



Little  
Oxford  
Dictionary *of*  
**P**roverbs



## **How to search for terms in *Little Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs***

To find an entry in this e-book you can:

- Browse the [Alphabetical List of Entries](#) and select the entry you would like to view
- or
- Use your Search function to be taken to a complete list of references to your search term in the *Dictionary*
  - If your search term has its own entry, it will usually be listed at the top of your results
  - In cases where your search term appears in more than one entry heading, the results will be listed alphabetically

### **A note on special characters**

While most e-readers can display special characters (such as é and â), many cannot search for words containing them, unless the special characters themselves are typed into the search box. If you are unable to type these characters, please browse for your term using the [Alphabetical List of Entries](#).

## **Alphabetical List of Entries**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
T V W Y

Ability

Absence

Achievement

Action and Inaction

Adversity

Advertising

Advice

Age

Ambition

Anger

Apology and Excuses

Appearance

Architecture

Argument

The Armed Forces

Art

Autumn

Beauty

Beginning

Behaviour

Belief

Birds

The Body

Books

Borrowing

British Towns and Regions

Broadcasting

Business

Buying and Selling

Cats

Causes and Consequences

Caution

Certainty and Doubt

Chance and Luck

Change

Character

Charity

Children

Choice

The Christian Church

Christmas

Circumstance and Situation

Cities

Clergy

Computing

Conscience

Consequences

Cooking

Cooperation

Corruption

Countries and Peoples

The Country and the Town

Courage

Crime and Punishment

Crises

Criticism

Custom and Habit

Dance

Danger

Death

Debt and Borrowing

Deception

Deeds

Defiance

Delay

Determination

Difference

Discontent

Discoveries

Dislikes

Dogs

Doubt

Dreams

Dress

Drink

Drunkenness

Eating

Education

Effort

Employment

Ending

Enemies

The Environment

Envy

Equality

Evil

Excellence

Excess

Excuses

Experience

Extravagance

Fact

Failure

Fame

Familiarity

The Family

Fate

Fear

Feelings

Flattery

Flowers

Food

Fools

Foresight

Forgiveness

Friendship

Futility

The Future

Games

Gardens

Generosity

God

Good and Evil

Gossip

Government

Gratitude



Greed

Guilt

Habit

Happiness

Haste and Delay

Health

History

The Home

Honesty

Hope

Horses

Hospitality

Housework

The Human Race

Hypothesis and Fact

Idleness

Ignorance

Inaction

Indecision

Inventions and Discoveries

Journalism

Justice

Knowledge

The Law

Leadership

Leisure

Letters

Lies

Life

Lifestyles

Likes and Dislikes

Losing

Love

Loyalty

Luck

Management

Manners

Marriage

Means

Medicine

Meeting and Parting

Men

Men and Women

The Mind

Misfortunes

Mistakes

Moderation

Money

Mourning

Murder

Music

Names

Nature

Necessity

Neighbours

News and Journalism

Opinion

Opportunity

Optimism and Pessimism

Parents

Parting

The Past

Patience

Peace

Pessimism

Politics

Possessions

Poverty

Power

Practicality

Praise and Flattery

Prejudice and Tolerance

Preparation and Readiness

The Present

Pride

Problems and Solutions

Punctuality

Punishment

Quantities and Qualities

Rank

Readiness

Reading

Rebellion

Relationships

Religion

Reputation

Responsibility

Revenge

Revolution and Rebellion

Rivers

Royalty

Satisfaction and Discontent

Sayings

Science

The Sea

Secrecy

Self-Esteem and Self-Assertion

Self-Interest

Selling

Sex

Sickness

Silence

Similarity and Difference

Situation

Sleep

Smoking

Solitude

Solutions

Sorrow

Speech

Sports and Games

Spring

Strength and Weakness

Success and Failure

Suffering

Summer

Surprise

Sympathy

Teaching

Technology

Temptation

Thinking

Thoroughness

Thrift and Extravagance

Time

Tolerance

Town

Towns and Cities

Transience

Travel

Treachery

Trees

Trust and Treachery

Truth

Value

Virtue

Warfare

