

# PROVERBS

PROVERB	MEANING
<b>A</b>	
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.	Something that one already has is better than something that one may or may not be able to get.
A bully is always a coward.	A bully always finds his victim among those who are weaker than he is because he does not have the courage to attack anyone his own size.
A burnt child dreads the fire.	A painful experience will not be soon forgotten. Instead, one will be careful to see that it does not happen again.
A cat may look at a king.	An inferior can have his rights to do anything, even in front of those who are more superior than he is.
A constant guest is never welcome.	If someone comes too often, he may be looked upon as causing inconvenience to the host.
A contented mind is a perpetual feast.	Contentment of mind is the cause of lasting happiness. Striving for such contentment is more important than striving for material riches.
A creaking gate hangs longest.	People in weak health often live longer than those in good health.
A drowning man will clutch at a straw.	A desperate man will do anything to save himself from ruin.
A fault confessed is half redressed.	If you have done something wrong and admit to it, you have begun a long way towards putting things right again.
A fool and his money are soon parted.	A wise man spends his money prudently while a foolish man spends his without thought and he is soon penniless.

PROVERB	MEANING
A friend in need is a friend indeed.	A real friend is one who helps us and remains with us when we are in trouble.
A good husband makes a good wife.	A husband who treats his wife well is likely to be treated well in return.
A good name is sooner lost than won.	It takes a long time to build up a good reputation, but this reputation is quickly lost by just one crime or mistake.
A heavy purse makes a light heart.	A person can afford to be cheerful when he has no financial problem.
A house divided against itself cannot stand.	Discord breaks up families.
A hungry man is an angry man.	A person will soon become desperate when he has nothing to rely upon.
A jack-of-all-trades is a master of none.	One should concentrate on one thing and learn to do it well or else he is no good at all tasks.
A miss is as good as a mile.	Whether one had missed his objective by a narrow margin or a wide one, he still failed.
A rolling stone gathers no moss.	A person who often changes his job will not succeed in life.
A rose by any other name will smell as sweet.	It is not what a thing is called that matters, but what it is.
A stitch in time saves nine.	A prompt action may save a lot of work later.
A watched pot never boils.	When we are looking forward to something, time always seems to pass very slowly.
Absence makes the heart grow fonder.	People feel more affection ( for friends and relatives ) when parted.
Actions speak louder than words.	It is what we do that matters, not just what we say.
After a storm comes a calm.	There must be something better after every piece of unpleasantness or argument.

PROVERB	MEANING
All good things come to an end.	Pleasures cannot go on forever, for all things change.
All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy.	One should not always be playing.
All roads lead to Rome.	Different people can arrive at one common objective even by different means.
All that glitters is not gold.	Do not judge a thing by its attractive appearance.
All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.	One should not always be working.
All's fair in love and war.	It is permissible to use every stratagem and take advantage of every opportunity.
All's fish that comes to the net.	We should take advantage of everything that comes our way.
All's well that ends well.	It is the end that matters, making up for previous failure and disappointment.
Any port in a storm	In time of difficulty or danger, any refuge is better than none.
As you sow, so shall you reap.	One will be punished or rewarded depending on whether one has led a virtuous or sinful life.
<b>B</b>	
Barking dogs seldom bite.	A man who utters threats loudly need not be taken seriously.
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.	Different people have different opinions about what is attractive.
Beauty is only skin deep.	We cannot judge by looks alone.
Beggars can't be choosers.	When a person is in desperate circumstances, he has no choice but to accept whatever is offered to him.

