

# Identifying Meanings



Match each figurative language expression below with its meaning. Write the letter of the meaning in the blank in front of the expression.

- |       |                                  |  |
|-------|----------------------------------|--|
| _____ | 1. all thumbs                    | a. arrange things so that you have an advantage    |
| _____ | 2. pull the wool over their eyes | b. clumsy  |
| _____ | 3. a feather in your cap         | c. a person of excellent character                 |
| _____ | 4. leave no stone unturned       | d. cowardly; not brave                             |
| _____ | 5. stack the deck                | e. losing your temper                              |
| _____ | 6. a word to the wise            | f. fool or trick someone                           |
| _____ | 7. fly off the handle            | g. try everything to get something done            |
| _____ | 8. the salt of the earth         | h. giving advice                                   |
| _____ | 9. acting yellow                 | i. accept something negative without fighting back |
| _____ | 10. take it lying down           | j. a great deed or accomplishment                  |

Choose two expressions from the list above and write a sentence using each.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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- |       |                                 |   |
|-------|---------------------------------|---|
| _____ | 1. pass the buck                | a. no evidence or law to back you up                      |
| _____ | 2. don't have a leg to stand on | b. try not to laugh                                       |
| _____ | 3. the lion's share             | c. saying the same thing over and over again              |
| _____ | 4. keep a straight face         | d. get married  |
| _____ | 5. put your foot in your mouth  | e. let someone else take the responsibility for something |
| _____ | 6. tie the knot                 | f. say something inappropriate                            |
| _____ | 7. give them the cold shoulder  | g. just in time   |
| _____ | 8. sound off                    | h. ignoring someone                                       |
| _____ | 9. under the wire               | i. the largest portion                                    |
| _____ | 10. like a broken record        | j. express your opinion or complain                       |

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| _____ 1. turn over a new leaf                    | a. when there are no apparent problems or dangers    |
| _____ 2. judging a book by its cover             | b. work hard on something                            |
| _____ 3. show someone the ropes                  | c. something annoying or bothersome                  |
| _____ 4. use some elbow grease                   | d. to fail at something                              |
| _____ 5. the cream of the crop                   | e. demonstrate how to do a job to someone            |
| _____ 6. throw the book at him                   | f. judge someone very harshly                        |
| _____ 7. the coast is clear                      | g. worrying before you need to                       |
| _____ 8. fall flat on your face                  | h. to make a fresh start                             |
| _____ 9. crossing a bridge before you come to it | i. something that is the best                        |
| _____ 10. a thorn in your side                   | j. making decisions about people based only on looks |

Choose two expressions from the list above and write a sentence using each.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Identifying Meanings

Each pair of expressions has a similar meaning. Match the letter of the correct meaning from the box to each pair.

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| a. someone who's in charge    | e. behavior that is offending or upsetting |
| b. acting without reason      | f. cause trouble                           |
| c. having a troubling problem | g. someone you shouldn't trust             |
| d. lose your temper           | h. save something                          |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. stir up a hornet's nest  
open a can of worms
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. hit the ceiling  
blow up
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. rubbed me the wrong way  
left a bad taste in my mouth
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. top banana  
high man on the totem pole
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. salt it away  
keep it for a rainy day
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. lose your head  
go off the deep end
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. a snake in the grass  
a back stabber
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. between a rock and a hard place  
in a pickle

# Identifying Meanings



Each pair of expressions has a similar meaning. Match the letter of the correct meaning from the box to each pair.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. being very upset about something                  | e. envious; jealous  |
| b. draw attention away from someone else to yourself | f. if you say you believe in something, then you should act that way |
| c. a situation where there is no hope                | g. easy, enjoyable situation   |
| d. disappoint or discourage someone                  | h. cowardly  |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. a bed of roses  
a bowl of cherries
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. rain on his parade  
burst his bubble
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. lily-livered  
yellow
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. practice what you preach  
put your money where your mouth is
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. turn green  
eat your heart out
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. down the drain  
a lost cause
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. up in arms  
beside yourself
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. upstage him  
steal his thunder

# Identifying Meanings

Each pair of expressions has a similar meaning. Match the letter of the correct meaning from the box to each pair.

- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. to discipline strictly             | e. spend a lot of money on something |
| b. act like everybody else            | f. to start something                |
| c. seize an opportunity without delay | g. understand how someone else feels |
| d. don't bother or upset someone      | h. don't be ungrateful               |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Get the ball rolling.  
Kick it off.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Put the shoe on the other foot.  
Walk a mile in her moccasins.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Pay through the nose.  
It cost an arm and a leg.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Don't rattle his cage.  
Let sleeping dogs lie.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. When in Rome, do as the Romans do.  
Get on the bandwagon.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Lower the boom.  
Crack down.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Don't bite the hand that feeds.  
Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Strike while the iron is hot.  
Don't let the grass grow under your feet.