Ways and Means

Weakness

Wealth

The Weather

Weddings

Winning and Losing

Winter

Wisdom

Women

Words

Words and Deeds

Work

Worry

Writing

Youth



# Contents

How to search for terms

Alphabetical List of Entries

Introduction

Acknowledgements

List of Subjects

## **Little Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T V  
W Y

Keyword Index

*Little Oxford Dictionary of*  
**Proverbs**

Little Oxford Dictionary of  
**Proverbs**

SECOND EDITION

*Edited by*

**Elizabeth Knowles**

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, ox2 6dp, United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Oxford University Press 2009, 2016

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First Edition published in 2009

Second Edition published in 2016

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016943803

ISBN 978-0-19-877837-0  
ebook ISBN 978-0-19-108424-9

# Introduction

This new edition of the *Little Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* once more brings together a wide range of proverbs and sayings, from the traditional Western maxims of biblical and classical tradition, through proverbs from across the wider world, to expressions of contemporary wisdom from popular culture. The selection made is based on the diversity of real usage: when reaching today for a saying to use in advice or admonition, we happily draw material from a broad range of sources. New additions from today's world include the advice to interviewees to 'Dress for the job you want, not for the job you have', and the rueful reflection from the world of computing that in matters of online security, 'There is no patch for stupid.'

The dictionary is arranged by theme, so that a number of sayings on each topic can be found together. Subjects covered range widely, from **Action** ('The shrimp that falls asleep is swept away by the current') to **Cooperation** ('Cross the river in a crowd and the crocodile won't eat you'), and from **Friendship** ('The road to a friend's house is never long') to **Gardens** ('A garden is never finished'). A piece of advice for **Parents** may resonate with anyone seeing a son or daughter off on a gap year: 'Send the beloved child on a journey.' Within each theme, the proverbs and sayings are arranged alphabetically (initial 'a' and 'the' being ignored). There is a keyword index for essential words from the first part of each saying, allowing the reader to trace a saying to its place in its particular theme.

One of the pleasures of proverbs is in seeing how, in different parts of the world, the same idea may be expressed. At **Optimism and Pessimism**, the traditional rueful reflection that 'If wishes were horses, beggars would ride' is now matched by a comment from Senegal: 'If you had teeth of steel, you could eat iron coconuts.' Under **Power**, the reflection from Africa that 'When elephants fight, it is the grass that gets hurt' is echoed by the Korean saying 'When whales fight, the shrimp's back is broken.'

At **Caution**, the traditional English adjuration to ‘Look before you leap’ is now reinforced by a Chinese saying recommending a different form of careful exploration, ‘Cross the river by feeling the stones.’ ‘Be what you want to seem’ at **Behaviour** finds an echo in the more recent, ‘Fake it ’til you make it.’

Sometimes, of course, different approaches are emphasized. At **Ability**, the idea that someone not naturally suited to a task will perform poorly is traditionally expressed by the proverb ‘A sow may whistle, though it has an ill mouth for it.’ The African saying ‘If you can talk, you can sing, and if you can walk, you can dance’ offers a much more positive approach. Views of **Enemies** range from ‘The enemy of my enemy is my friend’ to the warning ‘Do not call a wolf to help you against the dogs.’ The section on **Crises** includes two divergent modern contributions: the advice to ‘Keep calm and carry on’, and the wryer comment, ‘Never waste a good crisis.’

