

What are Idiomatic Expressions and Colloquialisms?

Worksheet

Idiomatic expressions are fixed phrases where the literal meaning differs from the intended meaning — 'casser les pieds' literally means 'to break feet' but means 'to bother' in French.

Questions

1. What does 'se faire plumer' mean?

- A) To become a bird
- B) To be scammed or overcharged
- C) To lose weight
- D) To become famous

2. Choose the correct idiom: 'J'ai ____ quand il m'a posé la question difficile.'

- A) eu un chat dans la gorge
- B) été dans la lune
- C) eu un mal de tête
- D) cassé les pieds

3. Which is a colloquialism (informal, everyday speech)?

- A) 'Je vous prie d'agréer' (formal request)
- B) 'T'es chelou!' (You're weird! — very casual)
- C) 'Enchanté' (Pleased to meet you)
- D) 'Bonjour, Madame' (Hello, Ma'am)

4. What is the key feature of an idiomatic expression?

- A) It is formal and polite
- B) Its meaning cannot be guessed from individual words
- C) It is always grammatically correct
- D) It is used only in literature

5. Translate and explain: 'Il me casse les pieds avec ses questions.'

6. Use the idiom 'être dans la lune' in a sentence.

7. Identify the idiom: 'On s'est fait plumer au restaurant — c'était très cher.'

8. Define: What is an idiomatic expression?

9. Define: 'Avoir un chat dans la gorge' means...

10. Define: 'Casser les pieds' means...

Answer Key

1. B) To be scammed or overcharged — 'Plumer' means to pluck feathers; idiomatically, it means to be scammed or taken advantage of financially.
2. A) eu un chat dans la gorge — 'Avoir un chat dans la gorge' (to be hoarse) fits the context of difficulty speaking when asked a hard question.
3. B) 'T'es chelou!' (You're weird! — very casual) — 'Chelou' is slang for 'fou' (crazy); 't'es' is casual 'tu es' — very informal colloquialism.
4. B) Its meaning cannot be guessed from individual words — Idioms are figurative — you cannot understand 'casser les pieds' by translating each word.
5. Literal: 'He breaks my feet with his questions.' Actual: 'He's bothering/annoying me with his questions.' Context: 'Casser les pieds' is a common French idiom meaning to annoy or bother someone.
6. Literal: 'to be in the moon' Actual: 'to be daydreaming or absent-minded' Sentence: 'Marie est dans la lune aujourd'hui — elle n'écoute pas.' (Marie is daydreaming today — she's not listening.)
7. Idiom: 'se faire plumer' (literally: to be plucked like a bird) Meaning: to be scammed, overcharged, or taken advantage of financially Context: The speaker paid too much at the restaurant.
8. A phrase whose meaning cannot be understood from the individual words — cultural and figurative language.
9. To be hoarse (literally: to have a cat in the throat).
10. To bother, annoy, or pester (literally: to break the feet).

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