



The World of Languages
and Languages of the World

Idiom and Culture

Let's learn about idiom in different languages and how they reflect culture.

Why this lesson?

- We can see that idioms are linked to the culture of their country.
- We can see explore idioms in a foreign language.
- We can see that idioms change as culture changes.



Idioms and culture

I am thinking of 5 idioms linked to cricket. Here are the pictures and clues.
Can you link them to the description of the idiom? What would the idiom be?



A



B



C

Blanche M. Elkey Dies at Age 102

D



E

1. Something has really shocked someone.
2. Someone's has had a long life.
3. Something has confused or perplexed someone.
4. The truth has been revealed about someone.
5. Someone has found themselves in a difficult and complex situation.

Idioms and culture

I am thinking of 5 idioms linked to cricket. Here are the pictures and clues.
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Something has really shocked someone. “Hit for six”



Someone's has had a long life.

“ A good innings”

Blanche M. Elkey Dies at Age 102

Something has confused or perplexed someone. “Stumped”



The truth has been revealed about someone. “Caught out”



Someone has found themselves in a difficult situation. “On a sticky wicket”



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Cricket- related Idioms

Why would these cricket expressions not be used throughout the English-speaking world, such as in The USA or Canada?

If cricket forms the basis of a number of idioms in English, which languages might use these areas as the basis for several idioms?

- a) Sausages b) Food in general c) Fish



What do you think these expressions mean?
Why do you think there is a connection to culture?

Sausages - German

Das ist mir Wurst! (That's sausage to me!)

Nur die Wurst hat zwei Ende. (Only sausages have two ends!)

Food in general - French

Comme un repas sans fromage! (Like a meal without cheese!)

Les carottes sont cuites! (The carrots are cooked!)

Fish – Scandinavian Languages

“Glida in på en räkmacka” (He slides in on a prawn sandwich!)

”Ikke en rød reje” (I don't have a red prawn)

How did you do?

Sausages - German

Das ist mir Wurst! (That's sausage to me!) **It doesn't matter! / I don't care!**

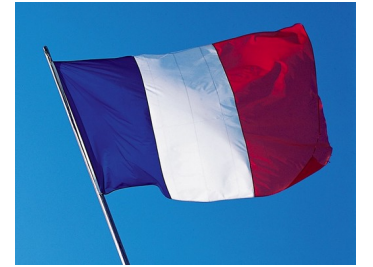
Nur die Wurst hat zwei Ende. (Only sausages have two ends!) **All (good) things come to an end!**



Food in general - French

Comme un repas sans fromage! (Like a meal without cheese!) **It's sad**

Les carottes sont cuites! (The carrots are cooked!) **It's too late!**



Fish – Scandinavian Languages

“Glida in på en räkmacka” (He slides in on a prawn sandwich!) **Born with a silver spoon in his mouth**

”Ikke en rød reje” (I don't have a red prawn) **To have no money**





Clip from Ted Translators



Here are four idioms in other languages ...

花より団子 (**hana yori dango**) (dumplings instead of flowers)

un cane in chiesa (a dog in church)

ogni morte di Papa (every death of the Pope)

cadw draenog yn dy boced (to keep a hedgehog in your pocket)

花より団子 (*hana yori dango*) (dumplings instead of flowers)

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1) The literal translation in English is in brackets. What do we mean by literal translation? How does this help us?

2) Three languages are represented here (one language is repeated). Which languages are they?

3) What do you think they mean and can you think of equivalent idioms in English for any?

How did you do?

花より団子 (**hana yori dango**) (dumplings instead of flowers)

Japanese - talks about choosing something useful over something decorative

un cane in chiesa (a dog in church)

Italian - talks about an unwanted guest

ogni morte di Papa (every death of the Pope)

Italian - refers to something that's infrequent ("once in a blue moon")

cadw draenog yn dy boced (to keep a hedgehog in your pocket)

Welsh - refers to being reluctant to spend money ("short hands and deep pockets")

Over to you!

花より団子 (hana yori dango) (dumplings instead of flowers)

un cane in chiesa (a dog in church)
ogni morte di Papa (every death of the Pope)

cadw draenog yn dy boced (to keep a hedgehog in your pocket)

- Why do you think some idioms stop being used?
- For the first two, can you create your own English idiom which is as “future proof” and “culturally neutral” as possible?
- For the second two, can you invent better new versions in English, using metaphors inspired by the Italian and Welsh idioms? Consider problems with the Italian and Welsh idioms which mean they won't be “future proof” when deciding on your idioms.

A Final Thought...

Talk through these expressions considering ...

- Which language are they from?
- What are the issues for a translator?
- Why do we use idioms?
- When we would use them?

