

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Wrangle Real-World Rhetoric: Your 10th Grade Idiom Challenge

Sophomores analyze linguistic nuances and dismantle complex metaphors to interpret how cultural context shifts the meaning of contemporary and classic expressions.

1. In a political debate, a candidate claims their opponent is 'moving the goalposts.' Based on the context of logical fallacies, what is the candidate accusing their opponent of doing?

Answer: A) Changing the criteria of a process while it is still happening to prevent success.

'Moving the goalposts' is an idiom derived from sports that refers to unfairly altering the agreed-upon rules or targets of a situation to make achievement impossible for the other party.

2. The expression 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater' suggests that an individual is being overly cautious by preserving every detail of a failed project.

Answer: B) False

False. This idiom actually describes a mistake where someone discards something valuable while trying to get rid of something unwanted or useless.

3. When a CEO mentions that the company needs to 'trim the fat,' she is utilizing a corporate idiom to suggest that the organization will ____.

Answer: B) Eliminate unnecessary costs or reduce the number of staff members.

In business contexts, 'trimming the fat' is a metaphor for removing parts of a budget or workforce that are deemed non-essential or wasteful.

4. Analyze the nuance: How does 'playing devil's advocate' differ from simply 'disagreeing'?

Answer: C) It indicates the person is taking a contrary position solely for the sake of debate or testing an argument.

A 'devil's advocate' argues against an idea—even if they might agree with it—to ensure all sides of the issue are thoroughly examined for weaknesses.

5. If a diplomat says a negotiation has become a 'Pandora's box,' they are implying that the situation ____.

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Answer: D) Has triggered many unforeseen and uncontrollable problems.

Drawing from Greek mythology, this idiom refers to an action that seems small but results in many huge, complex, and negative consequences.

6. The phrase 'the elephant in the room' refers to an obvious major problem or issue that everyone is present is avoiding discussing.

Answer: A) True

True. It signifies an unavoidable fact or social tension that is ignored because it is uncomfortable to address.

7. Consider the expression 'crossing the Rubicon.' In a modern narrative, which scenario best illustrates this idiom?

Answer: B) A whistleblower leaks classified data, knowing they can never return to their job.

'Crossing the Rubicon' refers to taking an irrevocable step or making a commitment from which there is no turning back, much like Julius Caesar's historic march.

8. To describe a person as having 'feet of clay' is to suggest that despite their outward appearance of strength or greatness, they ____.

Answer: B) Have a hidden, fundamental character flaw or weakness.

This biblical idiom refers to a person who is admired but has a significant personality defect that eventually leads to their downfall.

9. Which of the following is the most accurate synonym for the idiom 'jumping the shark' in the context of a long-running television series?

Answer: C) Employing a desperate gimmick that signals a decline in quality.

'Jumping the shark' describes the moment when something that was once popular makes a misguided attempt at relevance, indicating it has passed its prime.

10. If a writer is 'beating a dead horse,' they are effectively introducing a brand new topic that has never been discussed before.

Answer: B) False

False. 'Beating a dead horse' means to waste time and effort on a topic or issue that has already been resolved or exhausted.

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