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SL24. Introduction to Idioms

Student Name: _____ Student ID Number: _____

Instructor: _____ Level: _____ Date: _____

For media links in this activity, visit [the LLC ESL Tutoring website for Upper Level SDLAs](#). Find your SDLA number to see all the resources to finish your SDLA.

Section 1: Introduction

If you listen closely to native English speakers, you'll often hear them say things like, "That test was a piece of cake" or "I passed that test with flying colors." Now think about it. How can a test be a piece of cake? Can you eat it? Does it taste like cake? And what about colors? Can colors fly? The truth is, expressions like "a piece of cake" and "to pass with flying colors" are idioms. Idioms are words, phrases or expressions which are commonly used in everyday conversation by native speakers of English. They often make the language more colorful, and they often don't mean what the speaker is actually saying. For example, calling something a piece of cake means it is easy. To say that you passed something with flying colors means that you succeeded at something easily. Look at the images below. These images are visuals of idioms. Try to **guess** the idiom just by looking at the picture. You have several options below. Two options are NOT American idioms. Write your answer in the blue box.



1. _____

- a. He has ice shoes.
- b. He has cold feet.
- c. He has block feet.

2. _____

- a. He is a tough cookie.
- b. He is chocolate boxer.
- c. He is a mad cookie.

3. _____

- a. He's a flying cloud.
- b. He's taking a cloud bath.
- c. His head is in the clouds.



Section 2: Idiom Selection

Visit the [Section 2 website](#) to help you learn more about the most commonly used idioms. This [website](#) has the 50 most popular English idioms that native English speakers use. Look through the list of idioms. Find **4 more** idioms that interest you to complete the table below by:

- 1.) Writing the entire idiom
- 2.) Writing the meaning of the idiom
- 3.) Writing an example sentence (some are provided on the website)

The first one has been done for you as an example.

Idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
1) <i>Go the extra mile</i>	to make a special effort/try very hard to achieve your goal	If you want to become proficient in English, you'll <i>have to go the extra mile</i> .
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		



Section 3: Example Conversation

Read the example conversation below. In the conversation, many idioms are used. Find the idioms and copy them in the box below. You will discuss the meaning of these idioms with a tutor.

Going the Extra Mile

James: Hey Susan! How are you?

Susan: Hi James. I'm a little down in the dumps today. How are you?

James: I'm on cloud nine, but I'm sorry to hear that you're sad. What happened?

Susan: Well, I studied all night for my English test, and I really dropped the ball. I thought I would pass with flying colors, but I didn't.

James: I'm sorry to hear that. I was in your shoes a month ago. I really needed to hit the books, and get some help to improve my English. I decided to go the extra mile. I joined the Give Me 20 Reading program and started going to ESL tutoring at the LLC. I've really noticed a lot of improvement in my English skills. It wasn't a bed of roses, but all the hard work has paid off.

Susan: Wow! All of your hard work and dedication really blows me away. Thanks for the advice. I'll try to go the extra mile too so that I can improve my English, too.



Section 4: Create a conversation

Use the space below to create your own conversation like the one in Section 3. You can use the idioms you found in section 2 or any other idioms you like. Your conversation can be about any topic. You must use at least **5** idioms in your conversation. Use the box below if you need more space.

A: _____

B: _____



Section 5: Student Self-Assessment

Complete this table BEFORE meeting with a tutor.

Communication Skill	I can't do this YET. 	I can do this WITH help. 	I can do this WITHOUT help. 	I can TEACH this to a classmate. 
I can use pictures to figure out idioms.				
I can find information about idioms using the internet.				
I can identify idioms in a conversation.				
I can create a conversation with idioms.				

Here are some words/phrases I need to practice.

Good job!

Now go to the [LLC Tutoring Website](#) and make an appointment with a tutor.

Visit the [Virtual LLC](#) at the time of your appointment.



Section 6: Practice with a Tutor!

Meet with a tutor, and share this activity with the tutor. You will review the idioms in sections 2 and 3. Also, you will go over the conversation you created in section 4. You may also ask the tutor any questions that you might have.

Grading Rubric

Possible Points	Need Practice  (0-1 Point)	Good Job  (2-3 Points)	Excellent Work  (4-5 Points)
Content	Not enough information provided in responses and often does not use correct vocabulary.	Provides most important information in responses and some of the time uses correct vocabulary.	Provides all necessary information in responses and most of the time uses correct vocabulary.
Skill: Speaking	More than 6 mistakes saying words; needs guessing more than 3 times.	Not more than 5 mistakes saying words; needs guessing on 1-2 words or sentences.	Not more than 2 mistakes saying words; needs no guess about meaning.
Oral Fluency	Speaks mostly in phrases, individual words; many pauses.	Sometimes speaks in complete sentences; several pauses.	Speaks in complete sentences; a couple pauses okay.

*Students must receive at least 10 points to move on

Possible Points: _____ / 15

Tutor Comments:

Congratulations! Keep going.

You have successfully completed this SDLA and are ready to continue to the next.

Work on this more.

You have not yet mastered this SDLA. It is recommended that you complete it again.

Tutor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section 1 Answers:

1. He has cold feet.

2. He is a tough cookie.

3. His head is in the clouds.