

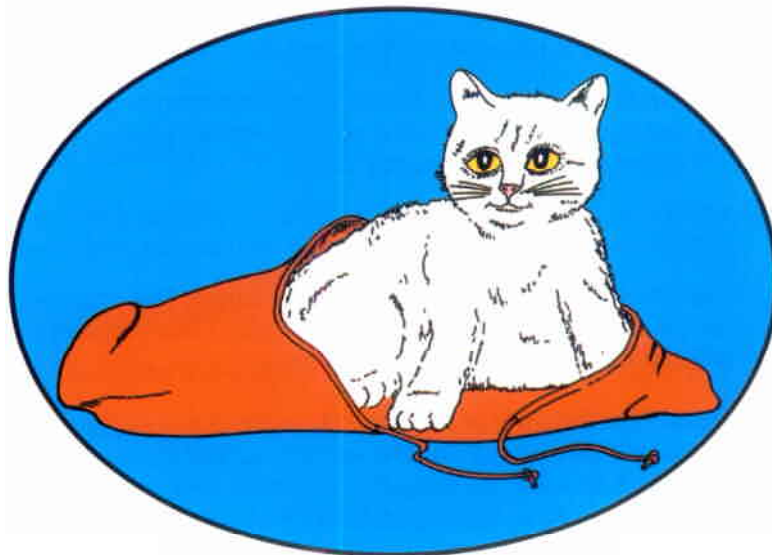


2001:

A CREATIVE

Odyssey
of the Mind®

Problem No. 5: **Idiom Inspiration**



Idiom Inspiration

Problem No. 5: Divisions I & II

Introduction

Nearly every culture has expressions whose meanings are different than the meaning of their words. These figures of speech are called *idioms*, or *idiomatic phrases*, and are not meant to be taken literally. For example, literally, *let the cat out of the bag* means that there was a cat inside a bag and someone allowed it to go free. However, this idiomatic expression is commonly understood to mean "to inadvertently reveal a secret."

This idiom's origin, as many others, dates back many centuries. In medieval times, dishonest shopkeepers would offer a pig or rabbit for sale. When unsuspecting customers purchased one of the bags already tied, some found that it contained a cat instead of a pig or rabbit. Smart people would open the bag in the store to be sure they were getting what they paid for. Those discovering the deception were wise to *let the cat out of the bag*.

Though most idioms originated with a literal meaning, in time they came to adopt a figurative meaning whose underlying message became commonly understood. Idiomatic expressions make language colorful and creative, and often add humor to a conversation. So, take it *straight from the horse's mouth*: Don't *beat around the bush*, and be sure to create a solution that is the *best thing since sliced bread*.

A. The Problem

The team's problem is to create and present an original humorous performance that includes a minimum of four idioms. Three of the idioms will be selected from a list and one will be created by the team. Two of the selected idioms must be acted out literally and figuratively, for example, literally, letting a cat out of a bag and, figuratively, unintentionally revealing a secret. The third selected idiom will be incorporated into an original poem created by the team. The performance will also include a scenario showing how the team-created idiom originated and how it is figuratively used to mean something else. The team will begin its presentation by informing the audience of the four idioms and their meaning.

The **creative emphases** of this problem are on the creativity of the performance, how the idioms are woven into the performance, the team-created idiom, and the team-created poem.

The **Spirit of the Problem** is for the team to create and present an original humorous performance that includes the literal and figurative presentation of two selected idioms and a team-created idiom, and to create a poem that includes a third selected idiom.

B. Limitations

1. **General Rules:** Read the *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*. This manual includes basic limitations for this problem and the forms required for competition. This problem cannot be solved without referring to the Program Rules section of the Guide.
2. **Problem Clarifications:** The *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide* explains the types of questions about the problems that will be clarified and the ways to submit those questions. General problem clarifications will be linked to www.odysseyofthemind.com and will be published in the fall and winter issues of the *Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter*. Problem clarifications improperly submitted, or sent after March 1, 2001, will not be answered.
3. The time limit for this problem is 8 minutes. This includes setup, Style and the problem solution.

