

ANIMAL-FRIENDLY IDIOMS THAT YOUR STUDENTS WILL LOVE

Replace outdated phrases that are harmful to animals with these fun alternatives. Plus, get exclusive idiom posters for your lesson!

The words that we use have the power to influence those around us. Unfortunately, many of us grew up hearing common phrases that perpetuate violence toward animals, such as “kill two birds with one stone,” “beat a dead horse,” and “bring home the bacon.” These old sayings are often passed down in classrooms during lessons on literary devices.

While these phrases may seem harmless, they carry meaning and can send mixed messages to students about the relationship between humans and other animals and can normalize abuse. Teaching students to use animal-friendly language can cultivate a compassionate attitude between humans and other animals and help end the epidemic of animal abuse perpetuated by young people. Try using some of the following fun idioms in your lessons this year:

Harmful	Helpful	Meaning
Kill two birds with one stone	Feed two birds with one scone	Accomplish two things with one action
Let the cat out of the bag	Spill the beans	Tell a secret
Take the bull by the horns	Take the flower by the thorns	Handle a problem fearlessly
Be a guinea pig	Be a test tube	Be tested on
Hold your horses	Hold the phone	Wait
Open a can of worms	Open Pandora's box	Create a situation that will cause problems
Bring home the bacon	Bring home the bagels	Make a living

Harmful	Helpful	Meaning
Beat a dead horse	Feed a fed horse	Try to make something happen that has no chance of happening
More than one way to skin a cat	More than one way to peel a potato	More than one way to complete a task
Put all your eggs in one basket	Put all your berries in one bowl	Bet everything on one possibility
Cry over spilled milk	Cry over burnt toast	Be upset about something that has already happened and can't be changed
Packed in like sardines	Packed in like pickles	Squeezed tightly together
On a wild goose chase	Out chasing rainbows	Looking everywhere for something that can't be found
Eat crow	Eat words	Admit to being wrong
Ants in your pants	Pepper in your pants	Inability to sit still
Walk on eggshells	Walk on broken glass	Be careful not to offend someone
Run around like a chicken with its head cut off	Run around like a clock with no hands	Run around in a frantic, distracted manner (Created by Sonya Tunstall in Dayton, Ohio)
Have bigger fish to fry	Have bigger kites to fly	Have higher priorities to attend to (Created by Trevor Thomas in Fayetteville, Arkansas)
Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.	Give people apples and you feed them for a day. Teach people to grow apple trees and you feed them for a lifetime.	Teach people, and you give them invaluable skills that last a lifetime. (Created by Nina Otazo and her 11th grade class of 2021 in Houston, Texas)



