Name: _____ Date: _____

Wendell and the Slippery Idioms

Circle group

Wendell Birch took everything people said exactly as they said it. His family called these "Wendell words."

On moving day, Dad called, "Wendell, give us a hand!" Wendell stood in the doorway and held out his own hand. He wondered who wanted it. Mom laughed. "I mean help us carry this box."

Later, she said, "Hold your horses, honey." Wendell ran to his toy shelf. He held a plastic horse in each fist.

"This is no piece of cake," said Dad, as he pushed a couch through the door. Wendell looked around. There was no cake. He felt a little sad.

That night, Wendell felt silly. Why did grown-ups say such strange things? Mom sat on his bed with a book called *Idioms Explained*. "An idiom is a group of words that means something else," she said. "A piece of cake means something is easy."

Wendell grinned. The next morning, Dad stared at an empty paint can.

"Feeling blue?" asked Wendell.

Dad blinked. "That was an idiom! Nice job!"

"I thought so," said Wendell. "Now stop pulling my leg and pass me the brush."

Questions

1. What did Wendell do when Dad said, "Give us a hand"?

_____

_____

2. What did Wendell hold when Mom said, "Hold your horses"?

_____

_____

3. What did Wendell look for when Dad said the couch was no piece of cake?

_____

_____

4. What is an idiom, according to Mom?

_____

_____

5. Why did Wendell feel silly at night?

_____

_____

6. How do you know Wendell now understood idioms?

_____

_____

Words to know

idiom: a saying whose meaning is different from its words
doorway: the open space where a door is
grinned: smiled very widely

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Wendell and the Slippery Idioms

Triangle group

Wendell Birch took everything people said exactly as they said it. His family had a name for it: "Wendell words."

On moving day, Dad called, "Wendell, give us a hand!" Wendell stood in the doorway holding out his own hand, wondering who wanted it. Mom laughed. "I mean help us carry this box."

Later, she said, "Hold your horses, honey." Wendell ran to his toy shelf and held a plastic horse in each fist.

"This is no piece of cake," said Dad, wrestling a couch through the door. Wendell looked around. There was no cake anywhere. He felt a little sad about it.

That night, Wendell began to feel silly. Why did grown-ups say such strange things? Mom sat on the edge of his bed with a book of sayings called *Idioms Explained*. "An idiom is a group of words that means something different from the words themselves," she said. "Like *a piece of cake* means something is easy."

Wendell grinned. The next morning, he found Dad staring at an empty paint can.

"Feeling blue?" asked Wendell.

Dad blinked. "Wendell, that was an idiom! Nice job!"

"I thought so," said Wendell. "Now stop pulling my leg, and pass me the brush."

Questions

1. What did Wendell do when Dad said, "Give us a hand"?

_____

_____

2. What did Wendell hold when Mom said, "Hold your horses"?

_____

_____

3. What did Wendell look for when Dad said the couch was no piece of cake?

_____

_____

4. What is an idiom, according to Mom?

_____

_____

5. Why did Wendell begin to feel silly at night?

_____

_____

6. How can you tell Wendell now understood idioms?

_____

_____

Words to know

idiom: a saying whose meaning is different from its words
doorway: the open space where a door is
wrestling: pushing and pulling with great effort
grinned: smiled very widely

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Wendell and the Slippery Idioms

Square group

Wendell Birch took everything people said in exactly the way they said it. His family had even invented a name for the habit: "Wendell words."

On moving day, Dad called out, "Wendell, give us a hand!" Wendell stood in the doorway holding out his own hand, wondering who wanted it. Mom laughed. "I mean help us carry this box."

Later, she said, "Hold your horses, honey." Wendell dashed to his toy shelf and clutched a plastic horse in each fist.

"This is no piece of cake," groaned Dad, as he wrestled a couch through the door. Wendell looked all around the room. There was no cake anywhere, and he felt rather disappointed about it.

That night, Wendell began to feel foolish. Why did grown-ups say such peculiar things? Mom perched on the edge of his bed with a book of sayings called *Idioms Explained*. "An idiom is a group of words that means something quite different from the words themselves," she said. "A piece of cake, for instance, means that something is easy."

Wendell grinned. The next morning, he found Dad staring into an empty paint can.

"Feeling blue?" asked Wendell.

Dad blinked. "Wendell, that was an idiom! Nicely done!"

"I thought so," said Wendell. "Now stop pulling my leg, and hand me the brush."

Questions

1. How did Wendell react when Dad said, "Give us a hand"?

_____

_____

2. What did Wendell grab when Mom said, "Hold your horses"?

_____

_____

3. What did Wendell search for when Dad said the couch was no piece of cake?

_____

_____

4. How does Mom define an idiom?

_____

_____

5. Why did Wendell begin to feel foolish that night?

_____

_____

6. What shows that Wendell finally understood idioms?

_____

_____

Words to know

idiom: a saying whose meaning is different from its words
doorway: the open space where a door is
grinned: smiled very widely

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Wendell and the Slippery Idioms

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Wendell and the Slippery Idioms

Easier · 185 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.9

1. He held out his own hand.
2. A plastic toy horse in each fist.
3. A cake.
4. A group of words that means something else.
5. He saw that grown-ups said strange things that did not mean what they said.
6. He used two of them himself.

Triangle: Wendell and the Slippery Idioms

This passage · 202 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.8

1. He held out his own hand.
2. A plastic toy horse in each fist.
3. A cake.
4. A group of words that means something different from the words themselves.
5. He realized grown-ups said many strange things that did not mean what they said.
6. He used two of them himself, feeling blue and pulling my leg.

Square: Wendell and the Slippery Idioms

Harder · 216 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.7

1. He held out his own hand, wondering who wanted it.
2. A plastic toy horse in each fist.
3. A cake.
4. A group of words whose meaning differs from the words themselves.
5. He realized grown-ups said peculiar things that did not mean what they said.
6. He used two of them himself, feeling blue and pulling my leg.