

## Idioms Test 1

**Directions:** Determine the meaning of the bolded expression. Choose the best answer.

**Idiom:** A common expression understood figuratively, as the literal definition makes no sense.

1. After going to the zoo, the mall, and the movies, Cassie was sick of **bending over backwards** to entertain her nieces.

Which best express the meaning of "**bending over backwards**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Cassie was doing very little to entertain her nieces.
- b. Cassie was making small efforts to entertain her nieces.
- c. Cassie was trying very hard to entertain her nieces.
- d. Cassie was not trying at all to entertain her nieces.

### Correct Answer Choice

**c**

### Answer Explanation

When someone is "bending over backwards," they are trying very hard to please another person.

2. Bobby would have been playing ball **until the cows came home** if it hadn't been for Suzie dragging him home for dinner.

Which best express the meaning of "**until the cows come home**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Bobby was just about to stop playing ball.
- b. Bobby didn't even want to play ball to begin with.
- c. Bobby prefers nature to athletics.
- d. Bobby would have continued playing ball for a long time.

### Correct Answer Choice

**d**

### Answer Explanation

The expression "until the cows come home" means that something is likely to continue for a long time.

3. Mr. Johnson was very particular about the arrangement of his classroom, so the thing he hated most was when his students caused a ruckus with their wild **horseplay**.

Which best express the meaning of "**horseplay**" as used in the sentence?

**Answer Choices**

- a. Mr. Johnson hated when his students pretended to be animals.
- b. Mr. Johnson hated when his students played sports.
- c. Mr. Johnson hated when his students wrestled around with each other.
- d. Mr. Johnson hated when his students made animal noises.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**c**

**Answer Explanation**

"Horseplay" is when children wrestle around with one another. Generally it is referred to as such in areas where such activities might upset the environment.

4. Eric wanted to fix his cousin's computer, but he was already having problems setting up his Aunt's Wi-Fi network and he didn't want to **open a whole new can of worms**.

Which best expresses the meaning of "**open a can of worms**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Eric was sick of spending his time helping his family.
- b. Eric wanted to go fishing instead of working on computers.
- c. Eric was having difficulties untangling the computer wires.
- d. Eric was not ready to begin working on a complicated new problem.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**d**

**Answer Explanation**

To "**open a can of worms**" is to begin working on a complicated problem. This expression may refer to a fisherman opening a can of worms and having difficulties unraveling a single worm from the bunch.

5. Even though Candace already had a new job, she submitted her two week notice and conducted herself in a professional way at her old job because she didn't want to **burn bridges**.

Which best express the meaning of "**burn bridges**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Candace didn't want to ruin her positive relationship with her old employer.
- b. Candace wasn't ready to start her new job.
- c. Candace was really going to miss her old job.

d. Candace was waiting until her last day to rub it in everyone's face that she was leaving.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**d**

**Answer Explanation**

To "**burn bridges**" is to ruin a relationship. If Candace did not want to burn bridges with her old employer, she wanted to maintain a good relationship with them.

6. World renowned country western super group The Mountain Boys can sell out an arena **at the drop of a hat**.

Which best express the meaning of "**at the drop of a hat**" as used in the sentence?

- a. The Mountain Boys may be able to sell out an arena, but it will take a long time.
- b. The Mountain Boys can sell out an arena very quickly.
- c. The Mountain Boys are always willing to perform at charity events.
- d. The Mountain Boys enforce a dress code at all of their shows.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**b**

**Answer Explanation**

"**At the drop of a hat**" means that something is likely to occur very quickly. This expression may have come from street performers, who were likely to perform amazing feats at the drop of a hat.

7. Vivian expected Craig to sob uncontrollably when she broke up with him; however, Craig **kept a stiff upper lip**.

Which best express the meaning of "**keeping a stiff upper lip**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Craig cried even more than Vivian had expected.
- b. Craig cried about as much as Vivian had expected.
- c. Craig cried a little less than Vivian had expected.
- d. Craig did not cry.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**d**

**Answer Explanation**

"**Keeping a stiff upper lip**" means that a person does not cry despite facing emotional turmoil. This expression probably refers to how when one cries, his or her upper lip tends to curl.

8. Mrs. Robinson expects Cassie and my presentation to be good, but we have been working on it every night for the last week, so we are really going to **knock her socks off**.

Which best express the meaning of "**knocking one's socks off**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Cassie and the speaker are not prepared to give a good presentation.
- b. Cassie and the speaker intend on hitting Mrs. Robinson rather than presenting.
- c. Cassie and the speaker's presentation will far exceed Mrs. Robinson's expectations.
- d. Cassie and the speaker's presentation will meet Mrs. Robison's expectations.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**d**

**Answer Explanation**

To "**knock someone's socks off**" is to impress them greatly with your efforts.