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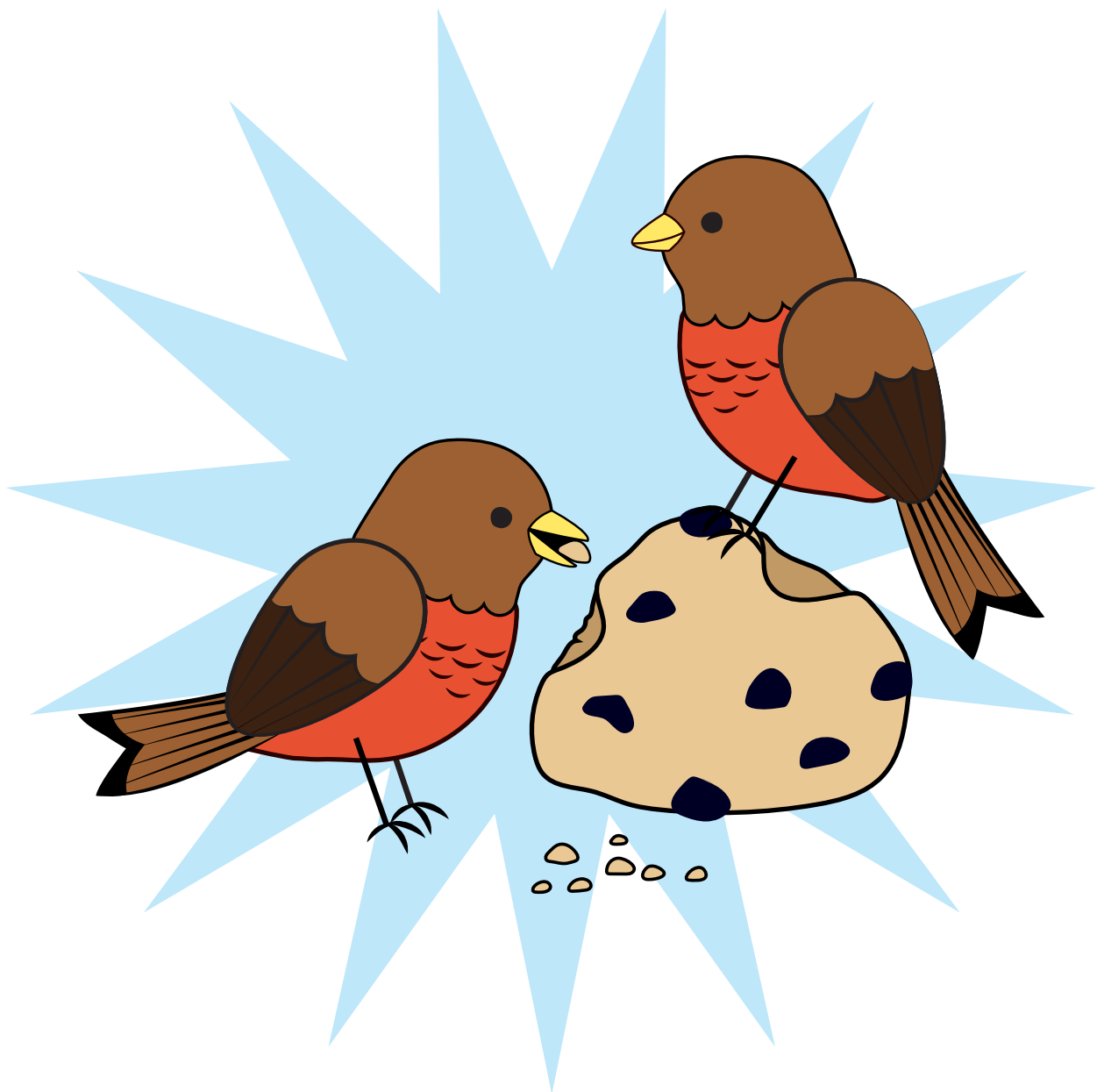


HARMFUL:

Kill two birds with one stone

HELPFUL:

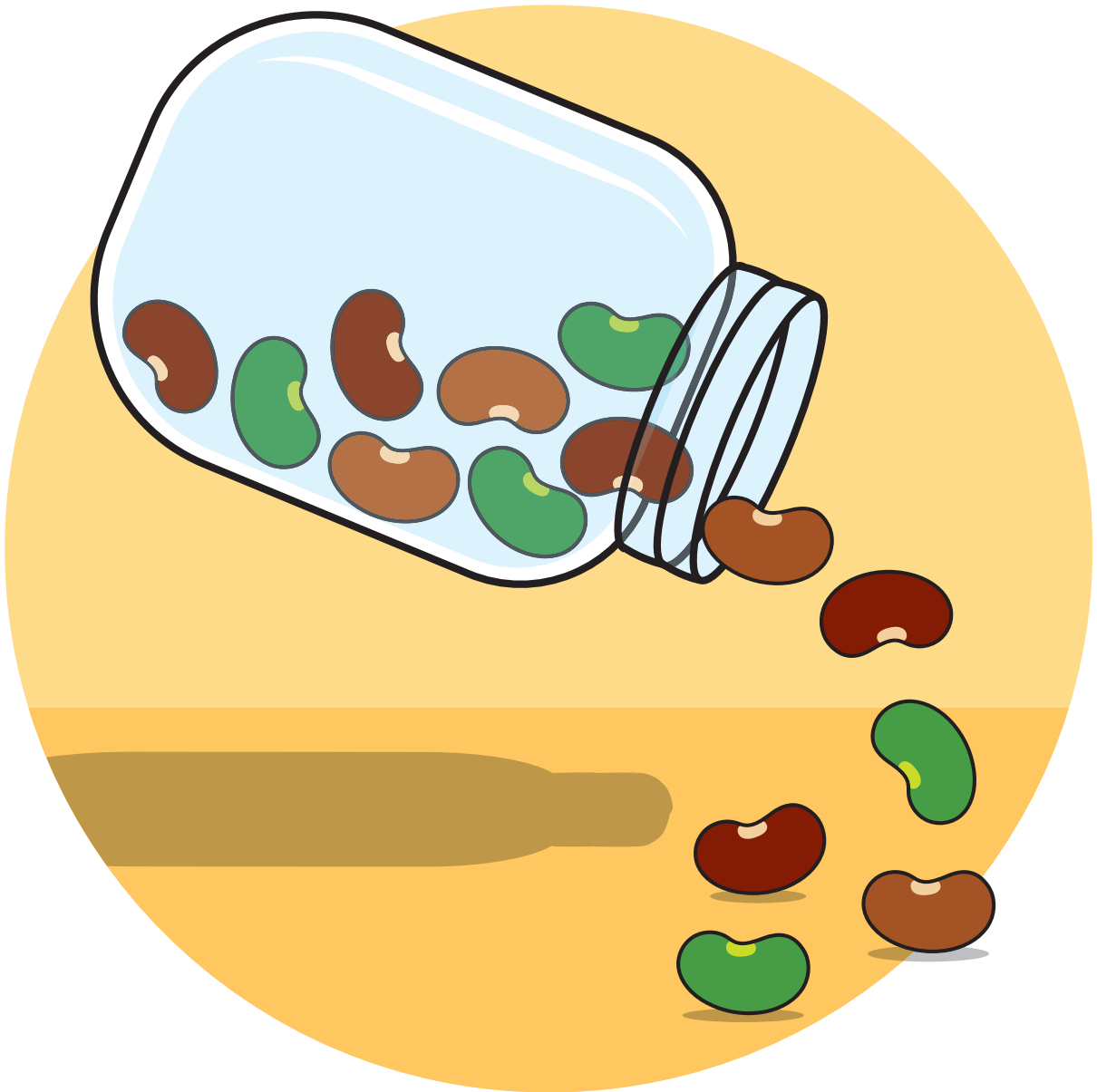
Feed two birds with one scone



MEANING: Accomplish two things with one action

