

Idiom of the Month: IT'S GREEK TO ME

By Sarah Gudgeon

1 What do all five sentences below mean?

- a. I don't know what he's going on about
- b. I don't follow
- c. I've got no idea.
- d. I don't get it
- e. I'm lost

2a Read

Grandad, can you help me with my homework, please?

What is it?

Shakespeare and other great English Playwrights.

No, sorry love, it's all Greek to me! I'm better with maths and science.

2b Complete

My mum doesn't understand my maths homework, she says it's all _____ to her.

3 Read these idioms from famous Shakespeare plays.

Match each idiom to the correct meaning.

- a. Mike **didn't sleep a wink** last night, he was so worried about his English literature exam.
- b. Going to university is not the **be all and end all**- some people do very well in life by getting work experience or by travelling.
- c. Frank **was in stitches**; Mark's joke was just so funny.
- d. The ghost stories my brother used to tell me **made my hair stand on end**
- e. Ben's mum **waited with bated breath** while he opened his exam results- it was the longest minute ever.

1. only option worth considering
2. waited nervously
3. were very frightening
4. didn't sleep at all
5. couldn't stop laughing

4 Write

- a. Two things that have you in stitches _____
- b. Two situations in your life where you have waited with bated breath _____
- c. Two things that make your hair stand on end? _____

5 Answer these questions:

- a. Is there one thing in life that really is the be all and end all for you?
- b. When was the last time you didn't sleep a wink?

Teachers notes

By *Sarah Gudgeon*

1 What do all five sentences below mean?

I don't understand something

2b Complete

My mum doesn't understand my maths homework- she says it's all Greek to her.

3 Match each idiom to the correct meaning..

Before you give students the answers see if they can guess which play each idiom is from.

- a. 2 Cymbeline
- b. 1 Macbeth
- c. 5 Twelfth Night
- d. 3 Hamlet
- e. 4 The Merchant of Venice

4 Initiate a class discussion before students start exercise 4.

Ask them what has them in stitches (a particular joke or Tv programme for example), two situations where they've waited with bated breath (exam results, the birth of a baby brother or sister) and what makes their hair stand on end (spiders, horror movies).

5 Before exercise 5 ask students to share stories with a partner and then write down their experiences.

Focus on present tenses for (a) and narrative tenses (past simple, past continuous and past perfect) for (b).