Words at Work

Do the words mean exactly what they say?

L.3.5 "Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings. Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases (e.g., take steps) in context..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

LITERAL

The words mean exactly what they say. The action could happen as written.

A rabbit dug a hole under the fence.

NONLITERAL

The words do not mean exactly what they say. You use clues in the sentence to understand what they mean.

Leo was on cloud nine when he won the game.

1 SORT

8 items

Part 1 SORT: Circle LITERAL or NONLITERAL for each sentence; Part 2 PROVE IT: choose two numbered items and explain how you knew.

1.	1. Nora put a lid on the jar.	LITERAL NONLITERAL
2.	2. Sam's new bike cost an arm and a leg.	LITERAL NONLITERAL
3.	3. The class was all ears for the story.	LITERAL NONLITERAL
4.	4. Ben carried two apples in a basket.	LITERAL NONLITERAL
5.	5. The kitten slept on the warm mat.	LITERAL NONLITERAL
6.	6. I had butterflies in my stomach before the play.	LITERAL NONLITERAL
7.	7. A leaf fell into the puddle.	LITERAL NONLITERAL
8.	8. The painter washed her brush in water.	LITERAL NONLITERAL

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Part 3 MAKE YOUR OWN: Write one new sentence that is literal and one that uses a nonliteral phrase.

LITERAL _____

NONLITERAL _____

CHALLENGE

Write two sentences using the words "cold feet": one where feet really feel cold and one where the words mean someone feels too nervous to do something.

ANSWER KEY # Words at Work

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	1. Nora put a lid on the jar.	**LITERAL**	Nora can put a lid on a jar as stated.
2	2. Sam's new bike cost an arm and a leg.	**NONLITERAL**	The phrase means the bike was very expensive, not that Sam paid with body parts.
3	3. The class was all ears for the story.	**NONLITERAL**	The phrase means the class listened closely.
4	4. Ben carried two apples in a basket.	**LITERAL**	Ben can carry apples in a basket as stated.
5	5. The kitten slept on the warm mat.	**LITERAL**	The kitten can sleep on a mat as stated.
6	6. I had butterflies in my stomach before the play.	**NONLITERAL**	The phrase means the speaker felt nervous, not that butterflies were in their stomach.
7	7. A leaf fell into the puddle.	**LITERAL**	A leaf can fall into a puddle as stated.
8	8. The painter washed her brush in water.	**LITERAL**	The painter can wash a brush in water as stated.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **LITERAL**: The dog drank water from its bowl.
- **NONLITERAL**: My little sister is a ball of energy.

Challenge: I had cold feet after walking through the snow. I got cold feet before I jumped off the diving board.

For Part 2, accept explanations that use the sentence to tell whether the words mean exactly what they say. For example, item 2 is nonliteral because a bike cannot cost body parts, while item 4 describes something Ben could really do.