Common Idioms

Speech Corner Photo Cards for Common Idioms was designed to give speech-language pathologists a convenient way to provide therapy for individuals needing extra help with understanding typical idioms found abundantly in everyday conversations. Individuals desiring more language flexibility, people with language difficulties, and dual language speakers may need greater supports with understanding abstract or figurative language. Not accurately comprehending figurative language can place them at a disadvantage, since almost two-thirds of English includes idiomatic expressions (Arnold & Hornett, 1990). Figurative language is so prevalent that most people are unaware of the extent that metaphorical language is used in daily conversations (Boers, 2000). The inability to interpret figurative language leads to a breakdown in both oral and written communication.

This collection of 50 double-sided cards targets common idioms. One side contains idioms paired with literal photographs. On the reverse, the idiom is defined, used in context, and followed by four discussion questions providing the speech-language pathologist with ample targets to choose from during a therapy session.

Arnold, K. M., & Hornett, D. (1990). Teaching idioms to children who are deaf. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 22 (4), 14-17.

Boers, F. (2000). Metaphor awareness and vocabulary retention. *Applied Linguistics*, 21, 553-571.

Common Idioms

Contents

#	Idiom	#	Idiom
1	Bite off more than you can chew	14	The ball is in your court
2	At the drop of a hat	15	Hit the sack
3	Skating on thin ice	16	Give me a hand
4	A piece of cake	17	Back to the drawing board
5	Seeing eye to eye	18	Miss the boat
6	Don't count your chickens before they hatch	19	Turn over a new leaf
7	It's not rocket science	20	Jump in with both feet
8	Don't quit your day job	21	Speak of the devil
9	Let sleeping dogs lie	22	Break a leg
10	A taste of one's own medicine	23	Have a cow
11	A wild goose chase	24	A picture is worth a thousand words
12	Dropping like flies	25	Comparing apples and oranges
13	Make a beeline	26	Let the cat out of the bag

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27	Wouldn't hurt a flea	39	Take a catnap
28	Cross that bridge when you come to it	40	Best thing since sliced bread
29	By the skin of your teeth	41	Your guess is as good as mine
30	Show one's true colors	42	When pigs fly
31	Burst one's bubble	43	Break the ice
32	Better late than never	44	A wolf in sheep's clothing
33	Don't judge a book by its cover	45	Roll the dice
34	Cut corners	46	In the heat of the moment
35	Hang in there	47	Straight from the horse's mouth
36	Hit the nail on the head	48	Go fly a kite
37	Once in a blue moon	49	The last straw
38	Bread and butter	50	A dime a dozen

Don't count your chickens before they hatch

Don't count your chickens before they hatch

Meaning:
- do not make plans expecting something good to happen because it might not, and you will be disappointed

In context:
- Mark never practices, but he still thinks he will make the basketball team easily. His friend tells him, "*Don't count your chickens before they hatch.*"

Discussion:
1. Mark's friend reminded him to *not count his chickens before they hatch*. What was his friend telling him?
2. When you *don't count your chickens before they hatch*, are you feeling overly confident? Explain.
3. If you have four eggs, but *don't count your chickens before they hatch,* are you expecting to have four chickens? Why or why not?
4. Use the idiom *don't count your chickens before they hatch* in a sentence.

Miss the boat

Miss the boat

Meaning:
- to miss an opportunity by being too slow to act on it

In context:
- Becky wanted to run for student council, but she didn't prepare a speech in time. It is too bad she *missed the boat* because Becky would have represented our school well.

Discussion:
1. How do you think Becky feels about *missing the boat*? Why?
2. What are good strategies Becky can use to make sure not to *miss the boat* in the future? Explain.
3. Do people need oars if they *miss the boat*? Why or why not?
4. Use the idiom *miss the boat* in a sentence.