PROVERB	MEANING
Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave.	The woman who marries an old man will fare better than the woman who marries a young one, on the grounds that the old man is likely to make a fuss of his young wife, while the young man will expect her to make a fuss of him.
Better late than never.	It is better to do a thing after much procrastination than not to do it at all.
Better safe than sorry.	It is better to be safe than to do anything that we may soon regret.
Better to light a candle than curse the darkness.	When faced with difficulties, it is better to do something to improve the situation instead of complaining about it.
Birds of a feather flock together.	People with similar tastes or interests tend to come together in groups.
Blood is thicker than water.	The ties of kinship are always strong.
Books and friends should be few but good.	People who have too many books often find that they do not have the time to read them. Similarly, people who have too many friends cannot find enough time to cultivate friendship with all of them.
Bread is the staff of life.	It is food that supports life.
Brevity is the soul of wit.	A witty remark or retort is all the better for being short.
<b>C</b>	
Call a spade a spade.	Speak plainly and to the point, saying exactly what one means using the simplest term.
Care killed a cat.	Do not worry.
Catch not at the shadow and lose the substance.	We should not waste time on trivial matters, because in doing so we may neglect the essential matter itself.
Charity begins at home.	A person's first duty is to help his own family members.

PROVERB	MEANING
Clothes do not make the man.	It is our character that really matters.
Comparisons are odious.	We should not make comparisons between two people, because it is very likely unjust to one or the other of them – or to both.
Courtesy costs nothing.	There is nothing to be lost by behaving in a courteous way.
Cross the stream where it is shallowest.	Find the simplest means of achieving your object.
Cut your coat according to your cloth.	One should adjust his expenditure according to his resources.
<b>D</b>	
Dead men tell no tales.	Death silences a man forever.
Deeds, not words.	A person is known and judged more by his actions than by what he says.
Do as you would be done by.	Treat others as you would like them to treat you.
Do not cast your pearls before swine.	Do not give a precious thing to a person who is unable to appreciate its value.
Do not change horses in midstream.	If we think that it is necessary to make changes, we must choose the right moment to make them.
Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.	Never be too optimistic about anything. One should wait until one's problem is over before he boasts of his success.
Do not cross a bridge till you come to it.	Do not worry about something before it has happened.
Do not cry before you are hurt.	You should not give way to misfortune until it actually happens, for it may not happen after all.
Do not empty the baby out with the bath water.	In achieving your aim, make sure you do not do something else that will cancel out your achievement.
Do not have too many irons in the fire.	If we attempt to do much at once, we shall not do anything properly.

PROVERB	MEANING
Do not make a mountain out of a molehill.	Do not make a fuss about nothing.
Do not make yourself a mouse, or the cat will eat you.	If you belittle yourself, people will take advantage of you.
Do not put all your eggs in one basket.	When investing your capital, do not venture the whole amount into a single speculation, but spread it over several.
Do not put new wine into old bottles.	We should not try to bring together things that are out of keeping with one another.
Do not put the cart before the horse.	We should not get things back to front, but should deal with them in their right order.
Do not ride the high horse.	Do not be arrogant.
Do not teach your grandmother to suck eggs.	Do not offer advice to those who are more experienced than you are.
Do not tell tales out of school.	Do not make public anything that should be kept private.
Do not wash your dirty linen in public.	We should not discuss intimate family matters in public, especially if they are of shameful nature.

## E

Early bird catches the worm.	One could miss opportunities by not acting promptly.
Easier said than done	It is easier to talk about doing a thing than it is to do it.
East or west, home is best.	There is no place like home.
Easy come, easy go.	Those who get money without effort usually squander it.
Empty vessels make the most noise.	Empty-headed people are always the most talkative and noisy.
Even Homer sometimes nods.	Even the best of us are liable to make mistakes.
Every cloud has a silver lining.	Every prospect, however grim, has its consoling or hopeful side.

PROVERB	MEANING
Every dog has its day.	Good fortune comes once to all of us.
Every family has a skeleton in the cupboard.	Every family has a guilty secret that it does its utmost to conceal from the world.
Every flow must have its ebb.	Our lives have ups and downs; neither good fortune nor ill one lasts forever.
Every oak must be an acorn.	Everything has to have a small beginning.
Everything comes to him who waits.	The person who is prepared to wait patiently usually gets what he wants in the end, provided of course he goes on trying.
<b>F</b>	
Faint heart never won fair lady.	A shy suitor will not succeed in courting a woman that he likes.
Familiarity breeds contempt.	We tend to lose respect when we know someone too well.
Fine feathers make fine birds.	Smart clothing makes a person look more impressive than he really is.
First come, first served.	Those who arrive early get a better choice or attention.
First thrive and then wive.	Do not marry until you can well afford to do so.
Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.	Foolish people act hastily and do or say things that wiser people would avoid.
Fortune knocks at least once at every man's gate.	Opportunity comes to everyone at least once ( and when it comes, we should seize it ).
<b>G</b>	
Give a dog a bad name and hang him.	Once a person loses his reputation, he is likely to be blamed for the misdeeds of other people.
Give credit where credit is due.	We should acknowledge the good points of others.
God helps those who help themselves.	We must make an effort in order to succeed instead of just waiting for help to come by.