# Explaining Meanings

Underline the expression that would make more sense in each sentence. Then explain why you made that choice.

1. Would you rather pass a test

a. by the skin of your teeth?

b. with flying colors?

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

2. If there was one slice of pizza left, would you want to

a. polish it off?

b. hit it off?

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3. If your cousins were gathering money to buy a present for your grandmother, would you

a. turn in?

b. chip in?

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you had something to celebrate, would you

a. paint the town red?

b. cook your goose?

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

5. If you had an important job that you wanted done well, would you hire a

a. crackerjack?

b. greenhorn?

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Dale has a bad attitude today. You would say he has

a. a feather in his cap.

b. a chip on his shoulder.

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Maurice doesn't know anyone at the party and he is uncomfortable dressed up in his suit.

He feels

a. like a rolling stone.

b. like a fish out of water.

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Grandpa wants to take the whole family on a trip and says he will do it

a. when his ship comes in.

b. when he gets forty winks.

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_





## Explaining Meanings

Explain why the following things would not or should not happen. You can give oral explanations, or write your thoughts on another sheet of paper.

1. Why wouldn't you get only 12 rolls if you got a baker's dozen?
2. Why wouldn't you foot the bill for something that you didn't order?
3. Why wouldn't you want to ride a horse that was on its last legs?
4. Why wouldn't you want a fair-weather friend?
5. Why wouldn't you buy white paint at a white sale?
6. Why shouldn't you go to school and act like you got up on the wrong side of the bed?
7. Why wouldn't someone driving a car want a passenger to be a backseat driver?
8. Why wouldn't a guy want his girlfriend to talk about her old flame?
9. Why shouldn't you cry wolf when you are doing something like swimming with a group of people?
10. Why wouldn't you want to sit next to a blowhard on a long bus trip?

# Associating Meanings

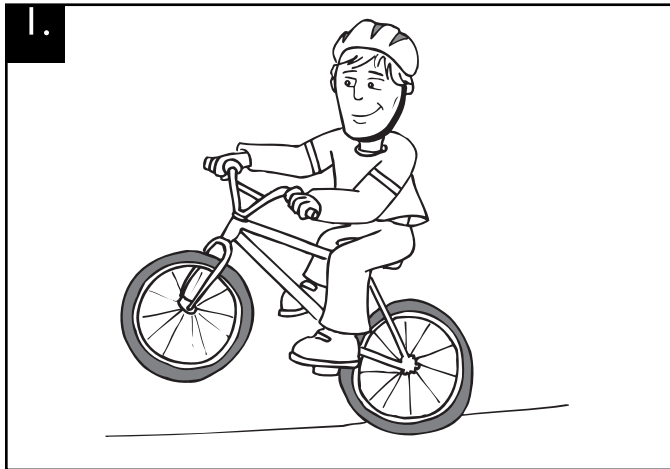
Write the expression on the blank under the picture that illustrates its meaning.

He hit the nail on the head.

He hit the hay.

He hit the books.

He hit the road.



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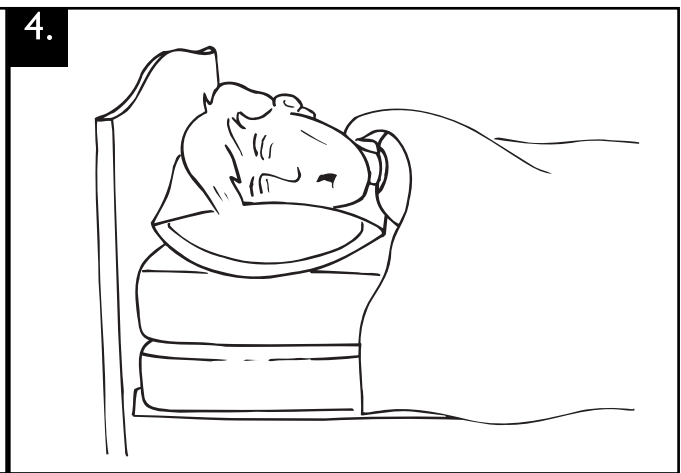
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# Associating Meanings

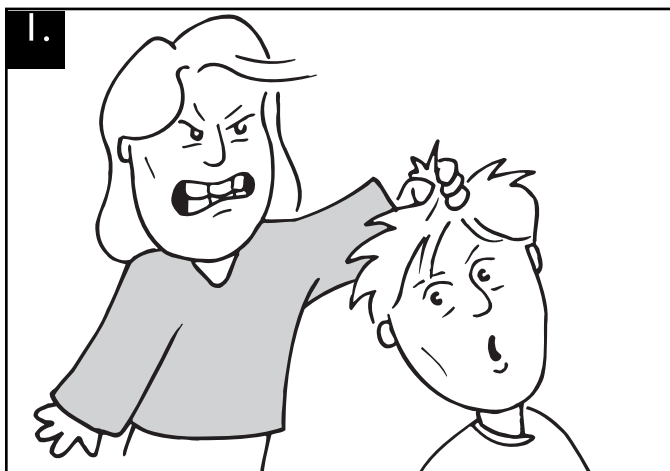
Write the expression on the blank under the picture that illustrates its meaning.

