

## Animals and colours

The idioms in these exercises all contain words related to animals or colours.

**1** Circle the correct animal to complete each idiom. Then match the idioms (1–6) with their meanings (a–f).

1 I don't like to leave my team for too long. **When the cat's away, the (mice / rabbits / worms) will play!** ..... *f*.....

2 The children **fight like (bird / cat / wolf) and dog.** .....

3 I intend to get there before seven o'clock. **The early (bird / mouse / cat) catches the worm.**  
.....

4 He seemed nice enough but he was **a (lion / wolf / horse) in sheep's clothing.**  
.....

5 I usually **kill two (birds / dogs / sheep) with one stone** and do some shopping on the way to pick up the children. ....

6 There's no point **running around like a headless (chicken / horse / dog).** .....

**a** to manage to achieve two things at the same time

**b** someone who appears harmless but is in fact dangerous

**c** to fight a lot

**d** moving in a disorganized way, and not thinking calmly or achieving anything

**e** People who get up early achieve more.

**f** People behave badly when their boss is not there.

2 Circle the correct colour to complete each idiom. Then match the idioms (1–6) with their meanings (a–f).

1 My mother grows all her own vegetables. She has (green / brown / red) fingers.

..... *d* .....

2 Are you sure you're okay? You're as (grey / white / pink) as a sheet. ....

3 She gave me a (black / blue / purple) look as she left the room, clearly furious.

.....

4 You can tell her until you are (red / blue / pink) in the face but she won't believe you.

.....

5 Carlos is going to see my favourite band and I'm (black / green / yellow) with envy.

.....

6 They rolled out the (red / purple / blue) carpet for the actor's visit. ....

- a again and again, but with no effect
- b wanting very much to do or have the same
- c gave a very special welcome
- d is very good at gardening
- e very pale
- f a look showing anger

**3** Complete the conversation with idioms from exercises 1 and 2.

**Maria:** Are you okay, Anna? You're as white as a <sup>1</sup> ..... *sheet* .....

**Anna:** I haven't had a very good day, actually. I've had a headache all afternoon and the kids have been fighting <sup>2</sup> ..... . On top of that I've been running around <sup>3</sup> ....., trying to get things prepared for the party on Sunday.

**Maria:** Oh poor you. You need a holiday!

**Anna:** I know. A colleague of mine is off to Portugal for two weeks and I'm green with <sup>4</sup> ..... . I really need a break.

**Maria:** Do you have a holiday planned for this summer?

**Anna:** No. Peter says he can't take the time off work.

**Maria:** But everyone needs a holiday!

**Anna:** I know. I tell him that till I'm blue <sup>5</sup> ..... but he doesn't listen. He's in charge of a big team, and he doesn't like to leave them for any length of time. You know what they say: while <sup>6</sup> ....., the mice will play.

4 For each sentence, complete the response with an idiom from exercise 1 or 2.

1 A: Get to the market as early in the morning as you can.

B: *Good idea! ..... The early bird catches the worm.....*

2 A: Your garden looks fantastic, Martine.

B: *Thank you! People say .....*

3 A: You should have seen how angry she was when he asked her to leave.

B: *I know. She gave .....*

4 A: They treated him so well during his last visit to the country.

B: *Yes, they did. They .....*

5 A: He wasn't the nice man he seemed to be.

B: *That's true. He .....*

6 A: You could drop these books off at the library while you're shopping in the town centre.

B: *Good idea! Then I can .....*

## Animals and colours – Answer key

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### Exercise 1

- 1 mice f
- 2 cat c
- 3 bird e
- 4 wolf b
- 5 birds a
- 6 chicken d

### Exercise 2

- 1 green d
- 2 white e
- 3 black f
- 4 blue a
- 5 green b
- 6 red c

### Exercise 3

- 1 sheet
- 2 like cat and dog
- 3 like a headless chicken
- 4 envy
- 5 in the face
- 6 the cat's away

### Exercise 4

- 1 Good idea! The early bird catches the worm.
- 2 Thank you! People say I have green fingers.
- 3 I know. She gave him a black look.
- 4 Yes, they did. They rolled out the red carpet.
- 5 That's true. He was a wolf in sheep's clothing.
- 6 Good idea! Then I can kill two birds with one stone.