

Signals and Sayings

Use context to interpret idioms and explain their effects.

11.RV.1.E “Explain and analyze idiomatic language in context.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the four idioms quoted in the passage. For each, circle a nearby action or detail that helps explain its intended meaning.

The Drone Repair

- ① At 6:30 on Saturday, the robotics team gathered in the school workshop to repair its underwater drone before Monday’s competition. During a trial, the depth readings on its laptop had stopped updating. With the drone out of the water and its power disconnected, their coach helped them replace a visibly damaged cable. Yet the readings stopped again during the next supervised pool trial. “We are not out of the woods yet,” captain Imani said. The group began comparing test notes instead of assuming that one replacement had solved everything.
- ② By noon, Leo was searching dozens of entries for a pattern. “Finding a useful clue is like looking for a needle in a haystack,” he said. Then he noticed that each interruption had occurred just after the laptop was moved. The team wanted to replace another drone part immediately. “Hold your horses,” Leo said, pointing to the notes. Back in the workshop, they examined the cable connecting the laptop to the controller and found that its plug did not latch securely. With the coach’s help they replaced that cable. In the next three trials, the readings continued updating even when the laptop changed position. They recorded the improvement and planned another check rather than declaring every possible fault solved.

- ③ On Sunday, a volunteer offered a newer battery, but fitting it would require changes they had not tested. Imani said the idea might help a future design. “Let’s not jump the gun,” she added, reminding the group that a changed design would need testing and the coach’s approval. They kept the tested battery for the competition and saved the suggestion in their notebook. On Monday, the drone completed its course and returned depth readings throughout the run. The team credited patient checking rather than the first explanation that sounded convincing.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- ① What does not out of the woods yet mean here? Use one detail to explain why Imani says it after a repair.

- ② What does needle in a haystack suggest about Leo’s search? Explain how the context supports this meaning.

- ③ What does hold your horses ask the team to do? How does this idiom shape Leo’s tone and the next decision?

- ④ Compare jump the gun with hold your horses here. What shared warning do they give, and what different actions do they address?

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three- or four-sentence scene about a group decision. Use a different idiom, supply context clues and explain in the final sentence what it means and reveals about the situation.

Show the meaning through context

Choose an idiom not used in the passage. Include both the scene and the final explanation within three or four sentences.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the four idioms quoted in the passage. For each, circle a nearby action or detail that helps explain its intended meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does not out of the woods yet mean here? Use one detail to explain why Imani says it after a repair.	The team is not free of trouble. Readings stop again after the first cable replacement, showing that the problem is not fully resolved.
2	What does needle in a haystack suggest about Leo's search? Explain how the context supports this meaning.	A useful clue is hard to find among many possibilities. Leo must search dozens of test entries before noticing the repeated laptop movement.
3	What does hold your horses ask the team to do? How does this idiom shape Leo's tone and the next decision?	It asks them to pause rather than rush. His informal, firm caution redirects them from replacing a part immediately to examining the pattern and connection.
4	Compare jump the gun with hold your horses here. What shared warning do they give, and what different actions do they address?	Both warn against haste. Leo pauses an immediate repair guess; Imani warns against adopting an untested battery change before testing and approval.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During a bridge-model test, Nia suggested skipping the remaining checks so the group could leave early. Omar pointed to a cracked support and insisted on repairing and retesting it before the class demonstration. "We cannot cut corners now," he said. Here, cut corners means omitting necessary work to save effort, revealing a conflict between haste and careful preparation.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

The four quoted idioms refer to unresolved trouble, a difficult search, pausing and acting prematurely. Ask for context and effects, not literal readings. The four-sentence model uses a new idiom and ends with its meaning and significance. The fictional repair sequence supplies reading context, not technical instructions.