

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

## Answer Key: Diplomatic Idioms and Deceptive Riddles for College Labs

Can you decode the subtext of a peace treaty? Analyze 10 complex linguistic constructs involving socio-political idioms and executive communication.

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**1. In the context of 19th-century realpolitik, when a diplomat is said to be 'buying a pig in a poke,' what is the primary analytical critique of their strategy?**

**Answer:** B) They are accepting an agreement without verifying the underlying assets or conditions.

To buy a 'pig in a poke' refers to purchasing something sight unseen. In a high-level analytical context, it identifies a failure in due diligence during negotiations.

**2. The expression 'to throw a sop to Cerberus' implies providing a meaningful, long-term solution to a crisis rather than a mere temporary concession.**

**Answer:** B) False

Derived from Virgil's Aeneid, giving a 'sop to Cerberus' means providing a bribe or a minor concession to distract a troublesome person or entity temporarily; it is not a long-term solution.

**3. When a corporate board decides to \_\_\_\_\_ a project, they are using a term derived from the English Longbowmen to signify the complete abandonment or 'releasing' of an initiative.**

**Answer:** D) Let fly

To 'let fly' or 'loose' originates from archery; in executive parlance, it refers to the sudden release or aggressive commencement/abandonment of a protocol.

**4. Evaluate the nuance of the expression 'damning with faint praise.' In a peer-review setting, this most likely suggests:**

**Answer:** C) The reviewer's mild approval actually serves to emphasize a lack of true excellence.

This idiom, famously used by Alexander Pope, describes a scenario where an unenthusiastic or mediocre compliment actually highlights the worthlessness of the subject.

**5. In macroeconomic discourse, the term 'Dutch Disease' is an idiomatic expression used to describe the positive economic boom resulting from the discovery of natural resources.**

**Answer:** B) False

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While it starts with a resource discovery, 'Dutch Disease' is a critical term for the negative consequences that follow, such as the decline in manufacturing due to currency appreciation.

**6. If a legal scholar argues that a precedent is a '\_\_\_\_\_', they are suggesting it is a deceptive or misleading distraction, originating from the practice of using cured fish to distract hunting dogs.**

**Answer:** A) Red Herring

A 'Red Herring' is a logical fallacy or literary device used to lead readers or debaters away from the relevant issue.

**7. Which idiom best describes a 'Pyrrhic victory' in the context of corporate litigation?**

**Answer:** B) A legal victory where the court costs and reputation damage outweigh the settlement won.

A Pyrrhic victory is one that inflicts such a devastating toll on the victor that it is tantamount to defeat.

**8. A politician who is accused of '\_\_\_\_\_' is being criticized for tailoring their message to the specific biases of a small, vocal subgroup rather than the general electorate.**

**Answer:** C) Dog whistling

'Dog whistling' involves using coded language that appears normal to the general public but has a specific resonance for a targeted subgroup.

**9. The expression 'to cross the Rubicon' refers to a point of no return where a decision has irrevocable consequences.**

**Answer:** A) True

Originating from Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon river in 49 BC, it signifies committing to a course of action from which there is no possibility of retreat.

**10. Analyze the sociological implication of the phrase 'the glass cliff.' This idiom describes a phenomenon where:**

**Answer:** B) Minority groups are promoted to leadership roles during periods of crisis when the risk of failure is highest.

The 'glass cliff' is a relative of the 'glass ceiling,' specifically referring to the tendency to appoint women or marginalized individuals to leadership positions when an organization is struggling, increasing their chance of failure.