

What Does "An Apple for the Teacher" Really Mean?

By Shelly Lyon

Apples and the first day of school always seem to go together. Most all classrooms have apple motifs in them at this time of year. Soon bright faced little children will bring these polished fruits to us, their teachers, as part of the great tradition of starting school. "But why?" you ask. What does it all mean?

Ah, those are exactly the questions I will pose to my shiny new group of fourth graders this September. As part of our apple study we will brainstorm a list of sayings that include the word apple in them. These are a few I've been able to come up with, with a little help from my friends:

- * You are the apple of my eye.
- * An apple for the teacher.
- * Don't upset the apple cart.
- * An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- * As American as apple pie.
- * An apple doesn't fall far from the tree.
- * Applesauce!
- * How do you like them apples?
- * The Big Apple
- * Rotten to the core.
- * Apple polisher.
- * Don't let one rotten apple spoil the whole barrel.
- * You're a good apple.
- * Apple pie, motherhood, and the American flag.

I will ask my fourth graders to choose an expression from their brainstormed list. Then I want them to predict what they think the expression means. Next I will ask them to find out what other people think it means. If possible they could research the meanings or just ask adults they trust to help with the translation. With that information the students will write a paragraph to explain their findings. Finally, I want them to create a cartoon using the apple phrase and have their characters acting out the meaning.

All essays and cartoons will be displayed on a board with an apple border, of course. I'll bet most of you have one of those in your classrooms even now. You probably have loads of apples, too. Come join us in this project, it will be a bushel of fun!