PROVERB	MEANING
Grasp all, lose all.	We will lose what we already have if we become too greedy.
Great minds think alike.	Great people think the same way.
<b>H</b>	
Half a loaf of bread is better than no bread at all.	We should be thankful for what we receive, even though it is not so much as what we have hoped for.
Haste makes waste.	The more hurry we are in, the more likely we are to mess things up.
He that cannot obey cannot command.	We must learn to obey orders before we are qualified to give one.
Help a lame dog over a stile.	Give assistance to anyone in difficulties or distress.
Hide not your light under a bushel.	Do not be too modest to set a good example for others.
History repeats itself.	What has happened once is liable to happen again.
Honesty is the best policy.	If we must decide on a course of action, being honest is the best decision.
Hunger is the best sauce.	Nothing gives us an appetite like hunger.
<b>I</b>	
If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well.	If what we propose to do is not trivial and deserves our attention, then we should not waste time on it but do it to our best ability.
If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.	We must not let early failure deter us from our purpose but stick to it and we will finally succeed.
If the blind leads the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.	One without knowledge must not try to teach the ignorant.
If the cap fits, wear it.	If you think that the remarks made refer to you, then act accordingly.
If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.	If we could achieve our aims by merely wishing, life would be very easy.

PROVERB	MEANING
In for a penny, in for a pound.	Once we have committed ourselves to some extent in an undertaking, we may as well go through with it.
It is useless to flog a dead horse.	It is a waste of time to try to revive interest in a worn-out or forgotten subject.
It never rains but it pours.	Events, especially misfortunes, always come together.
It's no use crying over spilt milk.	It is no use feeling sorry for a thing lost or mistake that can no longer be corrected.
<b>J</b>	
Jack-of-all-trades, master of none.	One should concentrate on one thing if he is to get on in the world.
<b>L</b>	
Let bygones be bygones.	Let's forgive and forget.
Let not the pot call the kettle black.	One who is at fault should not point out someone else's fault.
Let sleeping dogs lie.	Do not do anything that will stir up unnecessary trouble.
Like father, like son.	An expression to indicate many sons take after their fathers, not only in looks but also in character
Look before you leap.	Think carefully what we are doing before we do it.
<b>M</b>	
Make hay while the sun shines.	Take advantage of favourable circumstances promptly.
Many hands make light work.	The more people there are to carry out a task, the less each has to do, and the sooner the task will be accomplished.
Men strain at gnats and swallow camels.	People who speak loudly against small offences will commit much greater one at the same time.

PROVERB	MEANING
More haste, less speed.	The greater our need for haste, the more likely we are to waste time.
<b>N</b>	
Necessity is the mother of invention.	When a person is in great need of something, he will find a mean to get it.
Never buy a pig in a poke.	We must always examine our purchase before we pay for it.
Never do things by halves.	We must finish a task once we have started it.
Never look a gift horse in the mouth.	Do not be too critical of anything that we receive as a gift.
Never put off till tomorrow what may be done today.	If a thing has to be done, we must do it now.
Never say die.	Never give up.
Never trouble trouble until trouble troubles you.	Never look for trouble.
New brooms sweep clean.	People newly appointed to the posts tend to be more hard-working or make big changes.
No pain, no gain.	One is unlikely to achieve anything without hardship.
Nothing ventured, nothing gained.	If we are not prepared to take risks, we cannot expect to get results.
<b>O</b>	
Once bitten, twice shy.	One will be very anxious to avoid the repetition of an unpleasant experience.
One good turn deserves another.	If someone has done us a kindness, we should do him a kindness in return.
One man's meat is another man's poison.	One person may like what the other person hates.
One swallow does not make a summer.	Any single piece of evidence is not enough to prove anything.
Out of the frying pan into the fire	From a bad situation to one that is worse

