



The Cat's Pajamas

Yolanda thought her pjs were the cat's pajamas. They were fuzzy. They were pink. They were as warm as toast. The pajamas made Yolanda as pleased as punch, and she couldn't wait to put them on and curl up with a good book. There was only one problem. When she went to grab the pajamas from the hook in her closet—they were gone! Oh, no! The thought of not being able to wear her pajamas really bent her out of shape. But then she collected herself. Her pink pajamas *had* to be somewhere. Lightning flash! She could go ask her mother where they were. Her mom was the big cheese, and she knew everything. Yolanda ran down to the kitchen.

"Mom, have you seen my pink pajamas?" she asked.

"No," said her mom. "But your dad is doing the laundry. You know what a worker bee he is. Maybe he threw them in the wash."

So Yolanda raced down to the laundry room to find her dad.

"Dad, I can't find my pink pajamas. Did you wash them?" she asked.

"Nope," said her dad. "But don't go bananas. Grandma was cleaning today. I bet she put them in a drawer or something."

Wow, locating a simple pair of pink pajamas was turning into a wild goose chase! Yolanda dashed into the living room, where she found her grandma knitting up a storm.

"Grandma, do you know where my pink pajamas are?" she asked.

"I'm sorry, dear, but I haven't see them," responded her grandmother. "Hmm, but come to think of it, I noticed your little brother Mikey in your room earlier. If you want to ferret out the facts, I suggest you speak to him."

Grandma was one smart cookie, so Yolanda took her advice. She darted over to the den, where she found Mikey playing with his train set. She stopped to catch her breath. Her head was spinning. Her stomach was in knots. What if she *never* saw her beloved pjs again?

"Mikey, have you seen my pink pajamas?" asked Yolanda desperately.

First, Mikey was quiet as a mouse. Then he hemmed and hawed. Then he grabbed Yolanda's hand and silently led her to the corner of the room. There, on a fluffy pillow, was their white cat, Snowball, nestled snugly inside Yolanda's pink pajamas.

"Snowball looked cold, so I gave her your pajamas," said Mikey as sweet as pie.

At first, Yolanda was hopping mad. But seeing Snowball as happy as a clam melted her icy heart. Then she practically busted a gut laughing. Why? Now her pink pajamas *really* were the cat's pajamas!



IDIOMS: Well-known expressions that mean something different from what the words actually say, such as *a piece of cake* or *green with envy*. Idioms use lively and colorful language to conjure up images in the reader's mind. For that reason, they are remembered and often passed down from generation to generation.

FUN FACT: All idioms are a form of figurative language and some, such as *fit as a fiddle*, are similes, too!



Here are some popular idioms. What does each mean? Add more.

cat's pajamas
happy as a clam
in a pickle
slam dunk

two peas in a pod
hot head
wet behind the ears
stay on your toes

seeing red
couch potato
egg on face
goody-two-shoes

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Key Questions

1. There are lots of idioms used in this story. How many can you find? Underline them.
2. Which idioms are also similes (two things that are compared using the words *like* or *as*)? Revisit the story and put a box around them.
3. Discuss the meaning of each idiom. Which ones do you like the best? Why?
4. How does the use of idioms affect your understanding and enjoyment of a story? Discuss your feelings.

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question: Many idioms have a rich history. Use the Internet or an idiom dictionary to research one or more of the expressions in *The Cat's Pajamas* and/or the box above. What is its backstory?

The Write Stuff

Take the character of Yolanda and place her in a mini-story of your own design that is stocked with lots and lots of idioms. When you're done, share your story with classmates. Can they locate all the idioms?



Answer Key

TIP: No two readers interpret a story—including its characters, plot, setting, tone, or imagery—exactly the same way.

For that reason, it's wise to invite differing opinions and healthy debate in the context of your literacy lessons.



IDIOMS: The Cat's Pajamas

Key Questions: 1. Answers should include idioms: *the cat's pajamas*, *warm as toast*, *pleased as punch*, *curl up, bent her out of shape*, *big cheese*, etc. (22 in all)

2. Answers should include idioms that are also similes: *warm as toast*, *pleased as punch*, *quiet as a mouse*, *sweet as pie*, *happy as a clam*.

3. Answers will vary. 4. Answers will vary.

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question: Answers will vary, but an idiom encyclopedia and/or idiom websites will be very helpful to your research.

Common Core State Standards Correlation

This lesson and activity will help you meet many of the reading and language arts standards recommended in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Listed below are the specific CCSS Reading Standards for Literature (RL) addressed in this lesson at each grade level. For more information about the CCSS, visit www.corestandards.org.

Literary Element



IDIOMS

RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

RL.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.