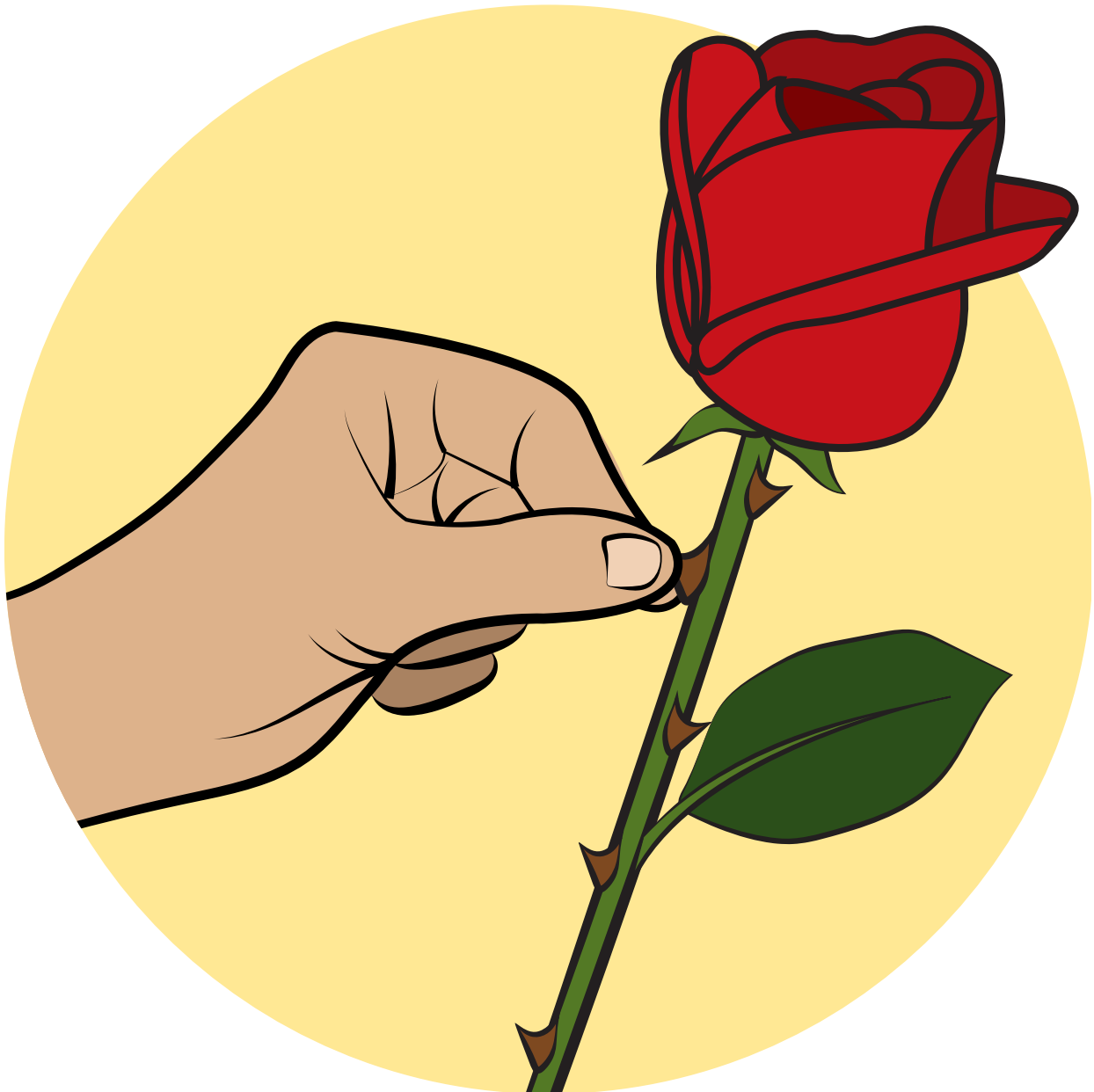
HARMFUL: Let the cat out of the bag

HELPFUL: Spill the beans



MEANING: Tell a secret

