

Activity Type

Vocabulary Exercises:
matching

Speaking Game: making
notes, telling true or
false stories, asking and
answering questions,
freer practice, guessing
(group work)

Focus

Time idioms

Aim

To tell stories that use
time idioms to your
classmates who guess
whether they are true or
not.

Preparation

Make one copy of the
worksheet for each
student.

Make one copy of the
three worksheets (A, B,
and C) for each group of
three.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

60 minutes

Introduction

In this engaging idioms game, students tell stories that use time idioms to their classmates who guess whether they are true or not.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the worksheet.

Students begin by matching sentence halves together to reveal time idioms used in context.

Exercise A - Answer key

1. d 2. e 3. i 4. k 5. c 6. h 7. a 8. f 9. l 10. b 11. g 12. j

Next, students match the time idioms to their definitions.

Exercise B - Answer key

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. working around the clock | 7. in the nick of time |
| 2. jump the gun | 8. when pigs fly |
| 3. take five | 9. lost track of time |
| 4. around the corner | 10. once in a blue moon |
| 5. pull an all-nighter | 11. on the spur of the moment |
| 6. in a flash | 12. a whale of a time |

After that, divide the class into groups of three (Student A, B and C) and give each student a corresponding worksheet.

Students choose one of the topics on their worksheet and come up with a story related to the topic. The story can be true or a lie.

Once the students have chosen their topic, they circle 'True' or 'Lie'. The students then use the space provided to make notes about their story, but must not write it out in full.

Give the students a few minutes to prepare their stories. After the preparation time, students take it in turns to briefly tell their story to their group members who guess whether it is true or not. Students must use the idiom shown in bold in their story.

After the story has been told, group members can ask questions to help them determine if the story is true or a lie. Each group member then guesses if the story is true or false and the correct answer is revealed. Storytellers score one point for each student they fooled. When everyone in the group has told their stories, students play more rounds using the other topics on their worksheet. The student with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

A. Match the beginnings to the endings to reveal sentences containing idioms.

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| 1. OK. Let's take five . We can return to the | a. Christmas Day is just around the corner . |
| 2. This product comes with express delivery, | b. We all had a whale of a time . |
| 3. We are working around the clock | c. so much that I lost track of time . |
| 4. Do I think our team will win the | d. discussion when we have all calmed down. |
| 5. Sorry, I'm late. I was enjoying that book | e. so it will arrive at your home in a flash . |
| 6. We didn't plan to go to the beach today. | f. to the mall once in a blue moon . |
| 7. The year has passed by so quickly. | g. pulled an all-nighter and didn't stop revising until daylight. |
| 8. I hate shopping, so I probably go | h. We just decided on the spur of the moment . |
| 9. The police arrived in the nick of time | i. to get the job finished in time. |
| 10. That was the best party ever! | j. to think carefully about what you should do. |
| 11. To try and pass the exam, we | k. championship this year? When pigs fly . |
| 12. Before jumping the gun , take some time | l. A minute later and the criminals would have escaped. |

B. Write the idioms in bold next to their definitions.

1. To continue doing something all day and all night without stopping.
2. To do something too soon, without thinking carefully about it.
3. To tell someone to stop working and relax for a short period of time.
4. To describe something that will happen soon.
5. To do an activity that last all night and into the morning hours.
6. To happen quickly or suddenly.
7. At the last possible moment.
8. To say you think that there is no chance of something happening.
9. To be unaware that so much time has passed.
10. To describe something that does not happen very often.
11. To describe a decision that was made without any planning.
12. To do something really fun and have a great time.

Student A**A. Choose one of the topics below and come up with a story related to the topic.**

The story can be true or a lie. Once you have chosen your topic, circle 'True' or 'Lie'. Make notes about your story in the space provided, but do not write out the full story.

B. Briefly tell the story to your group members who guess whether it is true or not.

You must use the idiom in **bold** in your story. Your group members can ask questions about your story before they guess to help them determine if the story is true or a lie. You score one point for each classmate you fool.

1. Talk about a time you had to **work around the clock**. True / Lie

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2. Talk about a time you **jumped the gun**. True / Lie

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3. Talk about a time something happened while you were **taking five**. True / Lie

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4. Talk about the preparations for an event that was **just around the corner**. True / Lie

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C. When everyone has told their stories, repeat the game with other topics.

Student B**A. Choose one of the topics below and come up with a story related to the topic.**

The story can be true or a lie. Once you have chosen your topic, circle 'True' or 'Lie'. Make notes about your story in the space provided, but do not write out the full story.

B. Briefly tell the story to your group members who guess whether it is true or not.

You must use the idiom in **bold** in your story. Your group members can ask questions about your story before they guess to help them determine if the story is true or a lie. You score one point for each classmate you fool.

1. Talk about a time you **pulled an all-nighter**. True / Lie

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2. Talk about something that happened **in a flash**. True / Lie

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3. Talk about a time you did something **in the nick of time**. True / Lie

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4. Talk about something you wrongly thought would only happen **when pigs fly**. True / Lie

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C. When everyone has told their stories, repeat the game with other topics.

Student C

A. Choose one of the topics below and come up with a story related to the topic.

The story can be true or a lie. Once you have chosen your topic, circle 'True' or 'Lie'. Make notes about your story in the space provided, but do not write out the full story.

B. Briefly tell the story to your group members who guess whether it is true or not.

You must use the idiom in **bold** in your story. Your group members can ask questions about your story before they guess to help them determine if the story is true or a lie. You score one point for each classmate you fool.

1. Talk about a time when you **lost track of time**. True / Lie

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2. Talk about something you do **once in a blue moon**. True / Lie

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3. Talk about a time you did something **on the spur of the moment**. True / Lie

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4. Talk about an experience of when you had **a whale of a time**. True / Lie

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C. When everyone has told their stories, repeat the game with other topics.