



FARM ANIMALS—AN IDIOM STORY

NOTE: This lesson can address the following Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.3, W.1.3, W.2.3, W.3.3, W.3.3.B, W.3.3.C, W.3.3.D, W.4.3, W.4.3.A, W.4.3.B, W.4.3.C, W.4.3.D, W.4.3.E, W.5.3, W.5.3.A, W.5.3.B, W.5.3.C, W.5.3.D and W.5.3.E.

I got this idea from the book, *Gimme Cracked Corn and I Will Share* by Kevin O'Malley. In this particular book, the author used idioms all about chickens and eggs throughout the story. Cute and clever! I thought my own students would enjoy writing a farm story using farm animal idioms and they did!

So here's the lesson:

1. Explain to the students that idioms are: phrases or sentences that represent a specific meaning and not the exact meaning of the words.
2. Give examples:
It's raining cats and dogs means, "It's raining really hard."
I gotta run means, "I have to go now."
3. If you have a copy of *Gimme Cracked Corn and I will Share*, read it to your students.
4. Tell the storyline: The farm animals complain to the horse about something.
5. Tell the students that they're going to use at least 3 farm animal idioms in their story. Brainstorm a list of common farm animal and horse idioms. Here are some to get started.

FARM ANIMAL IDIOMS

Don't have a cow

- Don't overreact or get too upset.
- Stay calm

Until the cows come home

- for a very long time

Take the bull by the horns

- Take decisive and direct action.
- Face the problem.
- Do something about it without fear.

Don't be a chicken

- Don't be afraid.
- Don't express fearful doubts.

As quiet as a mouse

- very quiet

A cat nap

- a short sleep

Go hog-wild

- behave wildly

Rain cats and dogs

- rain a lot

It was the last straw

- the thing or event that made someone get angry, cry etc.

HORSE IDIOMS

Eat like a horse

- to eat a lot

Get off one's high horse

- to begin to be humble or agreeable

Hold your horses!

- wait!

Horse around

- to play around in a rough way

Work like a horse

- work really hard

6. Brainstorm problems that the animals and horses might be having
 - i. The farm animals are jealous of the attention the horses get
 - ii. The farm animals think the horses are too loud
 - iii. The farm animals think the horses are too big
 - iv. The farm animals think the horses smell too bad



7. Show the five sections of the story:
 - a. Introduce the problem
 - b. The problem continues
 - c. The farm animals gather
 - d. The horse gets involved
 - e. Problem solved

Remember: K-1st Graders are encouraged to write 1 sentence for each section,
2nd Graders 2 sentences, 3rd Graders 3 sentences and so on.

Now to write!

Guide the students through the following steps so their story is organized and complete. They are free to write these ideas in their own words.

For sample ideas in italics, I'm using a student's story. She is a bilingual (Korean/English) speaker (age 11) and did a marvelous job!

8. On the first line, begin with a farm animal quoting an idiom to the horse:

"You eat like a horse!" complained the goat.

"Will you please stop horsing around?! Clucked the chicken.

9. Write the horse's response. Decide a name for the horse(s) and what kind of personality the horse has (kind, patient, humble, proud...).

"Well, I am a horse," protested Sam the horse.

"I was just reminding our keepers that it was breakfast time," replied Star the horse.

10. Write about how the problem continues.

The goat and all the other animals were bickering again. They didn't like the horses getting all the food and attention and they were going to do something about it. It all started on a bright sunny Monday morning when the campers arrived. Each camper hurried to see all the horses.

11. Write about how the farm animals gather to discuss a solution.

"Here is my plan. Let's put some weeds in the horses' food and make them get sick. There must be some poisonous plant around here," the chicken told everybody.

"No horseplay, chicken. The horses might die from the poison! The risk is too high," replied the turkey.

"Don't be a chicken!" exclaimed the chicken.

"Chill. Don't have a cow. How about we put rats on the horse," requested the cat.

"No! I'm really afraid of rats. I'd rather put mud on the horses so that they look dirty and smell bad," said a donkey.

"Why don't you go away and take a cat nap?" snapped the chicken.

12. Write how the horse gets involved.

"Silence!" the horse interrupted, "We don't eat the same thing." All the farm animals turned their attention to the horses.

13. Write how the problem gets solved and the attitudes of the animals change.

"We have to carry all those heavy campers on our back. Meanwhile, you can wander around freely," complained another horse. Suddenly, a stampede of tiny campers came rushing to the goats.

14. Write any concluding thoughts, statements or actions.

"There you go. Next time, hold your horses," said the horse sheepishly and fell into a deep sleep.