

Topic: Shakespeare's Idioms – 1

Level: B2

Time: 70 minutes

Aims

- To introduce five commonly used idioms that can be found in Shakespeare's works
- To give students practice in reading and understanding the idioms in everyday contexts
- To give students the opportunity to use the idioms in speech themselves

Introduction

This lesson teaches the following idioms, which were all used or invented by Shakespeare:

- *night owl*
- *break the ice*
- *at a snail's pace*
- *lie low*
- *send someone packing.*

It uses specially created illustrations to show the connection between the individual words (*night + owl*) and the idiom as a whole (*night owl*). The lesson will give students an opportunity to use the idioms through the creation of a short skit.

Preparation

Before class, spend several minutes looking carefully through the **PowerPoint presentation** which accompanies the lesson, as you will need to familiarise yourself with the content of each slide and the animations (the way images and new bits of text are revealed on each slide). Note: Slides 1–6 are needed for the lesson. The PowerPoint also has optional extra slides (numbered 8–17) with the 10 idioms drawings used in the lesson. Teachers may also wish to print or use these as they see fit.

Make one copy of the **student worksheets** per student.

Make one copy of the **idioms stories for Task 4** for every four students in the class, and cut these up.

Photocopy one copy of the **idioms cards** per group of four students. It will make sense to use **different coloured sheets of paper** for this in order for students to clearly differentiate the B cards from the C cards. Cut up the cards and divide them into sets A, B and C. Teachers may wish to use these in other ways than those suggested in this lesson plan, which is fine.

Procedure

Warmer – What is an idiom? (5 mins)

This task uses the first of the idioms (*a night owl*) to explain what an idiom is, and demonstrate how the two sets of pictures will be used in the lesson.

- **Show slide 2** of the PowerPoint presentation. Click once and the texts 'Warmer – What is an idiom?' and 'Meet Franz' will appear, followed by the picture of Franz. Once the picture of Franz appears, read this text aloud to the students:
 - *Franz recently started an English course at his local college. His dream is to eventually study English at university. He also works long shifts as a kitchen assistant at a busy restaurant. He starts work at 2 p.m. and often doesn't leave until midnight. When he gets home, he finds that he's still wide awake. The kitchen is always very busy and it takes him a while to unwind. Franz has discovered that the early hours of the morning are actually a good time for him to study. He enjoys the peace and quiet and finds that he is able to concentrate more effectively. He finally goes to bed at 5 in the morning, sleeps through the rest of the morning, and wakes up to go to work in the afternoon.*
- Tell the students that they are going to choose a phrase to describe Franz. **Click** to reveal the question 'Which phrase do you think could describe Franz?' and a/b/c options. Encourage students to justify their answers, then **click** to reveal the answer.
- **Show slide 3. Click again** to show the pictures, and ask students if they can see the connection between the two. **Click again** to show the answer (the first shows the words; the second demonstrates the meaning), then **click again** to show the definition of an idiom. Discuss with students and deal with any questions.

Task 1 – the words in the idioms (10 mins)

This task provides an opportunity for the students to learn and memorise the phrases, as these need to be reproduced accurately in order for the idioms to convey meaning, e.g. *at a snail's pace*, not ~~at the speed of a snail~~. Students will be keen to find out what the idioms mean; explain that they will learn this shortly, in Task 2.

- **Show slide 4.** There are two ways to use this slide. **Either:**
 - As you **click** to reveal each picture, ask the students to describe what they see in each picture, and try to guess the idiom. **Or:**
 - As you **click** to reveal each picture, drill the idiom each shows. In order, these are:
 - *a night owl*
 - *break the ice*
 - *lie low*
 - *at a snail's pace*
 - *send someone packing*
- Note: If you wish, you can also use the full-screen images on slides 8–12, either printed or projected.

Task 2 – the meanings of the idioms (10 mins)

- a) Click to reveal the five pictures on **slide 5** (eliciting the idioms as you go) and then explain the task (matching the pictures demonstrating the form of the idioms to pictures showing their meaning.) *Night owl* is done as an example.
- Distribute one set of the B and C cut-up cards to each group of four students. The A set of cards (with the phrases on) are also provided, but are not essential for the task. You can decide for yourself whether to use these as well.
- Get the students to match up the cards. Monitor, ensuring that the students are saying the idioms in full, e.g.
 - *I think this picture is 'send someone packing', not ~~I think this goes with the postbox.~~*
- As you conduct feedback, ask students to explain what they think each idiom means.
- b) Distribute the student worksheet, and ask the students to write the idioms next to the definitions on page 2 (**Task 2b**).

Answers

1. *send someone packing*
2. *lie low*
3. *break the ice*
4. *a night owl*
5. *at a snail's pace*

Task 3 – gap fill (5 mins)

This task could be set as homework, or done in class.

Answers

1. *send someone (him) packing*
2. *lie low*
3. *at a snail's pace*
4. *a night owl*
5. *break the ice*

Task 4 – idioms in context (15 mins)

- Remind the students about Franz's story, and ask them which idiom summarised what they knew about him (*Franz is a night owl*). Tell them that they will talk about four other people's stories and choose the best idiom to go with each one.
- Divide the students into four groups, A, B, C and D.
- Distribute the **Situations for Task 4** (cut up), giving Situation A to Group A, Situation B to Group B, etc.
- Give the students a few minutes to read the story and choose the idiom that best summarises it. When conducting feedback, ensure that the students put the idiom into a full sentence.

Suggested answers to Task 4

Situation A – *Jose's girlfriend is getting ready at a snail's pace.*

Situation B – *Hana is trying to break the ice with the rest of the group.*

Situation C – *Mariella wants to lie low, so that journalists can't follow her.*

Situation D – *Zahra sends Lin packing.*

- Regroup the students, so that one A, one B, one C and one D all sit together.
- Get the students to retell their story to the others in their group, who must identify the idiom that best summarises the story, and use the idiom in a sentence.

Task 5 – discussion (10 mins)

- In groups or as a whole class, students discuss the questions.

Task 6 – using the idioms (15 mins)

- In the same small groups, get students to prepare a sketch in which they use as many of the idioms as possible.
- You could reuse (and redistribute) **Set C of the idiom cards**, and use these as prompts.

Cooler – idioms in your language

- You could use these questions to round off the lesson.