She is trying to get his goat.

She is playing possum.

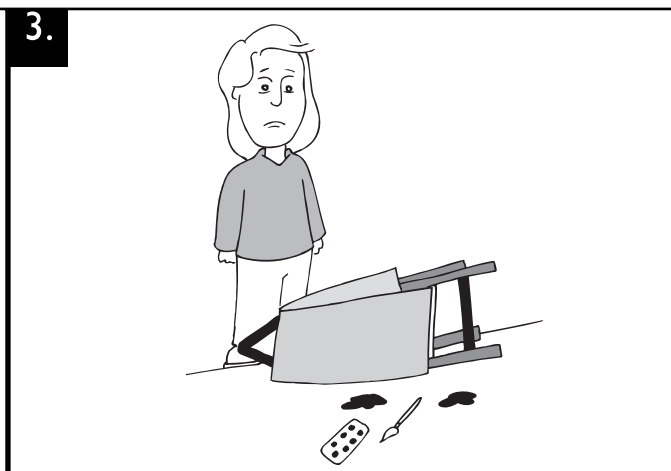
She is like a bull in a china shop.

She is going to rat on him.



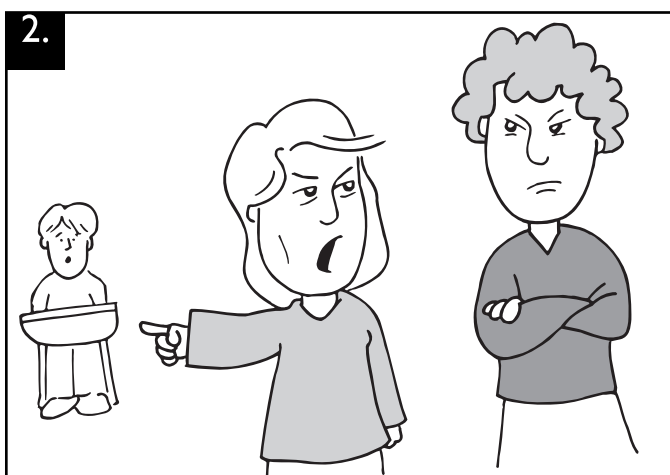
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# Associating Meanings

Write the expression on the blank under the picture that illustrates its meaning.

He is tight-fisted.

Money burns a hole in his pocket.

He's going to give her a run for her money.

He believes in salting it away.



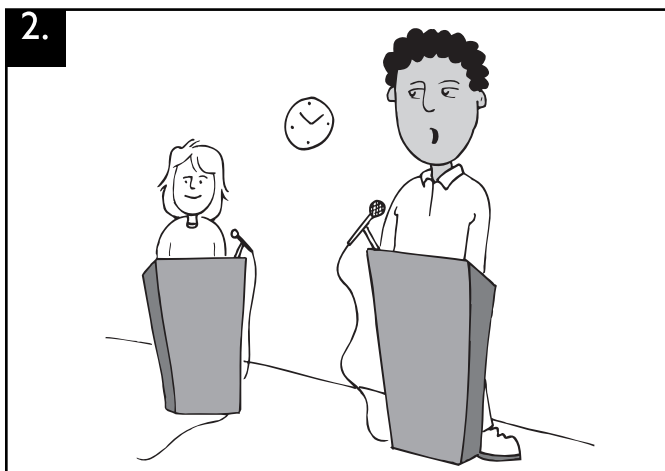
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Associating Meanings

Write a job that would be appropriate for someone who fits each description.

1. He has a green thumb. \_\_\_\_\_
2. She is a real ham. \_\_\_\_\_
3. He has a nose for news. \_\_\_\_\_
4. She has nerves of steel. \_\_\_\_\_
5. He is like greased lightning. \_\_\_\_\_
6. She is a globe-trotter. \_\_\_\_\_
7. He drives a hard bargain. \_\_\_\_\_
8. She takes people under her wing. \_\_\_\_\_
9. He is light on his feet. \_\_\_\_\_
10. She believes that "A picture is worth 1000 words." \_\_\_\_\_

## Associating Meanings

Match each figurative language expression to the situation in which it would apply.

