

# Animal Idioms



## 1 Warm Up Work with a partner.

- Do you know any animal-related idioms?

## 2 Matching Work with a partner.

Match the word to the idiom. What do you think the idiom means?

rat

wolf

whale

dogs

cat

1. Bob had a ..... of a time scuba diving on holiday last year.
2. When the caller told Susan that she had won the lottery, she smelled a .....
3. This town has really gone to the ..... It used to be such a nice place to live.
4. Please don't let the ..... out of the bag. I haven't told my parents yet!
5. You shouldn't ..... down your food like that. You're going to be sick!

## 3 Check Match the meaning to the idiom. Write the number from exercise two.

1. to eat very quickly .....
2. to be suspicious .....
3. to get into a bad state .....
4. to enjoy yourself .....
5. to tell someone a secret .....

## 4 Check Rewrite these sentences using an idiom from the list above.

1. Julia was suspicious when she read the email. She knew it was too good to be true.
2. We were going to hold a surprise birthday party for Pete, but his brother told him about it.
3. Bob was so hungry that he ate his dinner in just two minutes!
4. Sophie really enjoyed her first hip-hop dance class.
5. This company has become really bad since the old CEO retired.

## 5 Discussion

- Are you in the rat race? Are you a competitive person?
- Are there any towns or cities in your country that have gone to the dogs?
- Do you ever get suspicious telephone calls or emails?
- Are you good at keeping secrets? Have you ever let the cat out of the bag?
- Does your language have many idioms using animals? Can you explain some in English?

# Animal Idioms: Teaching Notes

<b>Target Structure:</b>	Idiom Building
<b>Vocabulary:</b>	Animal-themed idioms
<b>Level:</b>	Intermediate +
<b>Time:</b>	45 minutes, depending on discussion
<b>Preparation:</b>	None

## Suggested Teaching Method

This worksheet looks at some common idioms which are connected with animals. There are a number of exercises to recycle the idioms, including discussion at the end.

- 1 The opening question introduces the topic. Students can work in pairs for this.

Elicit a few examples from the group. Don't spend too long here. There is extended discussion at the end of the lesson.
- 2 Follow the instructions. Before beginning, pre-teach vocabulary, as needed. Don't teach the meaning of the idioms. Students can work alone, and then check in pairs.
- 3 Again, students can work alone and check in pairs. Elicit the answers from the group, and give further explanations or examples where necessary.

After going through the answers, give the students one minute to read the idioms again, and memorize them.
- 4 This exercise checks your students' ability to use the idioms in sentences. Students can work in pairs, and then check with a student from a different pair. For this exercise, have students cover the previous exercises.

Go through the answers with the group. Accept any answers that make grammatical (and logical) sense.
- 5 Assign new pairs or groups of three. The pairs/groups should begin by reading through the questions, and writing in the appropriate idiom.

Check the answers with the class.

The students can then proceed with the discussion questions. When students are talking, monitor, but try not to interrupt. Make a note of errors which you think need correcting: especially ones which cover these idioms.

When the discussion comes to a close, write some of the errors you heard on the board, and elicit corrections.

**The answer key can be found on the next page.**

**Answer Key (Other answers may be possible)****2**

1. Bob had a whale of a time scuba diving on holiday last year.
2. When the caller told Susan that she had won the lottery, she smelled a rat.
3. This town has really gone to the dogs. It used to be such a nice place to live.
4. Please don't let the cat out of the bag. I haven't told my parents yet!
5. You shouldn't wolf down your food like that. You're going to be sick!

**3**

1. to eat very quickly      5
2. to be suspicious        2
3. to get into a bad state   3
4. to enjoy yourself        1
5. to tell someone a secret 4

**4**

1. Julia smelled a rat when she read the email. She knew it was too good to be true.
2. We were going to hold a surprise birthday party for Pete, but his brother let the cat out of the bag.
3. Bob was so hungry that he wolfed down his dinner in just two minutes!
4. Sophie had a whale of a time at her first hip-hop class.
5. This company has really gone to the dogs since the old CEO retired.

**How are we doing?**

We'd be pleased to hear some feedback on our worksheets. Tell us how it went in your class. You can send us feedback from [www.handoutsonline.com](http://www.handoutsonline.com).

Alternatively, you can email the editor at [editor@handoutsonline.com](mailto:editor@handoutsonline.com).

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