

# GOOD YEAR BOOKS

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Making Sense of  
Everyday Idioms  
Horsing Around

BY KATHERINE SCRAPER



GOOD YEAR BOOKS

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# Introduction

Idioms use words in a special way. We come to understand idioms best by reading or hearing them in contexts where they make sense. In *Horsing Around*, students have the opportunity to discover the intended meanings of 50 common idioms by seeing them used in many different and engaging contexts.

Knowledge of idioms is important for:

- ◆ oral language development
- ◆ reading comprehension
- ◆ creative writing
- ◆ practice for English Language Learners

Each reproducible sheet focuses on one idiom. That idiom is interpreted literally by a humorous illustration. After enjoying the illustration, students read a passage that contains the idiom and use the context of the passage to decipher the phrase. Then, on the lines below the passage, they explain what they think the idiom “really means.”

Extend the basic activities by giving students the following challenges:

- ◆ Role-play the scenarios.
- ◆ On the reproducible cartoon frames, draw pictures and use speech balloons to demonstrate an understanding of an idiom’s actual meaning.
- ◆ On the reproducible Story Sheet, use an idiom in a new written passage.
- ◆ Consult etymology books listed in the bibliography to research the origins of the expressions.

While your students are *horsing around*, you’ll all be *shedding some light* on the English language. Enjoy!

# “Quit horsing around!”

“Please set the table while I finish making supper,” Mr. Chung instructed Lin and Sam. Sam spread a tablecloth on the small dining table and got the knives, forks, spoons, and napkins. “You get the plates and glasses,” he told Lin.

“Okay!” Lin replied as she skipped to the cupboard. She opened the door and reached for the dinnerware. Grinning, Lin balanced the plates on her head, and then began juggling the drinking glasses.

“Quit horsing around!” yelled Sam. “You’ll break something!”



◆ Sam really meant that \_\_\_\_\_

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# “It’ll knock your socks off!”

Aunt Harriet was making chili. “I like it spicy. I’ll add extra chili powder,” she decided. Then she went out to the library.

Gloria came home. “M-m-m, chili!” she sighed. “I like it spicy. I’ll add extra chili powder.” Then she went into her room to start on her homework.

Allen came home. “Yum! Chili!” he said. Then he tasted a spoonful. His eyes widened, and he ran to the sink for a glass of water.

Just then there was a knock on the door. It was Allen’s friend Donald. “Hey, Donald, do you want to stay for supper?” asked Allen. “We’re having chili. It’ll knock your socks off!”



Allen really meant that \_\_\_\_\_

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