

## A Proverbs

A proverb is a short statement usually known by many people. It states something that is common experience or gives advice. Here are some examples.

<i>you say</i>	<i>you mean</i>
<b>Absence makes the heart grow fonder.</b>	Being apart from someone you love makes you love them more.
<b>Actions speak louder than words.</b>	What people do is more important than what they say.
<b>There's no point / It's no good crying over spilt milk.</b>	There's no point in getting upset over something bad that's happened when you can't change it.
<b>Don't put all your eggs in one basket.</b>	It is not a good idea to put all your efforts or all your money into one project as, if it fails, you may lose everything.
<b>Many hands make light work.</b>	A job is done quickly and easily if plenty of people help.
<b>Blood is thicker than water.</b>	Family relationships are stronger than any other relationships.

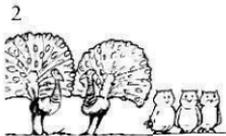
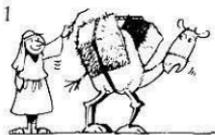
## B Half proverbs

There are a number of proverbs, which we often use only half of. The endings are so familiar that it isn't necessary to say them. Here are some examples.

<i>you say</i>	<i>ending of proverb</i>	<i>you mean</i>
<b>Too many cooks</b>	spoil the broth.	If too many people work on something, they will spoil it.
<b>People who live in glass houses</b>	shouldn't throw stones.	People shouldn't criticise other people for faults that they have themselves.
<b>It's the last straw</b>	that breaks the camel's back.	Something is the last in a series of unpleasant events, and which finally makes you feel that the situation cannot continue.
<b>While the cat's away,</b>	the mice will play.	When the person in authority is not there, other people will not do what they should do.
<b>Take care of the pennies/pence</b>	and the pounds will take care of themselves.	If you don't waste small sums of money, you'll end up with plenty of money.
<b>Birds of a feather</b>	flock together.	People who have similar characters or interests will often choose to spend time together.
<b>A bird in the hand</b>	is worth two in the bush.	It's better to keep what you have rather than to risk losing it by trying to get more.
<b>The grass is always greener</b>	on the other side of the fence.	Other people always seem to be in a better situation than you.
<b>All work and no play</b>	makes Jack a dull boy.	Someone who spends all their time working becomes a boring person.

## Exercises

### 29.1 Which proverbs do these pictures make you think of?



### 29.2 Can you find a proverb on the left-hand page that contradicts each of these proverbs?

- 1 Too many cooks spoil the broth.      3 Out of sight, out of mind.  
2 Opposites attract.

### 29.3 Write the first bits of these proverbs – the bits that we usually use.

- 1 ..... and the pounds will take care of themselves.  
2 ..... on the other side of the fence.  
3 ..... makes Jack a dull boy.  
4 ..... shouldn't throw stones.  
5 ..... is worth two in the bush.  
6 ..... flock together.  
7 ..... the mice will play.  
8 ..... that breaks the camel's back.

### 29.4 What proverbs could you use in these situations?

- 1 Your brother's girlfriend is going abroad for six months. He is afraid that she will lose interest in him while she's away. You could say: 'Don't worry, .....?'
- 2 A friend thinks that he will not get a job because the boss's nephew is interested in the same position. You agree: '.....?'
- 3 Three friends offer to help you build a new shed. You say: 'Thanks! .....?'
- 4 You are discussing two friends: Bob who is full of grand promises and Ben who says little, but is always very willing to help. You could say: 'I prefer Ben. ....?'
- 5 A friend of yours is very upset that he has scratched his new car. You could say: 'Don't make such a fuss. ....?'
- 6 Your brother is thinking about resigning from a not very well-paid job in order to spend time looking for something better. You think he would be better to find a new job first. You say: '.....?'