

## 14 Similes in idioms

### Activity A

In descriptions, we use similes to compare one thing to another in order to provide a clear picture of what we are describing and to emphasize the adjective we are using. There are different ways to structure a simile but the following activity focuses on 'as' + adjective + 'as' + noun. An example would be *That story is as old as the hills* meaning that the story being described is incredibly old. We use these similes in an idiomatic way and therefore they are not easy to translate. Match the two halves of the idioms then check your answers in the dictionary.

Match the beginning of each sentence with the best ending:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 My father used to have long hair and a beard but now he's <b>as bald</b> | a as houses, so stop looking so nervous.    |
| 2 Jenny's children are always as good                                      | b as brass.                                 |
| 3 My sister was as pleased   | c as a bee lately.                          |
| 4 If she doesn't wear her glasses, she's as blind                          | d as gold, so I'm happy to babysit for her. |
| 5 Don't invite Robert to the party. He's as miserable                      | e as a bat.                                 |
| 6 I was surprised at her confidence. She walked into the meeting as bold   | f as a pancake.                             |
| 7 He phones every Friday at 6pm as regular                                 | g <b>as a coot.</b>                         |
| 8 I think I've got a puncture. Yes, look, my tyre's as flat                | h as a fiddle.                              |
| 9 Flying is as safe  | i as sin at the moment!                     |
| 10 He's over 80 years old but he's as fit                                  | j as Punch to receive your letter.          |
| 11 Oh, look at this photo! You were as pretty                              | k as clockwork.                             |
| 12 I'm sorry I didn't call you back sooner. I've been as busy              | l as a picture in that dress.               |

### Activity B

Which of the idioms in Activity A seem logical to you? Are any the same in your language? Now think of an adjective which would fit in each of the following similes.

- As \_\_\_\_\_ as a rock.  
Example: *The brain surgeon's hand was as \_\_\_\_\_ as a rock.*
- As \_\_\_\_\_ as old boots.  
Example: *I can't eat this steak. It's as \_\_\_\_\_ as old boots!*
- As \_\_\_\_\_ as a whistle.  
Example: *Thank you for polishing the medal so well. It's as \_\_\_\_\_ as a whistle now.*
- As \_\_\_\_\_ as a hatter.  
Example: *You'd have to be as \_\_\_\_\_ as a hatter to drive so fast when the road is icy.*

Now check whether any of your adjectives are in the box below. Choose one adjective from the box for each simile and then check your answers in the dictionary.

a) mad      b) tough      c) clean      d) steady