Some new items have come to attention through high profile use. Hillary Clinton, speaking at a fundraising dinner in Arkansas when running for the Democratic nomination, used the saying ‘If you see a turtle on a fencepost, it didn’t get there by accident’: this has now been added to **Causes and Consequences**. President Michael Higgins of Ireland, thanking those who had given help to the injured after the collapse of a balcony in Berkeley had resulted in the death and injury of a number of Irish students, quoted the Irish saying, ‘We live in each other’s shadow.’ This now appears at **Cooperation**. At times, a news item may unexpectedly put us in touch with another culture. In October 2015, news from the British bird reserve of Slimbridge about the annual arrival of whooper swans quoted a Russian proverb associating migrating swans with impending wintry weather: ‘The swan brings snow on its bill’ (this is now at **Birds**).

One of the fascinating things about language is that we can never really say with certainty that a maxim which has fallen out of use may not reappear. The traditional saying ‘A wise man turns chance into good fortune’ seemed to have dropped out of use. However, when in November 2015 President Xi Jinping of China was entertained at a Buckingham Palace state banquet, he included it in his speech as a famous British adage. The proverb is now to be found at **Opportunity**.

An Arab proverb advises, 'To understand the people, acquaint yourself with their proverbs'. Working on this book has again been particularly pleasurable because of the opportunity to observe a multiplicity of views, and to enjoy the vigour and creativity of language. I hope that once more some of this pleasure will be shared with the reader.

# Acknowledgements

*Little Proverbs* has once more drawn on the most recent editions of the *Oxford Treasury of Sayings & Quotations* (4/e, 2011) and the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (6/e, 2015). This material has been augmented by Oxford's Quotations reading programme, the Oxford Corpus, and the Editor's own reading and research. Any book of this kind rests on the research, scholarship, and insight of many others, and I am extremely fortunate to have had such a foundation. I am grateful too to Ben Harris, who had the original idea for this book, and to Joanna Harris and Susan Ratcliffe who have provided valuable editorial support.

ELIZABETH KNOWLES

*Oxford 2016*



# List of Subjects

## A

Ability  
Absence  
Achievement  
Action and Inaction  
Adversity  
Advertising  
Advice  
Age  
Ambition  
Anger  
Apology and Excuses  
Appearance  
Architecture  
Argument  
Armed Forces, The  
Art  
Autumn

## B

Beauty  
Beginning  
Behaviour  
Belief  
Birds  
Body, The  
Books  
Borrowing: *see* Debt and Borrowing  
British Towns and Regions  
Broadcasting  
Business  
Buying and Selling

## C

Cats  
Causes and Consequences  
Caution  
Certainty and Doubt  
Chance and Luck  
Change  
Character  
Charity  
Children  
Choice  
Christian Church, The  
Christmas  
Circumstance and Situation  
Cities: *see* Towns and Cities  
Clergy  
Computing  
Conscience  
Consequences: *see* Causes and Consequences  
Cooking  
Cooperation  
Corruption  
Countries and Peoples  
Country and the Town, The  
Courage  
Crime and Punishment  
Crises  
Criticism  
Custom and Habit

## **D**

Dance  
Danger  
Death  
Debt and Borrowing  
Deception  
Deeds: *see* Words and Deeds  
Defiance  
Delay: *see* Haste and Delay  
Determination  
Difference: *see* Similarity and Difference  
Discontent: *see* Satisfaction and Discontent  
Discoveries: *see* Inventions and Discoveries  
Dislikes: *see* Likes and Dislikes  
Dogs

