

## Writing Basics → Using Figurative Language

Level: High School

*Idioms are figurative expressions that you learn through experience or common sense.*

Read through the idioms below and write the actual meaning of each one. Based on each idiom's literal wording, how do you think each one came to mean what it does?

1. **racing against the clock**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **you can't take it with you**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. **wears his heart on his sleeve**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. **sick as a dog**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **pipe down**

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Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. **knee jerk reaction**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. **the icing on the cake**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. **go out on a limb**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. **Elvis has left the building.**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. **costs an arm and a leg**

Actual meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

How it might have come to be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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