4. The cost limit for this problem is \$100 (U.S.). The combined value of the materials used during the demonstration of the team's solution, including Style, cannot exceed this amount. The *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide* explains the cost limit and identifies items that are exempt from cost.
5. The performance must include four idioms. It may include more than four idioms; however, only four will be scored in D. Scoring. The four required idioms:
 - a. must include three from the list in I. The Idioms. These selected idioms may be changed slightly, for example, "Put your foot in your mouth" could be presented as "Put my foot in my mouth."
 - b. must include one that is created by the team. Remember: idioms break normal linguistic rules in that they do not mean what they say. Idioms are never single words, and they seldom are complete sentences. The better idioms are difficult to understand from the makeup of their words.
 - c. must be presented to the audience, along with their figurative meaning, before the team begins its performance. This may be done orally or in writing.
6. Two of the selected idioms must be acted out. These must:
 - a. be presented literally. This may or may not be historically correct.
 - b. must be presented figuratively.
 - c. may be portrayed to take place in any time and place.
7. The third selected idiom must be incorporated into an original poem that is a minimum of eight lines. This idiom must be different from the two selected idioms to be acted out as described in B. 6.
8. The team must present its version of the origin of the team-created idiom. The team must also present a scenario that demonstrates the figurative meaning it has given to that idiom.
9. The performance is to be humorous, but it may contain dramatic elements.
10. The team must present the Staging Area Judge with two copies of a list on one side of one sheet of 8½" x 11" or A4 paper. This list must be hand-printed, typed or computer generated. It will not be scored, but will assist judges. This list must include:
 - a. the team's membership name and number, the problem and division.
 - b. the two selected idioms to be scored in D. Scoring, 3 and 4.
 - c. the selected idiom included in the poem to be scored in D. Scoring, 6.
 - d. any slight variations in the idioms as mentioned in B. 5, a.
 - e. the team-created idiom and its meaning to be scored in D. Scoring, 5.
 - f. a copy of the required poem.
 - g. the signal the team will use to indicate it has finished its performance.

C. Site, Setup and Competition

1. A stage or floor area a minimum of 7' x 10' (2.1 m x 3 m) will be used, but a larger area is desirable. This will not be marked. Teams must be prepared to perform in a 7' x 10' area. If space permits, the team may perform and/or place equipment, props, etc. outside the 7' x 10' area. If a drop-off exists beyond the 7' x 10' dimensions, a caution line may be taped 30" (76.2 cm) from the edge of the drop-off. This will serve as a warning, not a boundary.

2. A three-prong electrical outlet will be available. Teams should bring their own extension cords and adapters, if needed.
3. In most competitions, a Prestaging Area is used. The team will present its paperwork and meet with the Staging Area Judge in this area. When finished, team members will have 3 minutes to clear the Prestaging Area and go to the Staging Area, where they will remain until the judge gives a signal to begin.
4. It is the team's responsibility to complete its problem solution within the 8-minute time limit. When the team is finished, it must signal the judges. Judges will not call time, but an overtime penalty will be assessed if the team takes more than 8 minutes.
5. Teams should bring cleaning utensils to clean up any mess. Should a team take an unreasonable amount of time to clean the site, or leave a mess, the judges will assess an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty. Others not on the team's roster may help the team clear the site and remove the team's props. The competition area must be left clean and dry for the next competing team.

D. Scoring

1. Creativity of the overall performance (originality, effectiveness) 1 to 35 points
2. Quality of the performance (audibility, movement, stage presence) 1 to 25 points
3. The first selected idiom.....1 to 20 points
 - a. Is demonstrated literally 0 or 5 points
 - b. Is demonstrated figuratively 0 or 5 points
 - c. Effectiveness in the performance 1 to 10 points
4. The second selected idiom..... 1 to 20 points
 - a. Is demonstrated literally 0 or 5 points
 - b. Is demonstrated figuratively 0 or 5 points
 - c. Effectiveness in the performance 1 to 10 points
5. The team-created idiom..... 3 to 45 points
 - a. Its origin is presented 0 or 5 points
 - b. Effectiveness of the presentation of its origin..... 1 to 5 points
 - c. Is demonstrated figuratively 0 or 5 points
 - d. Creativity of its use as an idiom (figurative meaning)..... 1 to 15 points
 - e. Effectiveness in the performance 1 to 15 points
6. The poem 3 to 30 points
 - a. Creativity of the poem 1 to 10 points
 - b. Effectiveness of the idiom in the poem 1 to 10 points
 - c. Effectiveness of the poem in the performance..... 1 to 10 points
7. Humor in the performance 1 to 25 points
Maximum possible: 200 points

E. Penalties (Deducted from percentaged scores.)

1. "Spirit of the Problem" violation (each offense) -1 to -100 points
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct (each offense)-5 to -100 points
3. Incorrect or missing membership sign -1 to - 15 points
4. Outside assistance (each offense) -5 to -100 points
5. Over cost limit -5 to -100 points
6. Over time limit: -5 points for every 10 seconds or fraction thereof over time limit (example: 27 seconds over = -15 points) maximum -25 points
7. Omission of scored problem requirements carries no penalty except loss of score.