Doubt: *see* Certainty and Doubt

Dreams

Dress

Drink

Drunkenness

## **E**

Eating

Education

Effort

Employment

Ending

Enemies

Environment, The

Envy

Equality

Evil: *see* Good and Evil

Excellence

Excess

Excuses: *see* Apology and Excuses

Experience

Extravagance: *see* Thrift and Extravagance

## **F**

Fact: *see* Hypothesis and Fact

Failure: *see* Success and Failure

Fame

Familiarity

Family, The

Fate

Fear

Feelings

Flattery: *see* Praise and Flattery

Flowers

Food

Fools

Foresight

Forgiveness

Friendship

Futility

Future, The

## **G**

Games: *see* Sports and Games

Gardens

Generosity

God

Good and Evil

Gossip

Government

Gratitude

Greed

Guilt

## **H**

Habit: *see* Custom and Habit

Happiness

Haste and Delay

Health

History

Home, The

Honesty

Hope

Horses

Hospitality

Housework

Human Race, The

Hypothesis and Fact

## **I**

Idleness

Ignorance

Inaction: *see* Action and Inaction

Indecision

Inventions and Discoveries

## **J**

Journalism: *see* News and Journalism

Justice

## **K**

Knowledge

## **L**

Law, The  
Leadership  
Leisure  
Letters  
Lies  
Life  
Lifestyles  
Likes and Dislikes  
Losing: *see* Winning and Losing  
Love  
Loyalty  
Luck: *see* Chance and Luck

## **M**

Management  
Manners  
Marriage  
Means: *see* Ways and Means  
Medicine  
Meeting and Parting  
Men  
Men and Women  
Mind, The  
Misfortunes  
Mistakes  
Moderation  
Money  
Mourning  
Murder  
Music

## **N**

Names  
Nature  
Necessity  
Neighbours  
News and Journalism

## **O**

Opinion  
Opportunity  
Optimism and Pessimism

## **P**

Parents

Parting: *see* Meeting and Parting

Past, The

Patience

Peace

Pessimism: *see* Optimism and Pessimism

Politics

Possessions

Poverty

Power

Practicality

Praise and Flattery

Prejudice and Tolerance

Preparation and Readiness

Present, The

Pride

Problems and Solutions

Punctuality

Punishment: *see* Crime and Punishment

## **Q**

Quantities and Qualities

## **R**

Rank

Readiness: *see* Preparation and Readiness

Reading

Rebellion: *see* Revolution and Rebellion

Relationships

Religion

Reputation

Responsibility

Revenge

Revolution and Rebellion

Rivers

Royalty

## **S**

Satisfaction and Discontent

Sayings

Science  
Sea, The  
Secrecy  
Self-Esteem and Self-Assertion  
Self-Interest  
Selling: *see* Buying and Selling  
Sex  
Sickness  
Silence  
Similarity and Difference  
Situation: *see* Circumstance and Situation  
Sleep  
Smoking  
Solitude  
Solutions: *see* Problems and Solutions  
Sorrow  
Speech  
Sports and Games  
Spring  
Strength and Weakness  
Success and Failure  
Suffering  
Summer  
Surprise  
Sympathy

## **T**

Teaching  
Technology  
Temptation  
Thinking  
Thoroughness  
Thrift and Extravagance  
Time  
Tolerance: *see* Prejudice and Tolerance  
Town: *see* The Country and the Town  
Towns and Cities  
Transience  
Travel  
Treachery: *see* Trust and Treachery  
Trees  
Trust and Treachery  
Truth

## **V**

Value

Virtue

## **W**

Warfare

Ways and Means

Weakness: *see* Strength and Weakness

Wealth

Weather, The

Weddings

Winning and Losing

Winter

Wisdom

Women

Words

Words and Deeds

Work

Worry

Writing

## **Y**

Youth



# A

## Ability

*The consensus of proverbial wisdom is that ability (or the lack of it) is innate, although aptitudes may be developed: If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance.*

### **Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains.**

English proverb, late 19th century.

### **Horses for courses.**

originally (in horse-racing) meaning that different horses are suited to different racecourses, but now used more generally to mean that different people are suited to different roles; English proverb, late 19th century.

### **If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance.**

often used as an encouragement to undertake something new; African (Shona) proverb.

### **Inside the forest there are many birds.**

people are of many different kinds and abilities ('many birds' here = 'birds of many kinds'); Chinese proverb.

