

The Alice Sound



MAKING CHARACTERS FROM IDIOMS

WRITING RESOURCE

The Alice Sound

WRITING RESOURCES



LSO London
Symphony
Orchestra

Queen Mary
University of London

MAKING CHARACTERS FROM IDIOMS

An idiom (or idiomatic expression) is a set of words with a non-literal meaning that you can't work out by looking at the individual words. It sounds complicated but we use them all the time, and so did Lewis Carroll. There are about 25,000 in the English language alone! It's a form of figurative language, like metaphors, similes and hyperbole.

Here are some examples, with their meaning:

Go back to the drawing board – to start again

Go on a wild goose chase – to do something pointless

It's a piece of cake – it's really easy

The early bird gets the worm – the first people who arrive get the best things

Fit as a fiddle – in very good health

Here are some more – can you guess what they mean?

To be under the weather

To have bigger fish to fry

To act like a bull in a china shop

In Wonderland, Carroll doesn't just use the expressions but makes the figures in them into actual characters. He takes them literally rather than metaphorically. He takes the common Victorian expressions 'mad as a hatter', 'to grin like a Cheshire cat' and gives us a Hatter who is mad and a grinning puss.



TASK:

Use any of the expressions above – or find more for yourself and make them into characters, e.g. a cucumber person based on 'As cool as a cucumber'.

Draw your character and then write a story about them. Include details about how they behave, where they live, who their friends are.

Or, write a CV for your character with a profile picture, an outline of their skills, the jobs they have done, where they went to school.

Or, imagine this character is attending the school where you are the headmaster and you write a report about them.