

Autumn idioms (teacher's notes)

1. Warm-up (Activity 1) 3 mins

Aims: to break the ice and introduce the topic.

Procedure: Ask students to look at the picture and answer the question. Introduce the topic: Today we are going to talk about autumn and learn idioms associated with this season.

2. Vocabulary work (Activity 2) 5 mins

Aims: to revise and learn topic-related vocabulary

Procedure: Ask the brainstorm in pairs autumn vocabulary. Divide students in groups and ask to share their ideas. Then students look at the pictures, elicit or pre-teach the words: a squirrel, a nut, a chestnut, a leaf.

3. Vocabulary work (Activity 3) 15 mins

Aims: to present new idioms "Autumn"

Procedure: Ask students to read the sentences and discuss in pairs real and idiomatic meanings of the phrases. This might be done individually, provide the table and ask to draw or write student's ideas.

Idiom:	
Literal Meaning (idiom)	Figurative Meaning (real meaning)

Then students should match idioms with the correct definitions. They should guess from the context. Monitor closely. Let them work in pairs before checking as a whole group.

Save for a rainy day	To reserve something (usually money) for a future need
Squirrel away	To hide, reserve, or hoard something for future use

Feel/be under the weather	To feel ill; unwell
Get wind of something	To become aware of something, especially something being kept secret, through indirect means
Autumn years	The later years of a person's life when they are past middle age and approaching old age
Old chestnut	A topic, saying, story or joke that has been repeated so much that it has become boring and irksome
Drive someone nuts	To make someone very annoyed or go crazy
Be nuts about someone or something	To be obsessed with someone or something
Turn over a new leaf	To change your life by starting to be a better person or stopping a bad habit
Take a leaf (or page) out of someone's book	To follow someone's example or imitate them in a certain way

Clarify some idioms:

- 1) "Save for a rainy day" is similar expressions to "put something away for a rainy day", "keep something for a rainy day"
- 2) "To squirrel away" - for many animals, this time of year means that it's also time to prepare to hibernate or store food for the cooler months ahead. And that's where this idiom comes from. Squirrels will store away nuts and other food for the times that their food supply is low – likewise, this idiom means to put away or hide things for another time when you might need them. A noun or pronoun can be used between "squirrel" and "away".
- 3) "Autumn years" - this idiom refers to the later years of a person's life when they are past middle age and approaching old age. This period is likened to autumn since autumn is close to the end of the year (as an elderly person is close to the end of his life) and summer is already gone (just as an elderly person's best years are in the past).
- 4) "Old chestnut" - chestnuts are a common sight in autumn – a hard, shiny brown nut that can be found across parks wherever you go, as they fall from chestnut trees.
- 5) The sentence with "drive someone nuts" starts with the object. If the sentence starts with the Subject the phrase "go nuts" should be used.
- 6) "Take a leaf (or page) out of someone's book" - is usually used to speak positively about someone.

4. Complete the sentences.(Activity 4) 5 mins

Aims: to have controlled practice.

Procedure: Ask the students to complete the sentences and then check in pairs. Check open class.

Keys:

- 1) That noise _____. Please stop at once! (is driving me nuts)
- 2) I've been _____ a bit _____ this week. I might go to the doctor tomorrow. (feeling under the weather)
- 3) I don't want my colleagues to _____ the fact that I'm leaving. (get wind of)
- 4) Andy happily spent his _____ with his wife Matilda in their house by the sea. (autumn years)
- 5) After many days of hard work, Mike completed the project. You should _____. (take a leaf out of his book)
- 6) Lisa _____ a lot of money while she was working and now she can enjoy her retirement. (squirrelled away)
- 7) Billy, please... Stop telling us this _____. We've already heard that story so many times. (old chestnut)
- 8) I'm usually late for work, but starting tomorrow, I'm _____. I'm going to be on time from now on. (turning over a new leaf)
- 9) Sophie _____ dinosaurs. (s nuts about)
- 10) I just purchased a new board game for the kids. They're going to love it! But I'm not going to give it to them yet. I _____ during the winter school break. (will save it for a rainy day)

5. Charades 7 mins

Aims: to practice new vocabulary in an entertaining way.

Procedure: Print out the cards with the target vocabulary. One set for each pair. A student takes a card and mimes a phrase on it. His partner needs to guess the word.

If you work one-on-one, take turns with your student to mime the words.

Save for a rainy day	Feel/be under the weather	Autumn years
Squirrel away	Get wind of something	Old chestnut
Drive someone nuts	Be nuts about someone or something	Turn over a new leaf
Take a leaf (or page) out of someone's book		

6. Discussion (Activity 5) 10 mins

Aims: to provide free speaking practice and apply new vocabulary in the discussion

Procedure: Ask SS to discuss the questions in pairs. Change partners and let them report the most interesting information which they've found out about their previous partners.

7. Sum up 3-5 mins

Put errors on the board or whiteboard and let students correct them.

Summarise the lesson and tell students what results they have achieved (Now you can ... After our reading and speaking lesson you will be able to....). Ask them if they have any questions.

8. Homework

Ask the students to find out more idioms connected to autumn.