

Animal Idiom Lesson Plan
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This is a lesson I taught while I served in the Peace Corps in Ukraine that was extremely popular and effective, which presents a handful of common English animal idioms, also gives us a chance to practice the use of similes and comparisons by using “as [adj] as” I.e. “as healthy as a horse” or “as sick as a dog.” Just follow the instructions below and use the attached materials for this lesson or as a base for any lesson focused on the apprehension of new idiom vocabulary. Provided below are activities than can be used for a normal 45-50 min. class along with a number of supplementary materials that can be added to extend the lesson to a longer lesson or for a second lesson.

Objectives:

- To enlarge students’ vocabulary on American Idioms;
- To practice dialogues with new idioms and initiative speaking;
- To be able to use “as” in in comparison sentences;
- To use new idioms in new sentences.

Materials: Vocabulary jig-saw slips of paper, crossword, wordsearch, dialogue, slips of paper with slang to replace on dialogue, a monolingual dictionary

Procedures.

1. Warming up:

To start the lesson the teacher does a quick introduction with students to warm up the English speaking part of their brains. Asking students how they are, talking about the news, and the weather, are east topics that are common and necessary in their everyday lives.

2. Presentation of the topic:

The teacher will start with the definition of an idiom and explain the meaning of simile and metaphor using a few examples. A good way to increase class participation at this point to have a few students see if they can create similes or metaphors. “beautiful like a flower” or “as beautiful as a flower.”

The teacher will pass out sets of idioms and their definitions, which the students are to match without prior knowledge of the meaning. They are able to do this by using the vocabulary and definitions like puzzle pieces. Each sheet of paper with an idiom will match the exact shape to fit into its corresponding definition. This can be easily done by writing the idiom on one side of a scrap of paper, and the definition on the other, then cutting a distinct pattern between them. The students will get out of their seats with their vocabulary copybooks, find their match and sit with their new partner. This allows the students to stretch their legs a bit as well as working with a student who they normally do

not have much contact with. This is also an opportunity for teachers to match weaker students with the stronger, creating a communal learning environment, and peer teaching.

3. After each pair is found and seated the teacher will call up group by group to help explain their idiom in the order they are written on the board with a space next to it for a written explanation. One student will come up to the front of the class and read the idiom and their partner will read the definition.

as sick as a dog	>	very ill, not feeling well, under the weather
as busy as a bee	>	lots of work to do, very occupied, moving fast from task to task
as slow as a snail	>	not fast, moving at a low speed
as healthy as a horse	>	not sick at all, feeling 100%, having lots of energy
as strong as an ox	>	physically powerful, showing great strength
as proud as a peacock	>	a feeling of happiness or honor and pride for yourself
as poor as a church mouse	>	having little or no money or support
as happy as a lark	>	being glad, pleased, or in a good mood
as happy as a clam	>	being glad, pleased, or in a good mood
as free as a bird	>	able to do whatever you want, without obligations or work

The teacher asks students try to make up sentences with the idioms such as “Las week I got the flu and I was as sick as a dog.” In this development we move from the idiom alone to its use in a sentence. Once all of the questions about situational use and meaning are clear, idioms have been copied, and sentences have been created, the teacher will present a dialogue using all of the idioms.

4. The students will model the dialogue as it is read in literal English language. This is to say, first, without the slang so as to understand the context of the dialogue. Next the teacher hands out different slips of paper with the slang words written on them so the students can replace the literal words with the slang words. The dialogue should be written in two different colors, representing the words that are to be covered by the new slips of paper with the slang in one color, and the words that do not change in another.

Without animal idioms

A: Hey what’s up?

B: Not much, I have been **very ill**, and you?

A: That’s too bad. I have been **very busy** lately.

B: I am jealous, I have been moving **slowly** because of my illness.

A: You ought to rest so that soon you will be **healthy**.

B: I have been taking vitamins so that when I get better I will be **very strong**. How is your new job?

A: Oh, it's great! I am so **proud** to have finally got it, but all the time it took me to find it has left me **without money**.

B: And what is your boss like?

A: She is such a great woman, and she is always **very happy**.

B: Well congratulations, I am **very happy** that you found a job you like.

A: Thanks, and get well soon!

B: Next week, I will back to normal and **free**. Lets do lunch!

With animal idioms

A: Hey what's up?

B: Not much, I have been **as sick as a dog**, and you?

A: That's too bad. I have been **as busy as a bee** lately.

B: I am jealous, I have been moving **as slow as a snail** because of my illness.

A: You ought to rest so that soon you will be **as healthy as a horse**.

B: I have been taking vitamins so that when I get better I will be **as strong as an ox** too.

How is your new job?

A: Oh, it's great! I am **as proud as a peacock** to have finally got it, but all the time it took me to find it has left me **as poor as a church mouse**.

B: And what is your boss like?

A: She is such a great woman, and she is always **as happy as a lark**.

B: Well congratulations, I am **as happy as a clam** that you found a job you like.

A: Thanks, and get well soon!

B: Next week, I will back to normal and **as free as a bird**. Lets do lunch!

The students then model the dialogue again, now with the new animal idioms in place. Once all pronunciation problems and questions have been dealt with, the teacher removes the slips of paper with the animal idioms, leaving the original dialogue. The point of this is to force the students to read the literal words and translate them into the idioms as they go, reinforcing the association between the idiom and its meaning.

If time allows the last part of the class the teacher will clear up any final confusion about the meanings and uses of the idioms and then instruct the pairs to create their own dialogues with the new slang words. This enables them to creatively use the new idioms. If they complete them in class they can then present their new dialogues. For a home task the teacher will then assign them to write and memorize their new slang dialogues to present at the beginning of the next class.