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| a. He's running around like a house afire. | f. He's beginning with a clean slate. |
| b. He's a heel.                            | g. He's turning up his nose at it.    |
| c. He's a glutton for punishment.          | h. He's no spring chicken anymore.    |
| d. He's barking up the wrong tree.         | i. He's sticking to his guns.         |
| e. He's calling something sour grapes.     | j. He's burning the midnight oil.     |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Gary went ahead and volunteered to work at the fair again this year even though it's a hassle and he doesn't enjoy it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Even though Ben didn't do well in school last year, he knows that this is a whole new year and he intends to try hard from the start.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Kenneth has a big project due tomorrow and he's going to stay up as late as it takes to finish it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Marcus is blaming Nedra for the dent in his locker, but she isn't the one who did it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. When Les didn't win the contest, he got mad and said he didn't care because it was a stupid contest anyway.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Michael's been so busy doing errands to try to get ready for the party that he hasn't sat down all day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. That man betrayed the trust of his friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The 90-year-old man picked apples for only three hours instead of all day as he used to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Because the shirt was not the brand Jeff wanted, he refused to wear it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Wayne promised to do volunteer work this Saturday, and he is going to do it even though some of his friends are trying to talk him into going to an amusement park with them that day.

## Associating Meanings

Match each figurative language expression to the situation in which it would apply.

- |                                     |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. She was worth her salt.          | f. She went out on a limb.      |
| b. She bent over backwards.         | g. She was in the clear.        |
| c. She had a bone to pick with him. | h. She was on pins and needles. |
| d. She acted out of character.      | i. She kept him in the dark.    |
| e. She kept her fingers crossed.    | j. She pulled some strings.     |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. At the party, Brooke was singing and dancing around and talking to everybody! She's usually so quiet and shy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Tina's mother works at Jefferson Hall, and she helped us get tickets to a concert there even though it was sold out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Tracy didn't like what Alan said about her, so she decided to call him and talk to him about it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Sherry worked hard and was appreciated by her boss.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mona didn't tell her dad about her plans for the summer .
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Marcy tried every possible way to please her aunt and uncle when she stayed with them last month.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Mrs. Kumar really took a big risk loaning her cousin so much money for his business idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Yvonne was really hoping that her frog would win the frog-jumping contest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Lindsay was nervous all day as she waited to hear the r esults of the play tryouts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Some clothing disappeared from a locker right next to Seema's last Thursday. But no one blamed Seema because she was out sick fr om school all last week.

## Associating Meanings

Match each figurative language expression to the situation in which it would apply.

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| a. It's not my cup of tea.        | f. They are short-handed.                             |
| b. A stitch in time saves nine.   | g. Take it with a grain of salt.                      |
| c. All that glitters is not gold. | h. It's time to bury the hatchet.                     |
| d. Keep a stiff upper lip.        | i. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched. |
| e. Read the writing on the wall.  | j. Give him a run for his money.                      |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. This expensive new shirt has a designer label and is advertised all over . But the first time I washed it it faded, and the second time, two seams came undone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Albert is so sure that he's going to win the election for club pr esident. But Jared really wants to win, too, and he's doing all he can to get ahead in the votes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. This past week my best friend moved away, I caught a bad cold, and I lost an important report. But, through it all, I didn't cry or freak out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. My stepsister and my cousin went to the football game. But I'm not inter ested in football, so I stayed home and worked on my art pr oject.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. He was so sure he would get that new job that he went ahead and bought a car stereo and a camcorder. He didn't get the job, and now he wonders how he'll pay for those things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Derrick bragged all day about being a gr eat singer and dancer. I didn't pay much attention because I know that he boasts a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I'd better mow the grass today. If I wait until next week, it will take a lot longer because it will be so high.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Mona and Lacy had a big fight last month and have been mad at each other ever since. But today, they decided to make up and be friends again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Mrs. Sharma had heard rumors about the store where she worked going out of business. Then she read in the paper about the closing of another stor e owned by the same company in a nearby town. Mrs. Sharma decided to start looking for another job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I'll be late getting off work this afternoon. I need to stay overtime because two people didn't show up today and one went home sick, so we ar e behind getting orders out.



# Using Figurative Language



Write a sentence that uses each expression. Use another sheet of paper if you need more space.

1. pitch in \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. rip off \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. elbow room \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. on call \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. hop to it \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. break ground \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. draw a blank \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. talk turkey \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. fill me in \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. pull myself together \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Using Figurative Language



Write a sentence that uses each expression. Use another sheet of paper if you need more space.

1. goes in one ear and out the other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. that sounds fishy \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. get a taste of your own medicine \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. sit tight \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. as cool as a cucumber \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. get off my back \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. wrapped around your finger \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. makes my skin crawl \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. the last straw \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. face the music \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

