ANIMAL-FRIENDLY IDIOMS
THAT YOUR STUDENTS WILL LOVE

Replace outdated phrases that are harmful to animals with these fun alternatives. Plus, get exclusive idiom posters for your lesson!

The words that we use have the power to influence those around us. Unfortunately, many of us grew up hearing common phrases that perpetuate violence toward animals, such as “kill two birds with one stone,” “beat a dead horse,” and “bring home the bacon.” These old sayings are often passed down in classrooms during lessons on literary devices.

While these phrases may seem harmless, they carry meaning and can send mixed messages to students about the relationship between humans and other animals and can normalize abuse. Teaching students to use animal-friendly language can cultivate a compassionate attitude between humans and other animals and help end the epidemic of animal abuse perpetuated by young people. Try using some of the following fun idioms in your lessons this year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harmful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Accomplish two things with one action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let the cat out of the bag</td>
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<td>Tell a secret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take the bull by the horns</td>
<td>Take the flower by the thorns</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a guinea pig</td>
<td>Be a test tube</td>
<td>Be tested on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold your horses</td>
<td>Hold the phone</td>
<td>Wait</td>
</tr>
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<td>Open a can of worms</td>
<td>Open Pandora’s box</td>
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<td>Beat a dead horse</td>
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<td>More than one way to skin a cat</td>
<td>More than one way to peel a potato</td>
<td>More than one way to complete a task</td>
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<td>Put all your eggs in one basket</td>
<td>Put all your berries in one bowl</td>
<td>Bet everything on one possibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cry over spilled milk</td>
<td>Cry over burnt toast</td>
<td>Be upset about something that has already happened and can’t be changed</td>
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<td>Squeezed tightly together</td>
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<td>Eat crow</td>
<td>Eat humble pie</td>
<td>Admit to being wrong</td>
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<td>Ants in your pants</td>
<td>Pepper in your pants</td>
<td>Inability to sit still</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walk on eggshells</td>
<td>Walk on broken glass</td>
<td>Be careful not to offend someone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Run around like a chicken with its head cut off</td>
<td>Run around like a clock with no hands</td>
<td>Run around in a frantic, distracted manner</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Created by Sonya Tunstall in Dayton, Ohio)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have bigger fish to fry</td>
<td>Have bigger kites to fly</td>
<td>Have higher priorities to attend to</td>
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<td>(Created by Trevor Thomas in Fayetteville, Arkansas)</td>
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<td>Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.</td>
<td>Give people apples and you feed them for a day. Teach people to grow apple trees and you feed them for a lifetime.</td>
<td>Teach people, and you give them invaluable skills that last a lifetime.</td>
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<td>(Created by Nina Otazo and her 11th grade class of 2021 in Houston, Texas)</td>
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**NEED MORE CLASSROOM INSPIRATION?**
Visit TeachKind.org.
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