

Teaching Idiomatic Expressions

The English language has thousands of expressions that cannot be understood based on their literal meaning. Consider expressions such as "I'm pulling your leg," "You're driving me up the wall," "I've got time on my hands," and "He bit off more than he can chew." These are examples of expressions that we learn through our everyday experiences.

Idiomatic expressions often confuse children with communication disorders and individuals who are learning English as a second language. Mark Schmidek, a speech-language pathologist, is the author of *The Expressionary*, a book that includes over 10,000 expressions commonly used in English. He has spent more than a decade writing down expressions that people use when they speak. You will rarely find Mark without a pen and a piece of paper in hand. His list of expressions keeps getting longer and longer and longer. The second edition of this comprehensive resource, a 2008 publication from Academic Communication Associates, has been completely updated.

Although several popular dictionaries of idiomatic expressions have been published, they often use complex language to define these expressions and, therefore, are difficult to use with students who have language disabilities or limited proficiency in English. *The Expressionary* provides short definitions for each expression and also includes sentence examples. In addition to the idiomatic expressions, this comprehensive volume includes expressions commonly used within specific professions, expressions commonly used in music, film, and other media forms, and terms relating to recent technological advances. You can even search for expressions that contain a specific word. If you look up the word "foot," for example, you'll find a variety of expressions that contain this word.

Prior to publishing his work, Mark used *The Expressionary* in instructional programs for children with communication disorders and learning disabilities. Mark found *The Expressionary* to be quite helpful with students who have difficulty comprehending what they read in the classroom and was encouraged to submit his work for publication.

Teachers often expect students to look in the dictionary when they do not understand words encountered in classroom reading assignments. But the dictionary is often of little help when expressions need to be defined. *The Expressionary* fills a need for a practical resource that can be used by both students and professionals in instructional programs.

The Expressionary is available from Academic Communication Associates at <https://acadcom.com>. Product Number: 49101-IN

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References: Schmidek, M. (2003). *The Expressionary*. Oceanside, CA: Academic Communication Associates.