

Vocabulary

Grade 5 Unit 4: Don Quixote: A Hopeful Knight's Tale



Idioms and Figurative Language

Introduction: Idioms and Figurative Language



An **idiom** is a common expression or phrase that has its own meaning, which is different from the literal meaning of the words in the phrase.

Idioms often use **figurative language**.

To understand the meaning of an idiom, we have to recognize the difference between the *literal* meanings of the words in the phrase and their *figurative* meanings.

The *literal* meaning of a word is its dictionary definition.

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

Let's look at this common expression from our unit on Don Quixote:

stand his ground

Is this statement *literal* or *figurative*? Do you think this means Don Quixote is really just standing there?

Stand his ground is an idiom that uses figurative language.

If someone uses this expression, they really mean:

to maintain your position or opinion

Let's Try It Together!



Let's look at this common expression:

sitting on the fence

Do you think this statement is *literal* or *figurative*? Is someone really sitting on a fence?

Stay seated if you think **sitting on the fence** is a literal statement.

Stand up if you think **sitting on the fence** is a figurative statement.

Turn to a partner and discuss what you think someone means when they use this expression:

sitting on the fence

Sitting on the fence is an idiom that uses figurative language.

If someone uses this expression, they really mean:

I can't decide.

Now you try one with a partner. Look at this common expression:

kill two birds with one stone

Do you think this statement is literal or figurative? Is someone really throwing stones at birds?

Stay seated if you think **kill two birds with one stone** is a literal statement.

Stand up if you think **kill two birds with one stone** is a figurative statement.

Turn to a partner and discuss what you think this expression really means:

kill two birds with one stone

Did you remember the steps?

1. Read the statement or expression.

kill two birds with one stone

2. Decide if the statement is literal or figurative.

figurative

3. Determine the meaning of the idiom.

accomplish two things at once

Now Try One by Yourself!



Look at this common expression:

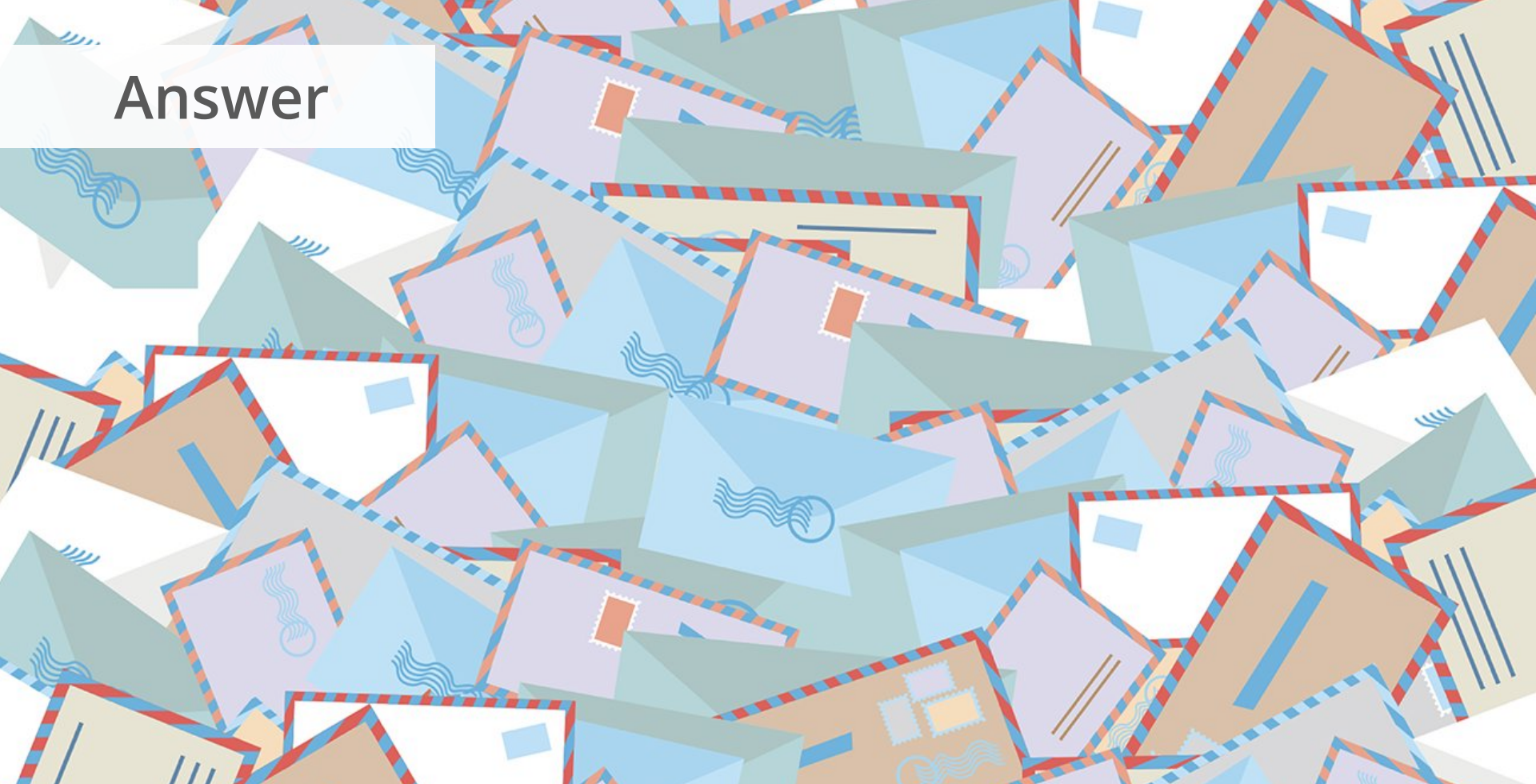
'till the cows come home

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

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

Then, write what you think this expression means.

Answer



figurative; for a very long time