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>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let the cat out of the bag</td>
<td>Spill the beans</td>
<td>Tell a secret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packed in like sardines</td>
<td>Packed in like pickles</td>
<td>Squeezed tightly together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a wild goose chase</td>
<td>Out chasing rainbows</td>
<td>Looking everywhere for something that can’t be found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat crow</td>
<td>Eat humble pie</td>
<td>Admit to being wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ants in your pants</td>
<td>Pepper in your pants</td>
<td>Inability to sit still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk on eggshells</td>
<td>Walk on broken glass</td>
<td>Be careful not to offend someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kill two birds with one stone</td>
<td>Feed two birds with one scone</td>
<td>Accomplish two things with one action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the bull by the horns</td>
<td>Take the flower by the thorns</td>
<td>Handle a problem fearlessly</td>
</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>
<tr>
<td>Open a can of worms</td>
<td>Open Pandora’s box</td>
<td>Create a situation that will cause problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring home the bacon</td>
<td>Bring home the bagels</td>
<td>Make a living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat a dead horse</td>
<td>Feed a fed horse</td>
<td>Try to make something happen that has no chance of happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEED MORE CLASSROOM INSPIRATION?**

Visit TeachKind.org.
HARMFUL: Cry over spilled milk
HELPFUL: Cry over burnt toast

MEANING: Be upset about something that has already happened and can’t be changed
HARMFUL: Packed in like sardines
HELPFUL: Packed in like pickles

MEANING: Squeezed tightly together
HARMFUL: On a wild goose chase
HELPFUL: Out chasing rainbows

MEANING: Looking everywhere for something that can’t be found
HARMFUL: Eat crow
HELPFUL: Eat humble pie

MEANING: Admit to being wrong
HARMFUL: Ants in your pants
HELPFUL: Pepper in your pants

MEANING: Inability to sit still
HARMFUL: Walk on eggshells
HELPFUL: Walk on broken glass

MEANING: Be careful not to offend someone
HARMFUL: Kill two birds with one stone
HELPFUL: Feed two birds with one scone

MEANING: Accomplish two things with one action
HARMFUL: Let the cat out of the bag
HELPFUL: Spill the beans

MEANING: Tell a secret
HARMFUL: Take the bull by the horns
HELPFUL: Take the flower by the thorns

MEANING: Handle a problem fearlessly
**HARMFUL:** Be a guinea pig

**HELPFUL:** Be a test tube

**MEANING:** Be tested on
HARMFUL: Hold your horses
HELPFUL: Hold the phone

MEANING: Wait
**HARMFUL:** Open a can of worms  
**HELPFUL:** Open Pandora’s box  

**MEANING:** Create a situation that will cause problems
**HARMFUL:** Bring home the bacon

**HELPFUL:** Bring home the bagels

**MEANING:** Make a living
HARMFUL: Beat a dead horse
HELPFUL: Feed a fed horse

MEANING: Try to make something happen that has no chance of happening
HARMFUL: More than one way to skin a cat
HELPFUL: More than one way to peel a potato

MEANING: More than one way to complete a task
**HARMFUL:** Put all your eggs in one basket

**HELPFUL:** Put all your berries in one bowl

**MEANING:** Bet everything on one possibility