PROVERB	MEANING
Out of sight, out of mind.	We cease to worry about anything that can no longer be seen.
<b>P</b>	
Paddle your own canoe.	Be self-reliant instead of expecting helps from others.
Pen is mightier than the sword.	The written word is more to be feared than physical force.
Practice makes perfect.	Only by doing things repeatedly that we can attain skill or efficiency.
Practise what you preach.	Behave in the same way as what we advise others to behave.
Prevention is better than cure.	It is better to take precautions against something rather than to make repair after damage is done.
Procrastination is the thief of time.	Deferring things from day to day is a waste of time as it will only end up in nothing being done at all.
<b>R</b>	
Rob Peter to pay Paul.	Take from one to give it to another.
Rome was not built in a day.	Great things are not achieved easily.
<b>S</b>	
Seeing is believing.	Many people are reluctant to believe a thing unless they can actually witness it.
Silence gives consent.	If no one makes protest on an issue, it would be taken as no objection.
Still water runs deep.	A man says a little does not indicate that he has no knowledge on the matter.
Strike while the iron is hot.	Choose the right moment to act.
<b>T</b>	
The beaten road is the safest.	We should learn or profit from the experience of others.
The best fish swim near the bottom.	The best things are hard to come by.

PROVERB	MEANING
The best is the enemy of the good.	In striving to reach perfection, we often spoil what would have been good enough.
The bull must be taken by the horns.	When faced by difficulties, we should meet them fearlessly and not try to evade them.
The child is father of the man.	By studying the character of a child, we can tell what sort of man he is going to be.
The course of true love never did run smooth.	There will always be difficulties to face in a relationship.
The darkest hour is that before dawn.	Even when things seem at their very worst, they may shortly improve.
The grapes are sour.	An expression to describe people who pretend that they never wanted what they have failed to achieve ( in order to save face )
The proof of the pudding is in the eating.	We cannot judge the wisdom of any action until it has been put into practice.
The truth will out.	Truth cannot be concealed indefinitely.
Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.	People who themselves are not free from blame should not find fault with others.
Time and tide wait for no man.	Do not delay in taking action.
Time flies.	Time passes so quickly that it is difficult to keep pace with it.
Time is money.	Time is as valuable as money. Therefore, neither should be squandered.
Too many cooks spoil the broth.	Chaos will reign when there are too many people trying to do the same thing at the same time.
Two heads are better than one.	It is an advantage to confer with someone else before reaching an important decision.
Two wrongs do not make a right.	One's fault is not excused by the fault of someone else.
<b>U</b>	
United we stand, divided we fall.	Unity is the strength.

PROVERB	MEANING
<b>V</b>	
Variety is the spice of life.	Life will be monotonous without some break in daily routine.
<b>W</b>	
Walls have ears.	Be careful of what you say or where you say it.
When in Rome, do as the Romans do.	We should adapt ourselves to our new surroundings or the local customs.
When one door shuts, another opens.	Failure should not deter us, for there are always other opportunities.
When the cat is away, the mice will play.	When the person in authority is away, those under him will take advantage of his absence.
Where there's a will, there's a way.	Given sufficient determination, we can accomplish what we set out to do.
Who chatters to you will chatter of you.	Whoever tells you tales about other people will also tell others tales about you.
<b>Y</b>	
You cannot have your cake and eat it.	A situation where a choice has to be made between alternatives, we can only have one or the other, but not both
You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.	We cannot change a person's character.
You cannot teach an old dog new tricks.	As a person gets older, he grows more set in his old ways and does not welcome any new innovation.
You made your bed and you must lie on it.	All of us are responsible for the consequences of our actions, so we must put up with them.
<b>Z</b>	
Zeal without knowledge is a runaway horse.	The enthusiasm of an inexperienced person may do more harm than good.