### **Is Saul also among the prophets?**

a rhetorical question asked when someone displays unexpected abilities; from the biblical account (1 Samuel 10:11), in which the young Saul's prophesying became one of the signs that he had been chosen as king of Israel.

### **A sow may whistle, though it has an ill mouth for it.**

someone not naturally suited to a task will perform it badly; English proverb, early 19th century.

## Absence

See also [MEETING AND PARTING](#)

*Despite the saying that Absence makes the heart grow fonder, it is possible that an absent person who is not present to defend themselves may be blamed for something, or simply forgotten.*

### **Absence is the mother of disillusion.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Absence makes the heart grow fonder.**

affection for a person is strengthened by missing them; English proverb, mid 19th century, derived from a Latin proverb recorded from the 1st century bc.

### **Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.**

traditional saying, recorded from the 19th century.

### **The absent get farther away every day.**

Japanese proverb.

### **He who is absent is always in the wrong.**

someone who is not present cannot defend themselves; English proverb, mid 15th century.

### **A little absence does much good.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Out of sight, out of mind.**

someone who is not present is easily forgotten; English proverb, mid 13th century.

## Achievement

See also [AMBITION](#), [EFFORT](#), [PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS](#), [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

*Effort and aspiration are both needed for achievement, but even if the goal is reached the outcome may not be satisfactory, since While the grass grows, the steed starves.*

**Behind an able man there are other able men.**

modern saying, said to be a Chinese proverb.

**The difficult is done at once.**

slogan of the US Armed Forces; recorded earlier as a comment by the French statesman Charles Alexandre de Calonne (1734–1802), ‘Madam, if a thing is possible, consider it done; the impossible?—that will be done.’

**The hand will not reach what the heart does not long for.**

desire is essential for achievement; Welsh proverb.

**He who likes cherries soon learns to climb.**

achievement seen as the result of motivation; German proverb.

**In a calm sea every man is a pilot.**

apparent achievement may not have been tested by circumstances; English proverb, recorded from the early 19th century.

***Palmas qui meruit, ferat* [Let him who has won it bear the palm].**

Latin, adopted by Lord Nelson (1758–1805) as his motto, from John Jortin *Lusus Poetici* (3rd ed., 1748), ‘Ad Ventos’.

***Per ardua ad astra* [Through struggle to the stars].**

Latin, motto of the Mulvany family, quoted and translated by Rider Haggard in his novel *The People of the Mist* (1894), and still in use as a motto of the Royal Air Force, having been approved by King George V in 1913.

**Seekers are finders.**

success is the result of effort; Persian proverb; compare **Seek and ye shall find** at ACTION AND INACTION.

**Still achieving, still pursuing.**

American proverb, mid 20th century, from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's adjuration, 'Let us, then, be up and doing, With a heart for any fate; Still achieving, still pursuing, Learn to labour and to wait' from the poem 'A Psalm of Life' (1838).

**Whatever man has done, man can do.**

anything that has been achieved once can be achieved again; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**While the grass grows, the steed starves.**

by the time hopes or expectations can be satisfied, it may be too late; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**You cannot have your cake and eat it.**

you cannot have things both ways; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Action and Inaction**

See also [IDLENESS](#), [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

*While setting out on a planned course is likely to be rewarded, since we are told that Seek and ye shall find, there are also dangers in not thinking things through: Action without thought is shooting without aim.*

**Action is worry's worst enemy.**

advocating the control of fruitless worry by taking a decision and acting upon it; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Action this day.**

annotation as used by Winston Churchill at the Admiralty in 1940.

**Action without thought is shooting without aim.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A barking dog never bites.**

noisy threats often do not presage real danger; English proverb, 16th century; recorded earlier in French in the 13th century.

**Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.**

motto of the American Christopher Society, founded in 1945.

**If it ain't broke, don't fix it.**

warning against interference with something that is working satisfactorily; late 20th-century saying.

**If you want something done, ask a busy person.**

implying that a busy person is most likely to have learned how to manage their time efficiently; late 20th century saying.

