

## Proverbs

**A proverb is a short wise saying which has been in use for probably hundreds of years.**

Twenty well known proverbs have been chopped into halves.  
Can you pair the halves together and write them out correctly?

### **Beginnings**

### **Endings**

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) Don't cross your bridges    | for a ha'p'orth of tar.        |
| 2) He who hesitates            | out of a sow's ear.            |
| 3) Many hands                  | nowhere.                       |
| 4) You can't teach an old dog  | before you come to them.       |
| 5) A leopard can't change      | laughs longest.                |
| 6) People in glass houses      | the heart doesn't grieve over. |
| 7) Don't spoil the ship        | new tricks.                    |
| 8) You can't make a silk purse | is lost.                       |
| 9) Where there's life          | where angels fear to tread.    |
| 10) He who laughs last laughs  | make light work.               |
| 11) Flattery will get you      | and I'll scratch yours.        |
| 12) What the eye doesn't see   | its spots.                     |
| 13) There's no time            | twixt the cup and the lip.     |
| 14) Fools rush in              | lie.                           |
| !5) You scratch my back        | a mile.                        |
| 16) There's many a slip        | and eat it.                    |
| 17) You can't have your cake   | invention.                     |
| 18) Necessity is the mother of | like the present.              |
| 19) A miss is as good as       | shouldn't throw stones.        |
| 20) Let sleeping dogs          | there's hope.                  |

## Proverbs – matching meanings

- ◆ Look at the proverbs you wrote out for the last exercise and match each of them to one of the meanings below:
- a) Jobs are easier when everyone helps.
- b) If you don't know about something then it needn't worry you.
- c) It's best to leave things as they are.
- d) If you help me, then I'll help you.
- e) If you've taken a lot of trouble with something it's worth spending a few more pence to make sure it's perfect..
- f) People never change their basic personality.
- g) When you only just fail it has the same effect as complete failure.
- h) If you take too long to decide about something you will lose out.
- i) If something is really needed someone will invent it.
- j) You want things too much your own way.
- k) There are still a lot of things that could go wrong before your task is finally completed.
- l) Don't assume that someone is going to die as long as they're still breathing.
- m) Don't start worrying about problems that haven't even happened yet.
- n) Silly people try to do things which even the most gifted people wouldn't attempt..
- o) When someone's been doing something their way for years, they find it hard to learn a new way to do it.
- p) You won't get anywhere by simply paying people compliments.
- q) The person who triumphs in the end may not be the one you thought would triumph at the beginning.
- r) It's best to get on with things straight away.
- s) Don't criticise other people when you're in danger of being criticised for the same thing yourself.
- t) You can't make anything decent out of shoddy materials.



## More Proverbs



Here are some more proverbs.



Can you work out what these mean?



1) Fine words butter no parsnips.  
gander.

13) What`s sauce for the goose is sauce for the



2) Make hay while the sun shines.

14) Where there`s a will there`s a way.



3) While the cat`s away the mice will play.

15) You can`t burn the candle at both ends.



4) Charity begins at home.

16) When the wine`s in the wit`s out.



5) In for a penny, in for a pound.

17) All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.



6) A drowning man will clutch at a straw.

18) Spare the rod and spoil the child.



7) Empty vessels make most noise.

19) A fool and his money are soon parted.



8) Faint heart never won fair lady.

20) Out of the frying pan into the fire.



9) Waste not, want not.

21) A stitch in time saves nine.



10) Hunger is the best sauce.  
bush.

22) A bird in the hand is worth two in the



11) Two heads are better than one.

23) Blood is thicker than water.



12) He who pays the piper calls the tune.

24) A rolling stone gathers no moss.



### **Your turn!**



- ◆ Make up some new proverbs of your own. Remember that they often contain animals or everyday objects.
- ◆ Write modern versions of some old proverbs.
- ◆ Write a very short story or dialogue which illustrates a proverb. The proverb should be the “punch-line” at the end.