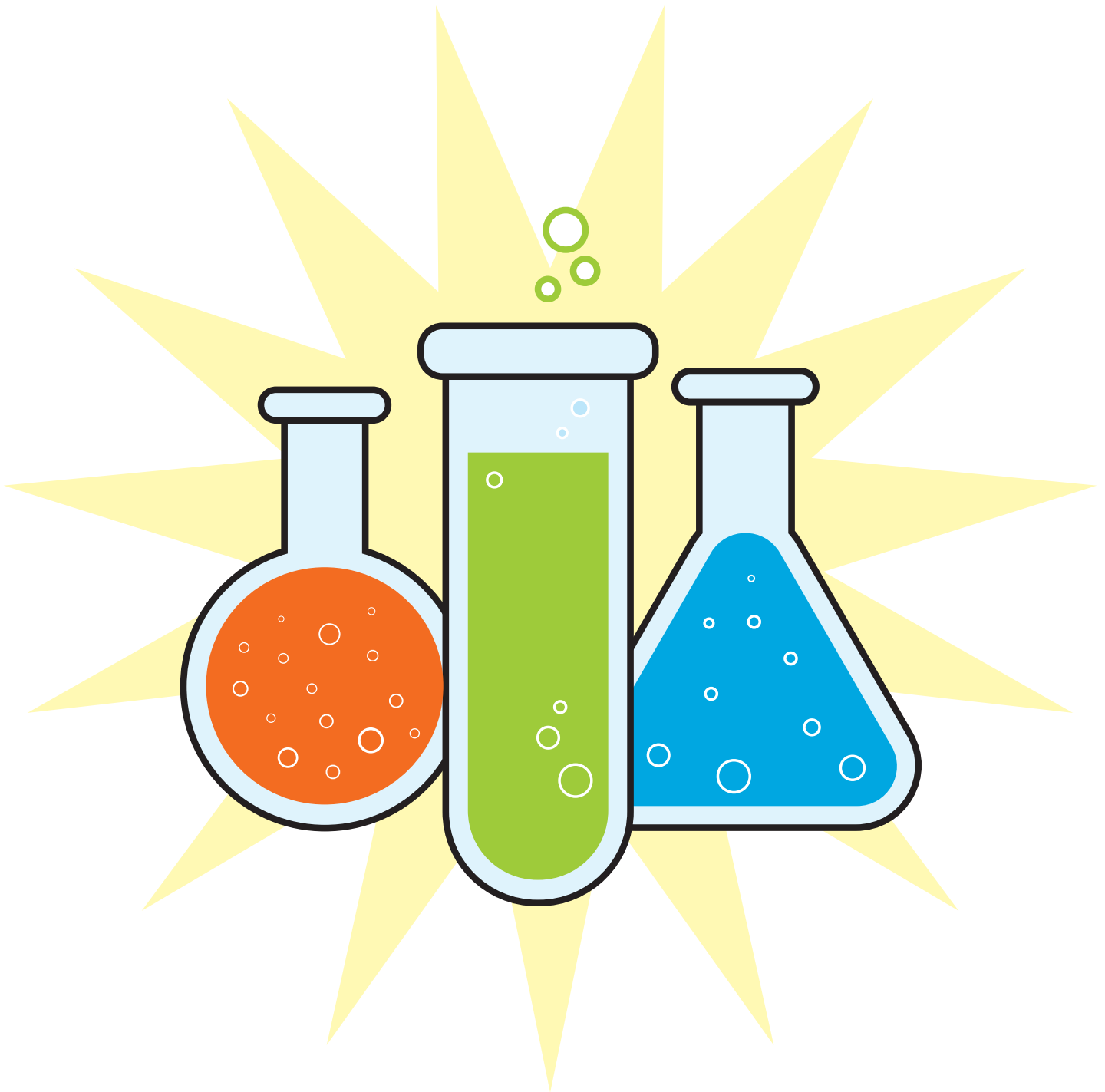
HARMFUL: Take the bull by the horns
HELPFUL: Take the flower by the thorns