F. Style (Elaboration of the problem solution; use two copies of the Style Form from the *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*)

1. Elaboration of the membership sign1 to 10 points
2. Creative use of materials in one costume.....1 to 10 points
3. (Free choice of team).....1 to 10 points
4. (Free choice of team)1 to 10 points
5. Overall effect.....1 to 10 points
Maximum possible: 50 points

G. Tournament Director Will Provide:

1. A 7' x 10' (2.1m x 3m) presentation area (larger, if possible; not to be marked off). If there is a drop-off, there may be a caution line taped to the floor approximately 30" from the edge. This is not a boundary; it is to warn team members that they are approaching the drop-off.
2. A three-prong electrical outlet.
3. A timing device.
4. Score sheets and pencils.
5. A minimum of three judges, but preferably seven, including one Head Judge, one Staging Area Judge, two Problem Judges, two Style Judges, and one Timekeeper.
6. Appropriate seating for judges.
7. Contact your Tournament Director for information regarding site specifications.

H. The Team Must Provide:

1. Any necessary extension cords or outlet adapters.
2. Cleanup materials as needed.
3. Two copies of the list required in B. Limitations, 10.

I. The Idioms (The idioms to be scored must be selected from the following list):

1. **Allaying hunger with pictures of cake***
(*comforting oneself with unrealistic thoughts without solving practical problems*)
2. **Apple of my eye**
(*someone who is loved very much*)
3. **At the drop of a hat** (*without hesitation*)
4. **Bark up the wrong tree**
(*follow a wrong line of investigation*)
5. **Beat around the bush**
(*avoid getting to the point*)
6. **Best thing since sliced bread**
(*the best innovation for some time*)
7. **Break a quarrel from a fence****
(*pick a quarrel*)
8. **Break the ice**
(*to break down social formality*)
9. **Bury the hatchet**
(*to make up, or restore a relationship after a long quarrel*)
10. **By the skin of my teeth** (*a narrow margin*)
11. **Chip off the old block**
(*a child who's very much like his/her parent*)
12. **Crocodile tears** (*hypocritical sorrow*)
13. **Crossing a river in the same boat***
(*people should pull together to overcome difficulties, burying their differences in a time of common danger*)
14. **Cutting one's feet to fit one's shoes***
(*rigidly applying unsuitable rules without considering the actual situation*)
15. **Fit as a fiddle** (*in top form*)
16. **Fly in the ointment**
(*something small that spoils the whole*)
17. **Get my goat** (*annoying*)
18. **Hear the fleas coughing****
(*wanting to know gossip*)
19. **Hook, line and sinker** (*completely*)
20. **In one ear and out the other**
(*not paying attention*)
21. **It's raining cats and dogs** (*raining heavily*)
22. **Kick the bucket** (*to die*)
23. **Let the cat out of the bag**
(*to inadvertently reveal a secret*)
24. **Lies have short legs*****
(*telling lies won't get you very far*)
25. **Like looking for a needle in a haystack**
(*a near impossible search for something*)
26. **Living on a shoestring**
(*managing on little money*)
27. **On cloud nine** (*very happy*)
28. **Pay through the nose**
(*pay too high a price for something*)
29. **Put your foot in your mouth**
(*to say something that could cause offense; say something you wish you had not said*)
30. **Red herring**
(*anything that diverts attention from the main argument*)
31. **Rule of thumb**
(*an estimate based on experience*)
32. **Shake a leg** (*hurry or rush*)
33. **Sitting by a stump, waiting for a careless hare**
(*waiting for a stroke of luck rather than making efforts to obtain what you need*)
34. **Steal someone's thunder**
(*to take credit for someone else's achievement*)
35. **Straight from the horse's mouth**
(*from the original or reportable source*)
36. **Strike while the iron is hot**
(*act at first chance*)
37. **Take the bull by the horns**
(*take action in a difficult situation*)
38. **Thumbs up** (*showing approval*)
39. **Tilt at windmills**
(*to face an imaginary enemy*)
40. **Turn over a new leaf**
(*begin again; resolve to behave better*)
41. **When the water ebbs, stones will appear***
(*the whole comes to light after repeated investigation*)
42. **White elephant**
(*a cumbersome, unwanted item*)
43. **Wolf in sheep's clothing**
(*someone who is not as pleasant and harmless as he or she first appears*)
44. **You're pulling my leg**
(*make someone the target of a good-humored joke*)

* These idioms were translated from the Chinese language.

** These idioms were translated from the German language.

*** This idiom was translated from the Lithuanian language.

Problem by Dr. Sam Micklus.

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