Why Idioms Don't Travel

Student handout · about 20 minutes

Name: Class: Date:

WARM-UP: LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE?

IDIOM	WHAT IT LITERALLY SAYS	WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS
It's raining cats and dogs.		

PREDICT, THEN WATCH

Before your teacher runs each idiom, circle what you think will happen: **S** = it survives (the meaning comes back), **L** = it goes literal (the words come back, the meaning doesn't), **M** = it mutates (it turns into something else).

IDIOM	MY GUESS	WHY I THINK SO	WHAT CAME BACK
	S L M		
	S L M		
	S L M		
	S L M		
	S L M		

I guessed right _____ out of _____ times.

DISCUSS

1. Which idioms survived? What do they have in common?

2. When an idiom went literal, where in the chain did it go wrong? Could you spot it in the language you're learning?

3. If *you* had to put "break a leg" into the language you're learning, would you translate the words or the meaning? Why?