MEANING: Handle a problem fearlessly

HARMFUL: Be a guinea pig

HELPFUL: Be a test tube



MEANING: Be tested on

HARMFUL: Hold your horses

HELPFUL: Hold the phone



MEANING: Wait

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HARMFUL: Open a can of worms

HELPFUL: Open Pandora's box



MEANING: Create a situation that will cause problems

HARMFUL: Bring home the bacon

HELPFUL: Bring home the bagels



MEANING: Make a living

HARMFUL: Beat a dead horse

HELPFUL: Feed a fed horse

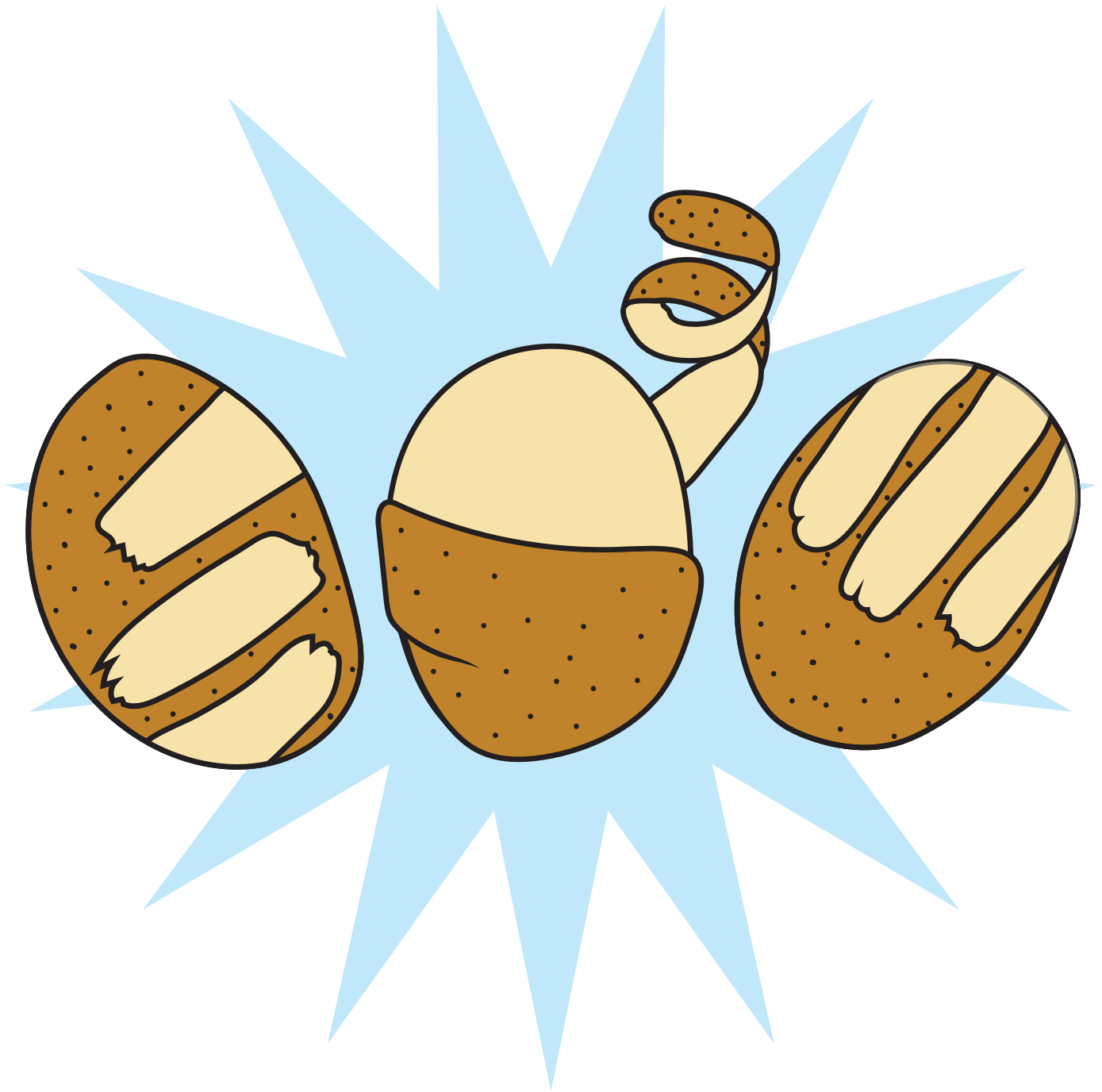


MEANING: Try to make something happen that has no chance of happening.

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HARMFUL: More than one way to skin a cat

