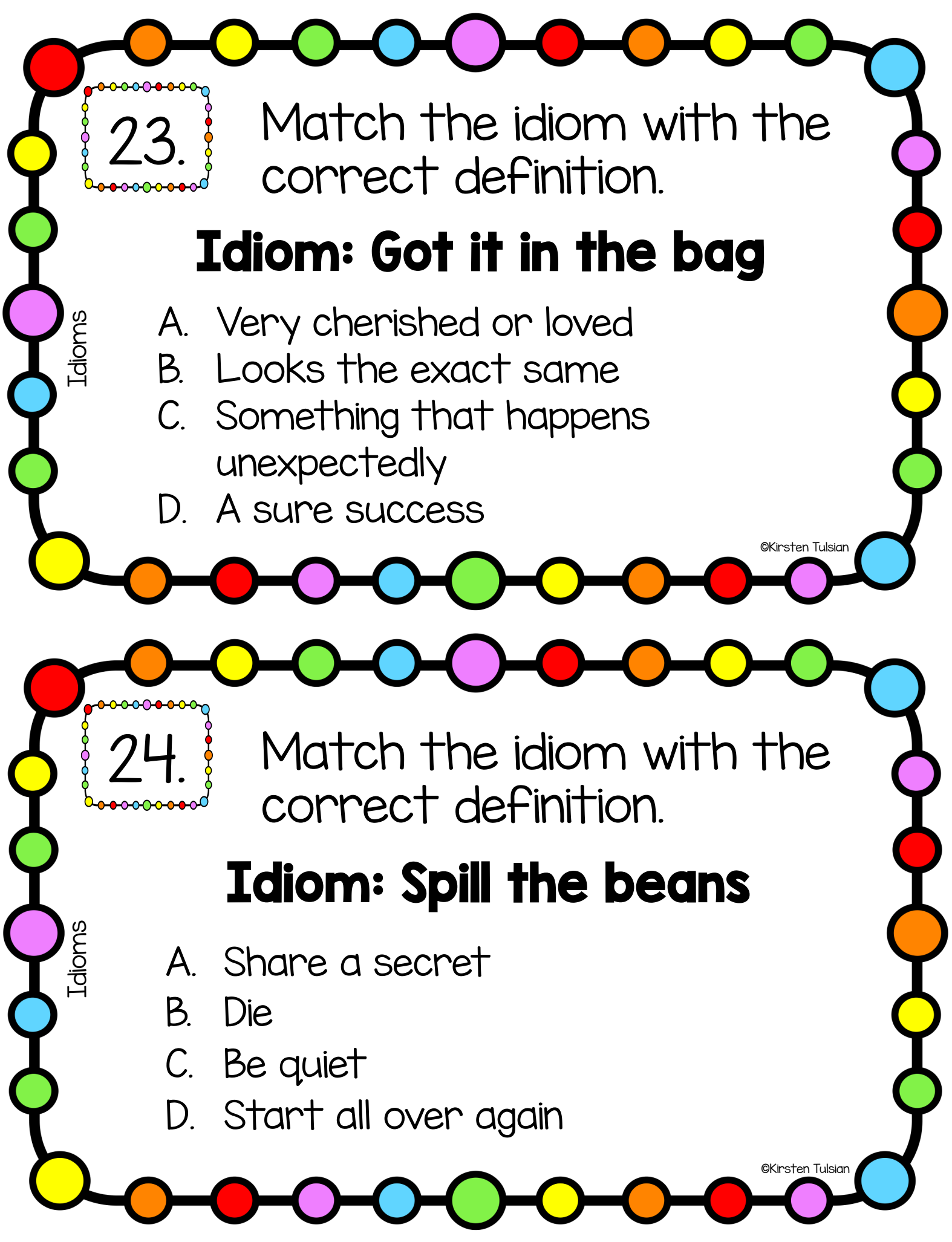
Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: Passing the buck

- Idioms
- A. Starting all over again
  - B. Telling the truth
  - C. Eating an excessive amount
  - D. Avoiding responsibility, blaming someone else

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23.

