IDIOMS WITH COLOURS

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An idiom is a sequence of words which has a different meaning as a group from the meaning it would have if you understood each word separately. Idioms add colour to the language, help us to emphasise meaning and make the language lively and interesting. The following exercises are based on color idioms.

1. **Each example below has an idiom with a color word. Can you guess the meaning of each idiom from the context? Try to match each idiom (1-6) with its definition (a-f).**
   1) I spent too much money this month and I don't have enough money in the bank to pay my bills. I am ***in the red***.
   2) He is very careful with his money. He never overspends and so he is always ***in the black***.
   3) I didn't feel like going to the party with John, but I didn't want to hurt his feeling, so I told ***a white lie*** and said I was busy.
   4) Last month I lost my job and my boyfriend broke up with me, so I was really ***feeling blue***.
   5) I was ***green with envy*** when I learned Jim won first prize in the lucky draw - he got a free trip to Hawaii!
   6) The news of her death came ***out of the blue***. No one was expecting it because she was still so young.

Idioms	**Definitions**
1) in the red …….	*a) to feel sad*
2) in the black …….	*b) in debt*
3) a white lie …….	*c) have money*
4) to feel blue …….	*d) jealous of someone else's good fortune*
5) green with envy …….	*e) unexpectedly*
6) out of the blue …….	*f) a lie that doesn't cause any harm*

2. **Each sentence below has an idiom, but there is something wrong with it. Can you find and correct each one?**

1) I got the news out from the blue that she was getting married!
2) She was green from envy when her sister won the beauty contest.
3) Ian doesn't have to worry about money. He's always in black.
4) Hana was feeling the blue because no one paid any attention.
5) My sister enjoys shopping very much. She is always in red by the end of each month.
6) I told a black lie. I didn't want to attend the party so I said I was busy.

3. Answer each question with *yes* or *no*.

1) I just got a promotion and I have met a great guy. Should I *feel blue*?
2) Ann's baby isn't pretty, but I told her that her baby was sweet and cute. Did I tell a *white lie*?
3) We knew John was getting married the next month, so when we received an invitation to his wedding last week, did the news *come out of the blue*?
4) I don't have enough money to pay for my credit card expenses. Am I *in the black*?
5) I truly felt happy for my sister when she won the singing contest. Was I *green with envy*?

4. Complete each gap with the correct colour idioms:

1. Our company has lost a lot of money recently and now we're in the ……... .
2. My mother just loves gardening: she has …… fingers.
3. When we heard the news, it came completely out of the …… .
4. Peter is so honest: he would never tell even a …… lie.
5. When Jane saw Mary's car, she was …… with envy.
6. Congratulations! You've passed all your exams with flying …… .
7. The teacher gave the boy a ……look when he broke the window on purpose.
8. When my son came after that fight with the other boys, he was …… and …… all over.
9. This party is so boring. Let's leave and paint the town …… instead.
10. You know, Fred has always been the …… sheep in the family.

5. **See if you can match the meanings with the correct idioms.**

Idioms:

a) a red herring ……..
b) a red letter day ……..
c) red tape ……..
d) paint the town red ……..
e) once in a blue moon …….
f) with flying colours ……..
g) a white elephant ……..
h) black and blue ……..
i) to be the black sheep ……..
j) a black look ……..
k) to have green fingers ……..

Meanings:

1. a number of official rules and regulations which seem unnecessary
2. a very special and happy occasion
3. to be very good at gardening
4. very successfully
5. an expression of anger on your face
6. something that takes the attention away from the subject being discussed
7. the person in the family who is thought of as being very bad/naughty
8. bruised
9. something which cost a lot of money but isn't really very useful
10. seldom
11. go out and have an enjoyable time

6. Choose the right answer.

1. She is feeling …… because her boyfriend didn't call her yesterday.
   A blue B green C red D white
2. How many little …… lies do we tell every day?
   A blue B green C red D white
3. Her father and mother saw …… when they found out that their daughter was dating that suspicious guy.
   A blue B green C red D white
4. Lena and Nick will be …… with envy when they see my new car!
   A blue B green C red D white
5. That expensive gift turned out to be a ……. elephant. We didn't have any use for it, and we couldn't sell it either.
   A blue B green C red D white
6. I tried to talk him out of it. Actually, I talked to him till I was …… in the face, but he didn't change his mind.
   A blue B green C red D white
7. They have to sell their property because their business has been in the ……. for six years.
   A blue B green C red D white
8. The idea came to him right out of the ……..… when he was making coffee in the kitchen.
   A blue B green C red D white
9. There was so much …… tape that we did not get the required papers in time.
   A blue B green C red D white
10. He punched me in the face and gave me a …… eye.
    A green B white C grey D black
11. How can you argue your salary now? It's there on your contract in ……. .
    A blue and white B black and white C red and white D white and black
12. The police caught him …… -handed as he steal some jeans from the shop.
    A green B grey C brown D red
13. My brother only rings home once in a …….. moon. I wish he would ring our parents more often.
    A green B black C red D blue
14. When someone is good at gardening, they have " …….. fingers".
    A green B yellow C orange D purple
15. Then he started talking about the cost of a new computer, which was a ……. herring, because we've got plenty of computers.
    A red B black C green D white

KEYS

1.

1. b, 2. c, 3. f, 4. a, 5. d, 6. e.

2.

1. out ~~from~~ the blue → out of the blue
2. green ~~from~~ envy → green with envy
3. in black → in the black
4. was feeling ~~the~~ blue → was feeling blue
5. in red → in the red
6. a ~~black~~ lie → a white lie

3.

1. No 2. Yes 3. No 4. No 5. No

4.

1. red
2. green
3. blue
4. white
5. green
6. colours
7. black
8. black and blue
9. red
10. black

5.

a) 6
b) 2
c) 1
d) 11
e) 10
f) 4
g) 9
h) 8
i) 7
j) 5
k) 3

7.

1. A
2. D
3. C
4. B
5. D
6. A
7. C
8. A
9. C
10. D
11. B
12. D
13. D
14. A
15. A