9. Over the summer Brian was really excited about being placed in the advanced math class, but after getting his syllabus on the first day and seeing the workload, he was ready to **jump ship**.

Which best express the meaning of "**jump ship**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Brian was even more excited about the math class than he was over the summer.
- b. Brian wanted to start working on his math assignments right away.
- c. Brian did not want to be in the advance math class anymore.
- d. Brian wanted to cause some trouble in the advanced math class.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**c**

**Answer Explanation**

To "**jump ship**" is to escape a commitment in which you are already engaged.

10. Jose had a hard time comparing the iPhone to the Samsung phone because to him they were **apples and oranges**.

Which best express the meaning of "**apples and oranges**" as used in the sentence?

### Answer Choices

- a. Jose can hardly tell the difference between the two phones because they are so similar.
- b. Jose believes that the phones are so different from one another that they cannot be compared.
- c. Jose doesn't know anything about phones so he may as well be thinking about fruits.
- d. Jose is too hungry to think about phones at this time.

### Correct Answer Choice

**b**

### Answer Explanation

Jose believes that the phones are so different that they cannot be compared. The expression "**apples and oranges**" is applied when two things are so uniquely different from one another that comparisons either don't apply or are unfair.

11. When Brian felt pretty good about getting the a pair of roller-skates for his birthday, until he saw his twin brother Ryan open up his GameBox X-9000, and then Brian felt like he **got the short end of the stick**.

Which best express the meaning of "**short end of the stick**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Brian felt like Ryan received a better gift than he.
- b. Brian was quite pleased with his roller skates.
- c. Brian wanted a long stick that he could use to support himself on hikes.
- d. Brian feels bad for Ryan because Ryan wanted roller-skates.

### Correct Answer Choice

**a**

### Answer Explanation

The expression "**short end of the stick**" is used when someone feels like they got the worse part of a deal or situation.

12. After Ms. Smith caught Darnisha chewing gum for the third time, Ms. Smith scheduled a parent teacher conference with Darnisha's mother. When Darnisha's mother came into Ms. Smith's classroom to discuss her daughter's behavior, Darnisha's mother was chewing gum. Ms. Smith thought to herself, "**the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.**"

Which best express the meaning of "**the apple doesn't fall far from the tree**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Ms. Smith thinks that Darnisha dresses like her mother.
- b. Ms. Smith thinks that Darnisha acts a lot like her mother.
- c. Ms. Smith is surprised to see that Darnisha's mother came.
- d. Ms. Smith thinks that Darnisha's mother lives very close to the school.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**b**

**Answer Explanation**

The expression "**the apple doesn't fall far from the tree**" is used when a person believes that a child acts in a way that is similar to their parent.

13. Brad was accusing us of stealing his phone until he found it in his backpack, and now he's trying to **sweep it under the rug**.

Which best express the meaning of "**sweep it under the rug**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Brad thinks that his phone will be safer if he hides it under the rug.
- b. Brad wants to do something to make up for his mistake.
- c. Brad is trying to locate a signal for his phone so that he can use it.
- d. Brad wants to pretend that the incident never happened.

**Correct Answer Choice**

**d**

**Answer Explanation**

Brad wants to pretend that the incident never happened. The expression "**sweep it under the rug**" is used when a person is trying to quickly move past a mistake without taking the time to correct it properly. .

14. Keisha got up a started yelling at Ronnie and threatening him but Ronnie didn't even flinch because he knew that her **bark was worse than her bite**.

Which best express the meaning of "**bark is worse than her bite**" as used in the sentence?

- a. Ronnie thinks that Keisha will get in trouble for yelling.
- b. Ronnie thinks that Keisha has bad breath.
- c. Ronnie thinks that Keisha is loud but not dangerous.
- d. Ronnie thinks that Keisha has a crush on him.

### Correct Answer Choice

c

### Answer Explanation

Ronnie thinks that Keisha is loud but not dangerous. When somebody says that "**one's bark is worse than one's bite**" they mean that the person makes a lot of noise but it is not a physical threat.

15. You might think that Billy Parker is the kid who has everything, but if you saw the list of chores his parents give him, I guarantee that you wouldn't want to **be in his shoes**.

Which best express the meaning of "**be in his shoes**" as used in the sentence?

- a. You wouldn't want your shoes to get as dirty as Billy's when he's doing his chores.
- b. If you have to do as many chores as Billy, you'll want a pair of comfortable shoes.
- c. Billy shoes are so uncomfortable that doing his chores is really unpleasant.
- d. Billy has so many chores to do that it is unpleasant to imagine doing them all.

### Correct Answer Choice

d

### Answer Explanation

Billy has so many chores to do that it would be unpleasant to be him. The expression "**to be in one's shoes**" means to imagine what another person is going through.