**It is as cheap sitting as standing.**

often used literally; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Lookers-on see most of the game.**

those who are not participating are able to take an overall view; English proverb, early 16th century.

**The road to hell is paved with good intentions.**

often used as a comment on well-intentioned actions that have turned out badly; English proverb, late 16th century (earlier forms omit the first three words).

**Seek and ye shall find.**

an active search for something wanted is likely to be rewarded; English proverb, mid 16th century, from the Bible (Matthew 7:7), 'Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find'; compare **Seekers are finders** at achievement.

**The shrimp that falls asleep is swept away by the current.**

if you get distracted you will fall behind; Spanish proverb, *Camarón que se duerme se lo lleva la corriente*.

### **When in doubt, do nowt.**

advising against taking action when one is unsure of one's ground; English proverb, mid 19th century.

## Adversity

See also [MISFORTUNES](#), [SUFFERING](#)

*Adversity is unavoidable, and may in fact be salutary; a modern saying advises making the best of it: If life hands you lemons, make lemonade. We also, according at least to a Swahili proverb, have the comfort that adversity is finite: After hardship comes relief.*

### **Adversity introduces a man to himself.**

modern saying, implying that experiencing difficult circumstances leads to self-knowledge.

### **Adversity is the foundation of virtue.**

Japanese proverb.

### **Adversity makes strange bedfellows.**

shared difficulties may bring together very different people; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **After hardship comes relief.**

African proverb (Swahili).

### **A dose of adversity is often as needful as a dose of medicine.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **If life hands you lemons, make lemonade.**

an adjuration to make the best of difficult circumstances; late 20th century saying.

## Advertising

*It is tempting to think of advertising as a modern phenomenon, but the awareness that It pays to advertise goes back a considerable way, as Good*

wine needs no bush *shows*.

**Any publicity is good publicity.**

it is always preferable to have attention focused on a name than to be unnoticed; English proverb, early 20th century.

**Blow your own horn, even if you don't sell a clam.**

American saying.

**Don't advertise what you can't fulfil.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Good wine needs no bush.**

there is no need to advertise or boast about something of good quality as people will always discover its merits, referring to the bunch of ivy that was formerly the sign of a vintner's shop; English proverb, early 15th century.

**It pays to advertise.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Let's run it up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes it.**

recorded as an established expression in the 1960s, suggesting the testing of a new idea or product.

## Advice

*Caution should be exercised in the giving and receiving of advice: against the warning Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs, we have the reminder that A fool may give a wise man counsel.*

**Ask advice, but use your common sense.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs.**

a caution against offering advice to the wise and experienced; English proverb, early 18th century.

### **A fool may give a wise man counsel.**

sometimes used as a warning against overconfidence in one's judgement; English proverb, mid 14th century.

### **Never give advice unless asked.**

German proverb.

### **Night brings counsel.**

sometimes used as a warning against overconfidence in one's judgement; English proverb, mid 14th century.

### **A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse.**

the slightest hint is enough to convey one's meaning in a particular case; English proverb, late 18th century.

### **A word to the wise is enough.**

only a very brief warning is necessary to an intelligent person; English proverb, early 16th century; earlier in Latin '*verbum sat sapienti* [a word is sufficient to a wise man]'

## Age

See also [YOUTH](#)

*The consensus on the latter part of life is that experience is likely to have brought wisdom: the 'fool at forty' is an exception to the view that The older the ginger the more pungent its flavour.*

### **Age is just a number.**

modern saying.

### **A fool at forty is a fool indeed.**

someone who has not learned wisdom by the age of forty will never learn it; in this form from Edward Young's *Universal Passions* (1725), 'Be wise with speed; A fool at forty is a fool indeed'; English proverb, early 16th century.



**For the unlearned, old age is winter; for the learned, it is the season of harvest.**

Jewish saying.

