

There are many aspects of reading that children find difficult, even if they can decode and understand basic text. Two of these are unknown vocabulary words and idioms.

Young readers find idioms hard to understand, and this is not surprising. They are often not sure what image the idiom is based on. When reading the idiom "I'll *show you the ropes*" their visual image is one of actual ropes. Their reading sophistication is not at a level where they understand the expression to mean that someone will teach you how to do a certain job. (And they definitely don't understand that the expression was originally used in the context of [sailing](#), where an experienced sailor had to show a novice how to handle the ropes on a boat.)

It doesn't help that many of these expressions are really outdated in their references. Some of them come from ancient literature or even classic films. For example, "Little pitchers have big ears." Many students don't even know what a "pitcher" is or looks like.

Idioms comprise a huge part of what children read and say, so they should become familiar with them. Below is an activity students can do at home to practice. There are also sites to access for more review and practice.

 [idiom practice.ppt](#)

(After you click on the link above, click [Slide Show](#) on the top menu bar and then click [View Show](#) from the drop down menu)

Great sites for students to practice with idioms.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/idioms/>

http://www.usd352.k12.ks.us/teachers/north/mfrazier_site/languagearts/idioms.htm

Great sites for parents to review idioms.

<http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/>

<http://www.edict.com.hk/vlc/idioms/directory/>