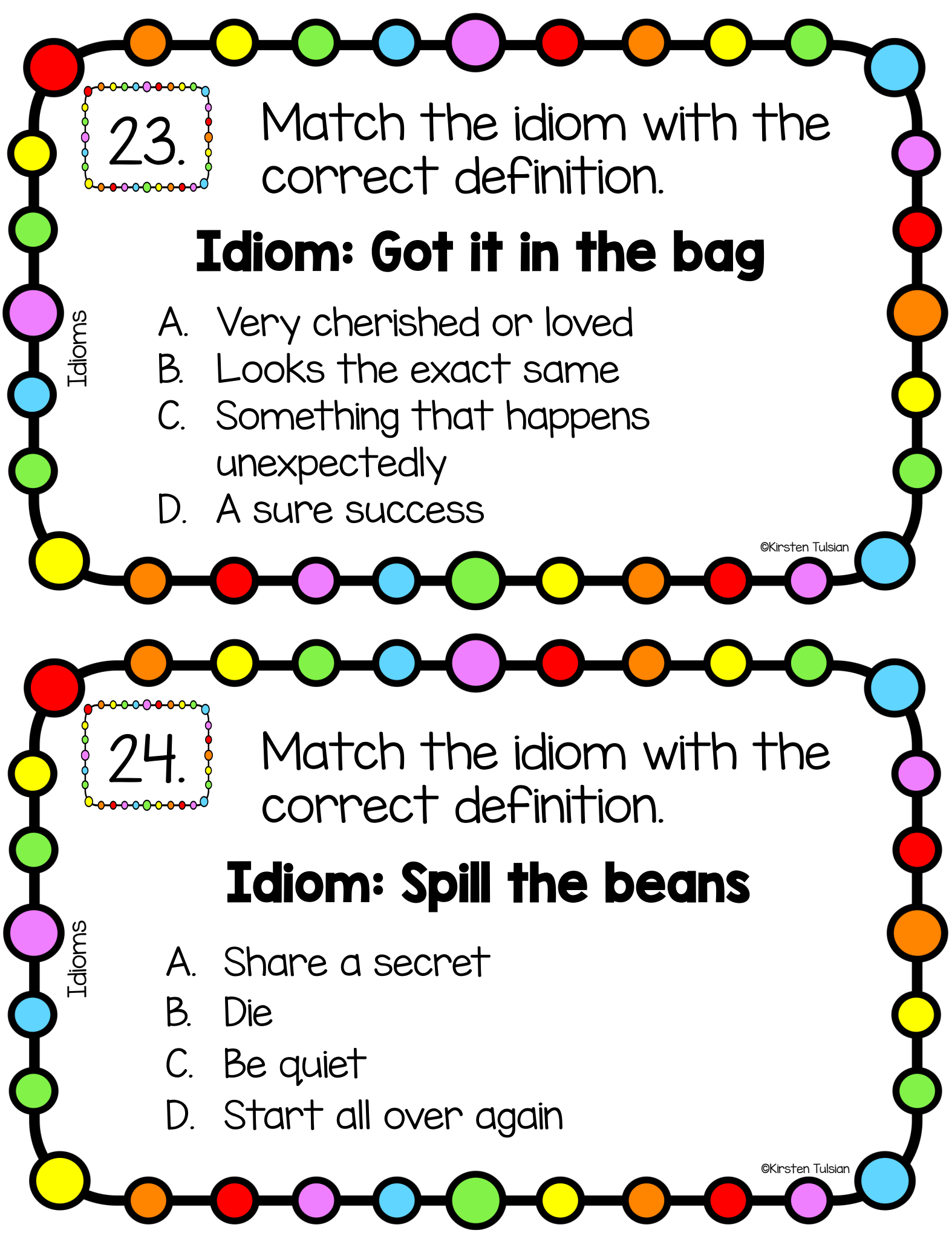
Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: Got it in the bag

Idioms

- A. Very cherished or loved
- B. Looks the exact same
- C. Something that happens unexpectedly
- D. A sure success

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24.

Match the idiom with the correct definition.

## Idiom: Spill the beans

Idioms

- A. Share a secret
- B. Die
- C. Be quiet
- D. Start all over again

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25.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**Stop pulling my \_\_\_\_\_!**

**(Stop tricking me!)**

Idioms

- A. hair
- B. leg
- C. toes
- D. nose

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26.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**Don't \_\_\_\_\_ around the bush!**

**(Stop avoiding the topic or issue!)**

Idioms

- A. creep
- B. beat
- C. drive
- D. run

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27.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**Those are a \_\_\_\_\_ a dozen!**

(Those are so easy to come by!)

