

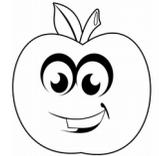
Teaching Garden Idioms

What Do they Mean?

*A lesson from the New Jersey Agricultural Society
Learning Through Gardening program*

OVERVIEW: We come from an agrarian society, so many of the idiomatic phrases we continue to use come from the garden or farm. Do your students know what an idiom is? Do they know what these garden idioms mean?

GRADES: 2-5



PROCEDURE:

Discuss with students what an idiom is. Idioms are phrases that have a meaning very different from its individual words. Unlike most sentences that have a literal meaning, idioms have a figurative meaning. A literal meaning is when each word in a sentence stays true to its actual meaning. A figurative meaning is when a combination of words mean something entirely different than the individual words do.

Explain that many idioms we still use today come from a time when most people grew their own food in gardens or on farms. This is called an agrarian society.

Tell students that today they are going to learn the meanings of some common garden idioms that people still say today.

Pair the students and give each pair one of the idioms in the table below. Tell the students they must:

- Research the meaning of the idiom.
- Draw a picture showing the literal meaning of the words in the idiom. *For example, for "let grass grow under your feet," students would draw a picture of feet with grass growing beneath them.*
- Under the picture, write the figurative meaning of the idiom or what people mean when they say it. *For example, under "let grass grow under your feet" students would write: to waste time or neglect your responsibilities.*

EVALUATION:

Students share their pictures and the meaning of their idiom with the class.

EXTENSION:

Challenge students to find other idioms we use in everyday language that have to do with the garden or agriculture.

New Jersey Learning Standards

English Language Arts: 2:RL.2.4 3:RL.3.4 4:RL.4.4 5:RL.5.4

Common Garden Idioms

Apple of my eye	Nip it in the bud	Make a mountain of a molehill
Garden variety	Salad days	Turn over a new leaf
Lead you down the garden path	Seed money	To mend fences
Life is a bowl of cherries	Go to seed	A bee in your bonnet
Let grass grow under your feet	Shake like a leaf	Make a beeline
Small potatoes	Put down roots	Dig deep
The grass is always greener	Reap what you sow	Catch more bees with honey than with vinegar
Kick the bucket	A tough row to hoe	Make hay while the sun shines