HELPFUL: More than one way to peel a potato

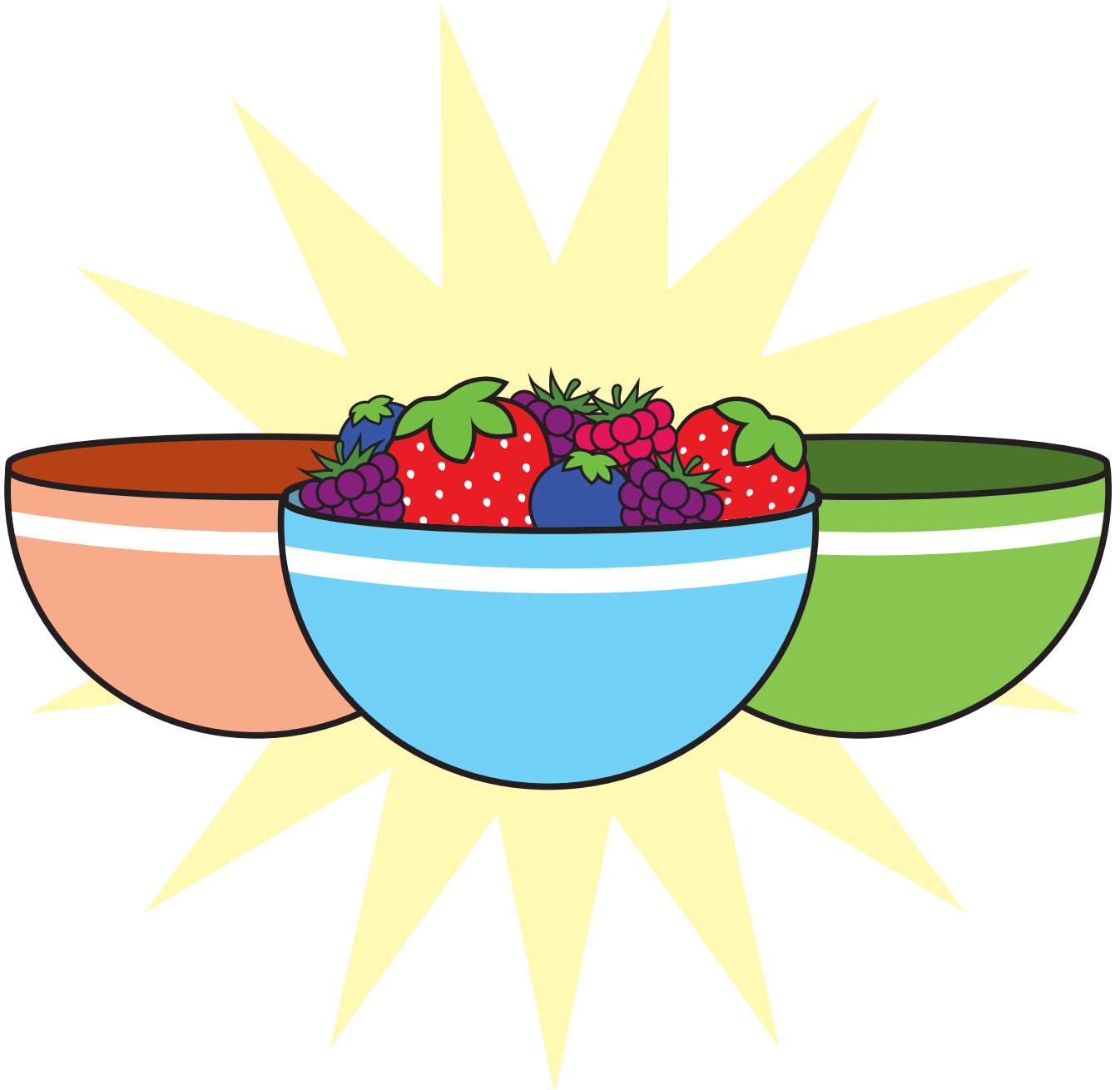


MEANING: More than one way to complete a task

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HARMFUL: Put all your eggs in one basket