- A. shirt
- B. ball
- C. banana
- D. dime

Idioms

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28.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**You hit the \_\_\_\_\_ on the head!**

(You are exactly right!)

- A. nail
- B. dog
- C. class
- D. board

Idioms

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29.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**Why are you giving me the \_\_\_\_\_ shoulder?**

**(Why are you being so unfriendly?)**

- A. hot
- B. pointy
- C. cold
- D. red

Idioms

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30.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**Don't let the \_\_\_\_\_ out of the bag!**

**(Don't share the secret!)**

- A. sandwich
- B. fish
- C. video game
- D. cat

Idioms

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31.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**Every cloud has a \_\_\_\_\_ lining.**

**(You will find something good in this bad situation.)**

- A. wet
- B. silver
- C. drippy
- D. hot

Idioms

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32.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**I'm not trying to pull the \_\_\_\_\_ over your eyes!**

**(I'm not trying to trick you!)**

- A. blanket
- B. hat
- C. wool
- D. paper

Idioms

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33.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**Don't add \_\_\_\_\_ to the fire!**  
(Don't make this bad situation even worse!)

Idioms

- A. fuel
- B. paper
- C. water
- D. matches

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34.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**It's time to hit the \_\_\_\_\_!**  
(It's time for bed!)

Idioms

- A. town
- B. head
- C. homework
- D. sack

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35.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**This situation has me stuck between  
a \_\_\_\_\_ and a hard place!**

**(I have no good choices in this situation!)**

- A. house
- B. rock
- C. phone
- D. book

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36.

Complete the idiom by filling in the blank with the correct word.

**You are the \_\_\_\_\_ of my eye!**

**(I adore you so much!)**

- A. apple
- B. cake
- C. window
- D. turkey

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **IDIOMS Task Card Answer Sheet**

Answers	Answers
1. A	19.
2.	20.
3.	21.
4.	22.
5.	23.
6.	24.
7.	25. B
8.	26.
9.	27.
10.	28.
11.	29.
12.	30.
13. B	31.
14.	32.
15.	33.
16.	34.
17.	35.
18.	36.

Name: Answer Key Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **IDIOMS Task Card Answer Sheet**

Answers	Answers
1. A	19. A
2. C	20. C
3. D	21. B
4. C	22. D
5. B	23. D
6. D	24. A
7. A	25. B
8. B	26. B
9. D	27. D
10. C	28. A
11. C	29. C
12. A	30. D
13. B	31. B
14. D	32. C
15. C	33. A
16. A	34. D
17. D	35. B
18. B	36. A

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**IDIOMS:** Think about a time in your life when you have experienced these situations.

1. I hit the nail on the head when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. I got a taste of my own medicine when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. I bent over backwards for someone when I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. It was a breath of fresh air when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. I was on pins and needles when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. I was between a rock and a hard place when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
7. I tried to keep my chin up when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Draw a picture to match the literal meaning of the idiom. Don't forget to have fun!**

You are driving  
me up the wall!

I am bending over  
backwards for you!

I am feeling a bit  
under the weather.

I am in a pickle!

# ACT IT OUT!

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Teacher instructions:

1. Cut out the following idioms.
  2. Assign one idiom to every 2 or 3 students (not out loud).
  3. Students get in their groups of 2 or 3 and quietly plan a way to act out the idiom **WITHOUT USING WORDS** (if available, props can be used)..
  4. The idea is to keep each idiom a secret until they act it out.
  5. The only words the group can use are "BEGIN" and "END" to indicate they are starting and to indicate they are finished acting it out.
  6. The rest of the class **WAITS** until the performing group says "DONE" and then raises a hands if they have a guess about which idiom it could be.
- \*\* This is a great culminating activity after the students have learned the idioms. Have so much fun!

*Don't let the cat out of the bag!*

*You are driving me up the wall!*

*We are on pins and needles waiting to hear!*

*You need to hold your horses!*

*You will get a taste of your own medicine!*

*They are between a rock and a hard place.*

*This money is burning a hole in my pocket!*

*You are a pain in the neck!*

*I am head over heels for you!*

*Thank you for lending an ear.*

*Thank you for coming at the drop of a hat!*

*I am all ears!*

## Additional Products:

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**Find Me Here:**



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