

Words of wisdom: idiomatic phrases

Level: Intermediate

Age: Teenagers

Time needed: 25 minutes

Lesson aim:

- To help students locate and use the definitions of idiomatic phrases through identifying keywords.

Skills: Study skills, speaking

Materials needed: Worksheet, Macmillan online dictionary

Activity 2

Discuss with your students the following steps for finding idiomatic phrases in the dictionary.

- Decide which is the keyword in the idiomatic phrase. Usually this word is a noun or a verb, but it might be an adjective or adverb.
- Look up the keyword in the Macmillan online dictionary to see if the idiom is there. listed in the phrases section. If the idiom isn't listed, try one of the other words. For example, the idiom *have your hands full* isn't listed in the phrases section of *have*—you can find it in the phrases section of *hands*.

Ask students to guess the keyword in the idiom *hit the roof/ceiling*. Then ask them to look up that keyword in the Macmillan online dictionary and find the meaning of the idiom in the phrases section.

Key:

hit the roof/ceiling—hit

Activity 3

Ask students to apply the guidelines from activity 2 in order to find the keyword and the meaning of the idiomatic phrases in the sentences in activity 3.

Check the answers with the class, and make sure that students understand what each idiomatic phrase means.

Key:

- apple of her father's eye—apple
- got cold feet—foot
- light at the end of the tunnel—light
- take the plunge—plunge
- in her good books—book
- in black and white—black-and-white

Discussion

Discuss with the class any difficulties that they have found with using an online dictionary, and ask them to make suggestions and offer tips on using the dictionary effectively and quickly.

Warmer

Ask students if they know what the idiomatic phrase *words of wisdom* means (very wise remarks or comments).

Point out the screenshots from the Macmillan online dictionary of the idiomatic phrases *let your hair down* and *shake like a leaf* and explain how the complete idiomatic phrases (idioms) are given as well as their definitions and examples.

Ask students if they know any other idioms.

Activity 1

Put students in pairs and ask them to look at the example *not give an inch* and to discuss or guess what it means, and how it can be used. They will need to use an online dictionary on their phones or a computer to check.

Then ask them to complete the remaining idioms by choosing words from the box, using the dictionary if necessary.

Go through the answers with the whole class and make sure that students understand what the idioms mean.

Key:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| a inch | b mind | c prey | d matter |
| e bearings | f spot | g wisdom | h corner |
| i chance | j mile | k pocket | |