



Vocabulary

Grade 5 Unit 2: The Renaissance: Art and Culture



Adages & Proverbs

Introduction: Adages & Proverbs



A **proverb** is a common statement that gives advice or expresses a well-known truth.

An **adage** is a familiar saying that expresses wisdom.

Proverbs and adages often use *figurative language*.

To understand the meaning of proverbs and adages, we have to recognize the difference between the *literal* meanings of the words in the statement and their *figurative* meanings.

The literal meaning is the dictionary definition of the words in the statement.

The figurative meaning is implied. It contains ideas, emotions, or connections that differ from the dictionary definition.

Let's look at a common expression that William Shakespeare may have used in the *Renaissance* unit:

The pen is mightier than the sword.

Is this statement literal or figurative? Do you think Shakespeare was really planning to win a battle with a pen?

The pen is mightier than the sword is an adage that uses figurative language.

If Shakespeare used this expression, he more than likely meant:

Words are stronger than acts of violence.

Let's Try It Together!



Let's look at this common expression Leonardo da Vinci might have used:

A watched pot never boils.

Do you think this statement is literal or figurative? Was Leonardo da Vinci really sitting around watching water boil?

Stay seated if you think **A watched pot never boils** is a literal statement.

Stand up if you think **A watched pot never boils** is a figurative statement.

Turn to a partner and discuss what you think Leonardo da Vinci meant if he used this expression:

A watched pot never boils.

A watched pot never boils is an adage that uses figurative language.

If Leonardo da Vinci used this expression, he really meant:

Time passes slowly if you are waiting
for something to happen.

Now you try one with a partner. Look at this expression Michelangelo might have used:

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Do you think this statement is literal or figurative? Was Michelangelo really looking for silver in clouds?

Stand up if you think **Every cloud has a silver lining** is a literal statement.

Stay seated if you think **Every cloud has a silver lining** is a figurative statement.

Turn to a partner and discuss what you think Michelangelo meant when he used this expression:

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Did you remember the steps?

1. Read the statement or expression.

Every cloud has a silver lining.

2. Decide if the statement is literal or figurative:

figurative

3. Determine the meaning of the expression:

Something good may come from a bad situation.

Now try one by yourself!



Look at this common expression:

The early bird gets the worm.

Write the word **literal** if you think this statement is literal.

Write the word **figurative** if you think this statement is figurative.

Then, write what you think this statement means.

Answer



Figurative

If you arrive early, you have a better chance for success.