

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Sophisticated Sayings: Idiom Analysis for 9th Grade

Etymological origins, semantic shifts, and rhetorical impact. This rigorous challenge serves as an ideal bell-ringer or formative assessment for advanced ELA tracks.

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**1. In a political debate, a candidate is accused of 'red herring' tactics. What is the primary rhetorical function of this idiom in this context?**

**Answer:** B) To intentionally divert attention from the central issue with irrelevant info

A 'red herring' refers to a distraction or a false trail, originating from the practice of using strong-smelling fish to distract hounds from a scent.

**2. When a lawyer refuses to move forward with a case because they have a '\_\_\_ of interest,' they are citing a situation where their personal loyalties divide their professional integrity.**

**Answer:** C) conflict

A 'conflict of interest' is a common legal and professional expression describing a situation where a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity.

**3. The expression 'the die is cast' implies that a decision has been made and the results are now irrevocable (unchangeable).**

**Answer:** A) True

Attributed to Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon, 'the die is cast' refers to a point of no return where a gamble has been initiated.

**4. Which of the following scenarios best exemplifies the idiom 'tilting at windmills'?**

**Answer:** B) An activist wasting energy fighting an imaginary or non-existent enemy

Derived from Cervantes' 'Don Quixote,' this expression describes attacking imaginary enemies or fighting futile, idealistic battles.

**5. An author who relies on '\_\_\_ machina' uses an improbable plot device to resolve a seemingly hopeless situation at the end of a story.**

**Answer:** A) deus ex

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

'Deus ex machina' (God from the machine) is a Latin expression used in literary analysis to describe an artificial or contrived solution to a conflict.

**6. To describe someone as a 'Luddite' is an idiomatic way to suggest they are highly skilled and enthusiastic about the latest technological advancements.**

**Answer:** B) False

A 'Luddite' refers to someone who is opposed to new technology or ways of working, named after 19th-century English textile workers who destroyed machinery.

**7. What is the implied meaning when a journalist refers to a specific policy as a 'Third Rail' of politics?**

**Answer:** C) It is a topic so controversial that touching it will 'electrocute' or ruin a career

In transit systems, the third rail provides high-voltage power; idiomatic use refers to a political issue that is so radioactive or sensitive it should be avoided.

**8. To provide a '\_\_\_ account' of an event means to report it with strict objectivity and without emotional bias.**

**Answer:** D) dispassionate

'Dispassionate' is an expression used in academic and legal writing to signify an absence of passion or bias, ensuring neutral analysis.

**9. If a CEO is accused of 'window dressing' the company's financial reports, what are they being accused of doing?**

**Answer:** B) Making business performance appear better than it actually is

Window dressing involves manipulating or presenting data in a way that creates a favorable but misleading impression.

**10. The expression 'Pandora's box' is used to describe a process that, once started, generates many complicated and unforeseen problems.**

**Answer:** A) True

Originating from Greek mythology, this idiom suggests that a seemingly small action can unleash a multitude of unstoppable negative consequences.