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Figurative Language

Idiom Reference Notebook

When a writer uses **figurative language**, they want to appeal to the reader's **senses, imagination** or **sense of humour**. The meaning of a figurative language phrase goes **beyond the literal meaning** of each individual word.

Song lyrics are a great place to find figurative language. Can you find the examples of **IDIOM** in this song excerpt?

Cut out around the edges of the box and glue the song into your book. Highlight each **IDIOM** you find and explain what it really means.

"Stronger"

by Kelly Clarkson (excerpt)

You think you got the best of me
Think you've had the last laugh
Bet you think that everything good is gone
Think you left me broken down
Think that I'd come running back
Baby you don't know me, cause you're dead
wrong
What doesn't kill you makes you stronger,
stronger
Just me, myself and I
What doesn't kill you makes you stronger
Stand a little taller
Doesn't mean I'm lonely when I'm alone

You heard that I was starting over with
someone new
They told you I was moving on over you



Now cut out this quick reference guide to IDIOM and glue it into your book to remind you how this type of figurative language works.

Idiom

Idioms are phrases or expressions common to a region or language. They have a particular meaning which isn't related to the individual words.

Idioms often use animals or animal characteristics. For example:

It's raining cats and dogs.

The children made a beeline for the new toys.

A little bird told me it's your birthday today!

Some idioms have meanings which can be worked out with a bit of lateral thinking! For example:

James is always rubbing Sam up the wrong way and making him cross.

[If you rub a cat's or dog's fur backwards, it often makes the animal uncomfortable or annoyed.]

I can't remember the last time we had a curry; we only have a take-away once in a blue moon.

[When there are two full moons in one month, that is called a 'blue' moon, which is quite rare.]



Answers:

The singer's ex thinks that because s/he broke up the relationship, the singer won't have any fun or happiness in their life now.

Getting slightly ill and then recovering makes your body produce antibodies (chemicals which can fight off the illness if it comes back). The singer feels they've survived this experience and so they'll be better able to deal with something similar in future.

The singer's life hasn't stopped because the relationship broke down – s/he is starting to do other things without the ex.

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The singer wants their ex to know that s/he hasn't wasted all his/her best qualities or experiences on this relationship. The ex won't get to see those things.

If something breaks down, it doesn't work any more. The singer wants his/her ex to know their body and mind are still working fine.

The idea is absolutely wrong – being dead can't be corrected!

When you stand up tall and straight, you show that you're proud of yourself.

The singer is beginning a brand new relationship.

Teacher note:

Idioms are so steeped in tradition that most of the time we don't even notice we're using them. It can be hard for children to understand that this is figurative language because the expressions can feel as if they don't need explanation.

Many idiomatic expressions are phrasal verbs (verb + preposition). Think of someone 'sticking up for' their friends, or 'drinking in' the atmosphere of a beautiful location. Challenge your class to spot these in their reading, or even where they've used an idiom in their own writing without realising!