

Name: _____ Date: _____

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.

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?

- A. To introduce a secondary, valid argument for comparison
- B. To intentionally divert attention from the central issue with irrelevant info
- C. To provide a smelly or distasteful anecdote to discredit an opponent
- D. To signal that the candidate is unprepared for the question

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.

- A. clash
- B. vacuum
- C. conflict
- D. breach

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

- A. True
- B. False

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

- A. A student studying late to ensure they get an A+
- B. An activist wasting energy fighting an imaginary or non-existent enemy
- C. A farmer updating their equipment to be more eco-friendly
- D. A politician successfully passing a difficult piece of legislation

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

- A. deus ex
- B. spiritus
- C. vox
- D. persona

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

- A. True
- B. False

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

- A. It is the most efficient path to success
- B. It is a hidden or secondary option for voters
- C. It is a topic so controversial that touching it will 'electrocute' or ruin a career
- D. It is the foundation of a robust infrastructure plan

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

- A. cold-blooded
- B. matter-of-fact
- C. whitewashed
- D. dispassionate

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

- A. Improving the interior design of the corporate headquarters
- B. Making business performance appear better than it actually is
- C. Being transparent about all financial failures
- D. Opening more retail locations to attract customers

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

- A. True
- B. False