HELPFUL: Put all your berries in one bowl



MEANING: Bet everything on one possibility

HARMFUL: Cry over spilled milk

HELPFUL: Cry over burnt toast

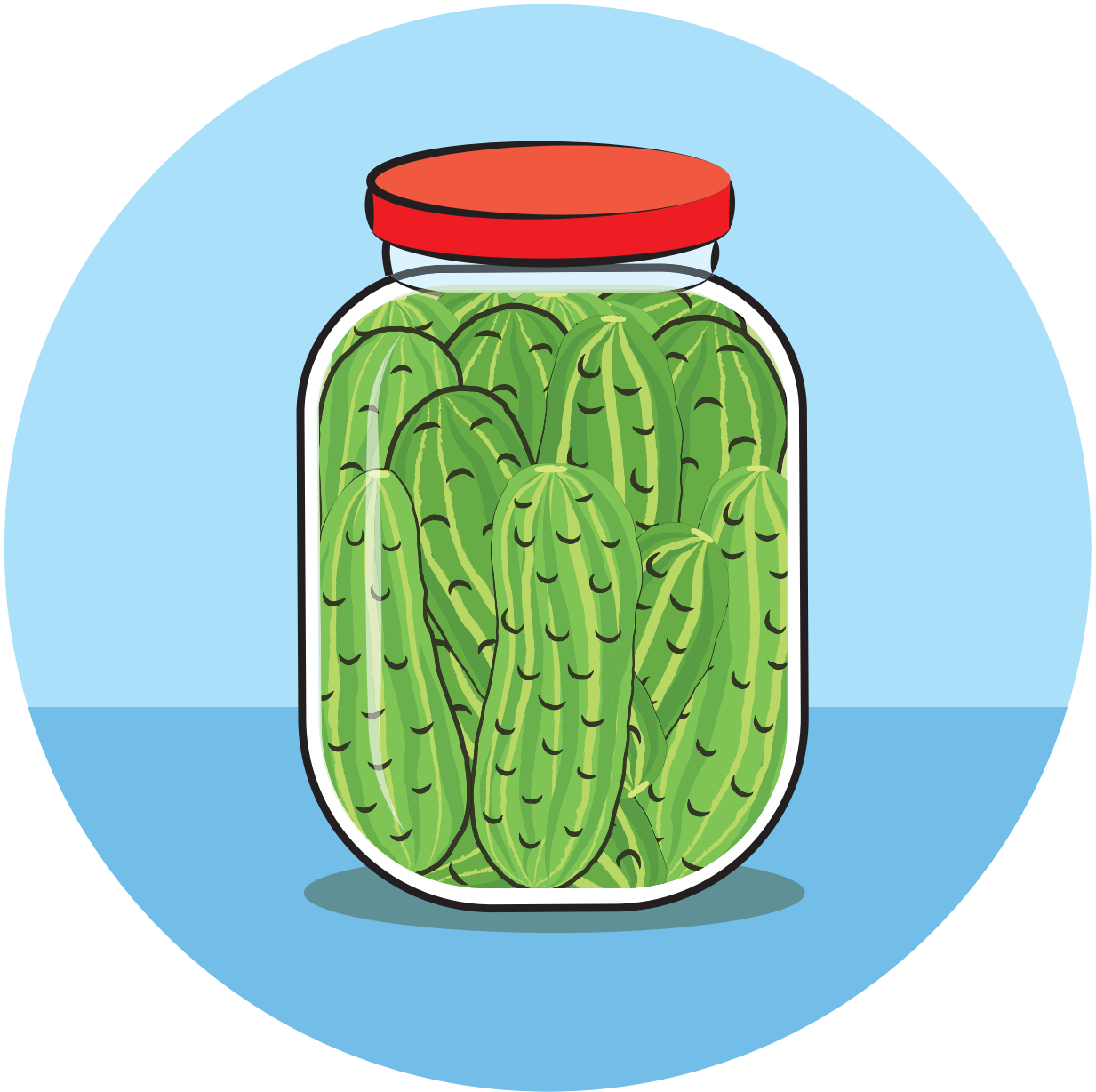


MEANING: Be upset about something that has already happened and can't be changed

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HARMFUL: Packed in like sardines

HELPFUL: Packed in like pickles



MEANING: Squeezed tightly together

HARMFUL: On a wild goose chase

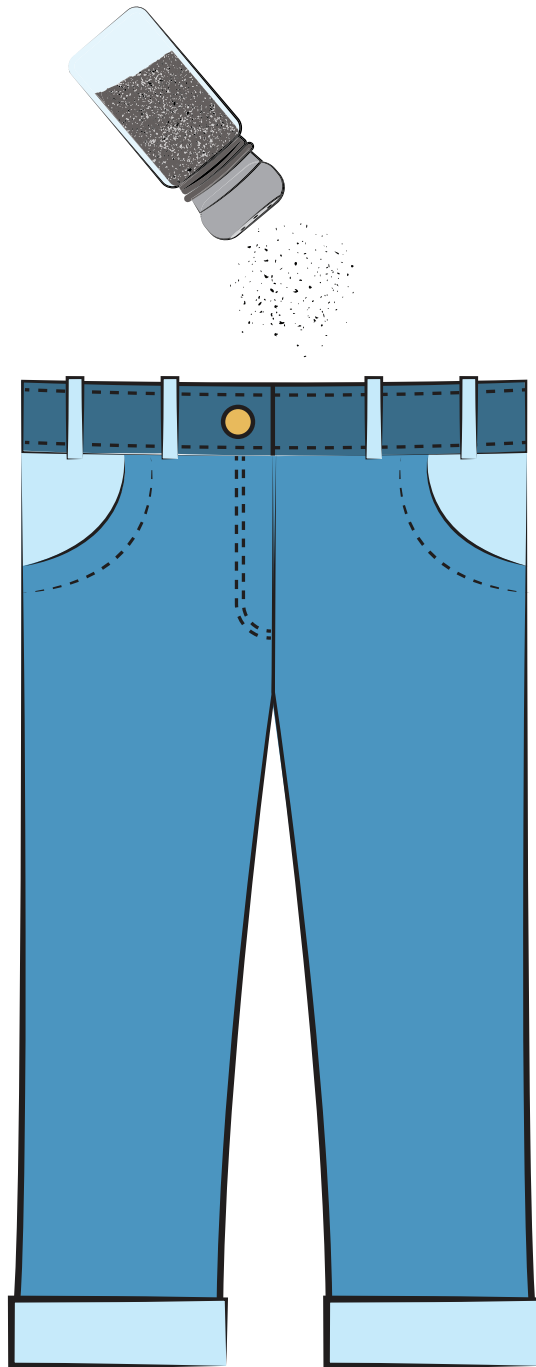
HELPFUL: Out chasing rainbows



MEANING: Looking everywhere for something that can't be found

HARMFUL: Ants in your pants

HELPFUL: Pepper in your pants



MEANING: Inability to sit still

HARMFUL: Walk on eggshells
HELPFUL: Walk on broken glass



MEANING: Be careful not to offend someone

HARMFUL:

Run around like a chicken with its head cut off

HELPFUL:

Run around like a clock with no hands



MEANING: Run around in a frantic, distracted manner

HARMFUL:

Have bigger fish to fry

HELPFUL:

Have bigger kites to fly



MEANING: Have higher priorities to attend to

HARMFUL:

**Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.**

HELPFUL:

**Give people apples and you feed them
for a day. Teach people to grow apple trees
and you feed them for a lifetime.**



MEANING: Teach people, and you give them invaluable skills that last a lifetime.