

About Idioms

Idioms are phrases whose meaning can't be determined by the individual words. A person who "eats like a bird" doesn't actually hop about on the ground pecking for grains and grubs: rather, she simply eats very little. The phrase means something other than what the literal words say.

One type of idiom is the proverb — a short saying (usually hundreds of years old) that expresses common wisdom. "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched" is an example. This proverb entered English through the older literary source of *Aesop's Fables*. But even original English proverbial idioms such as "let sleeping dogs lie" have been around for many hundreds of years. The three idioms in *Waltur Paints Himself into a Corner and Other Stories* are also proverbs.

Learning idioms is an enriching experience for children. Idioms are living examples of the fun that people throughout the ages have had with language: just as we use playful expressions today, so, too, did people of the past. By learning specific cultural expressions, young readers can comprehend situations and feelings and communicate about them. The three stories in *Waltur Paints Himself into a Corner* are a humorous introduction to folk wit and wisdom.

In addition to parents who buy this early reader for their children, elementary-grade teachers will find *Waltur Paints Himself into a Corner* useful, as will parents who home school. Last but not least, teachers of English as a Second Language will find the stories helpful.