Idioms in Action

Use context clues to interpret figurative language.

10.RV.1.E "Identify and explain idiomatic language in context."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each idiom in the passage and number it. In the margin, write a brief meaning for each idiom based on nearby actions or details.

The Showcase Rover

1. On the morning of the school robotics showcase, Maya arrived at the auditorium with her tool bag clinking against her knee. Her team had spent weeks building a small rover that could sort colored blocks. When the rover refused to move during a practice run, Jordan said, "Do not throw in the towel yet." He pointed to a loose wire near the battery and handed Maya a screwdriver. Instead of packing up, the team bent over the rover, tested each connection, and replaced the wire. Soon, the wheels rolled forward, drawing a cheer from the students waiting nearby.

2. By noon, the team had repaired the wire, but the sorting arm began dropping blocks. "Back to square one," Maya groaned as the blocks scattered across the stage. Jordan opened the design notebook and compared the arm's measurements with their earliest sketches. He removed the arm, reset its angle, and ran another test. While he worked, Maya told the younger visitors to keep an eye on the rover. The visitors stood beside the table, watching its wheels and arm closely. When the arm lifted three blocks without dropping them, Maya called Jordan over to see the result. The repair seemed promising to everyone nearby.

3. Near the end of the showcase, a judge asked why the team had not abandoned the rover after its setbacks. Maya replied, "We learned to roll with the punches." She described the loose wire and faulty arm, then explained how the team changed its plan after each surprise. After the rover sorted its last block, the team was on cloud nine. Their smiles, raised hands, and loud cheers filled the auditorium. Maya packed the tool bag while Jordan photographed the rover, knowing that the next design would bring more problems and more chances to adapt.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does “throw in the towel” mean in paragraph 1? Which action in the paragraph helps you infer its meaning?

2. Explain what Maya means by “Back to square one” in paragraph 2.

3. What does “keep an eye on the rover” mean? Give one context clue that supports your answer.

4. What does “on cloud nine” mean in paragraph 3? Use two details from the passage to explain your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence scene about a challenge. Use exactly two idioms that do not appear in the passage, and include context clues that show what each idiom means.

ANSWER KEY

Idioms in Action

GRADE 10 · 10.RV.1.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each idiom in the passage and number it. In the margin, write a brief meaning for each idiom based on nearby actions or details. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does “throw in the towel” mean in paragraph 1? Which action in the paragraph helps you infer its meaning?	**It means to give up. The team keeps working, tests connections, and replaces the wire instead of packing up.**
2	Explain what Maya means by “Back to square one” in paragraph 2.	**She means the team must return to an earlier stage of solving the problem because the sorting arm has failed.**
3	What does “keep an eye on the rover” mean? Give one context clue that supports your answer.	**It means to watch the rover carefully. The visitors stand beside the table and watch its wheels and arm closely.**
4	What does “on cloud nine” mean in paragraph 3? Use two details from the passage to explain your answer.	**It means extremely happy. The team smiles, raises their hands, and cheers loudly after the rover sorts its last block.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before the chemistry quiz, Lena decided to hit the books, so she spent the evening reading notes and solving practice problems. At first, balancing equations felt confusing, but after studying, the quiz seemed like a piece of cake. She finished calmly because the questions were easy for her.

Accept accurate paraphrases of each idiom when the student supports the meaning with relevant passage details. For Part 3, accept any two appropriate idioms not used in the passage if the surrounding scene makes both meanings clear.