**The fox may grow grey, but never good.**

ageing will not change a person's essential nature; English proverb; compare **The wolf may lose his teeth, but never his nature** below.

**The gods send nuts to those who have no teeth.**

opportunities or pleasures often come too late to be enjoyed; English proverb, early 20th century.

**Life begins at forty.**

English proverb, mid 20th century, from the title of a book (1932) by Walter B. Pitkin.

**Like fine wine,—gets better with age.**

modern saying.

**The older the ginger the more pungent its flavour.**

older people have more knowledge and experience than the young; Chinese proverb.

**An old horse does not spoil the furrow.**

Russian proverb; compare **There's many a good tune played on an old fiddle** below.

**There's many a good tune played on an old fiddle.**

someone's abilities do not depend on their being young; English proverb, early 20th century; compare **An old horse does not spoil the furrow** above.

**There's no fool like an old fool.**

often used to suggest that folly in an older person, who should be wiser, is particularly acute; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**When an elder dies, it is as if a whole library has burned down.**  
African proverb.

**The wolf may lose his teeth, but never his nature.**

age may affect physical strength, but not a dangerous nature; English proverb; compare **The fox may grow grey, but never good** above.

## Ambition

See also [ACHIEVEMENT](#), [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

*Although* There is always room at the top *is encouraging, proverbial wisdom warns that the results of pursuing one's goals may be less than happy*: Many go out for wool and come home shorn.

**Aut Caesar, aut nihil [Caesar or nothing].**

motto coined by Cesare Borgia (1476–1507), and inscribed on his sword.

**Hasty climbers have sudden falls.**

the over-ambitious often fail to take necessary precautions; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**The higher the monkey climbs the more he shows his tail.**

the further an unsuitable person is advanced, the more their inadequacies are apparent; English proverb, late 14th century.

**It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes.**

often used of a situation in which one is hoping for a position currently occupied by another; English proverb, mid 16th century; compare **A bloody war and a sickly season** at armed forces.

**Many go out for wool and come home shorn.**

many who seek to better themselves or make themselves rich end by losing what they already have; English proverb, late 16th century.

**The smaller the lizard, the greater its hopes of becoming a crocodile.**

lack of power may be a spur to ambition; African proverb.

**There is always room at the top.**

as a response to being advised against joining the overcrowded legal profession, it is also attributed to the American politician and lawyer Daniel Webster (1782–1852); English proverb, early 20th century.

## Anger

*Losing your temper is unproductive, since Anger improves nothing but the arch of a cat's back; traditional advice suggests using soft answers to deflect the anger of others, and counting to a hundred to avoid becoming angry yourself.*

**Anger improves nothing but the arch of a cat's back.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**He that will be angry for anything will be angry for nothing.**

frequent anger is likely to be prompted by petty reasons; Scottish proverb.

**A little pot is soon hot.**

a small person soon becomes angry or passionate; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**A soft answer turneth away wrath.**

with allusion to the Bible (Proverbs 15:1); English proverb, late Middle English.

**When angry count a hundred.**

advising against precipitate response (the number proposed varies, and sometimes the advice is ‘. . . recite the alphabet’); English proverb, late 16th century.

## Apology and Excuses

*Making excuses to avoid blame is regarded poorly, since He who excuses himself, accuses himself, and we are told that A bad workman blames his*

tools. *However, it may be right to try to make some kind of explanation: A bad excuse is better than none.*

**Apology is only egoism wrong side out.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A bad excuse is better than none.**

It is better to attempt to give some kind of explanation, even a weak one; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**A bad workman blames his tools.**

often used as a comment on someone's excuses for their lack of success; English proverb, early 17th century, late 13th century in French; (compare **One who cannot dance blames the uneven floor** at [DANCE](#)).

**Don't make excuses, make good.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**He who excuses himself, accuses himself.**

often used to mean that attempts to excuse oneself show a guilty conscience; English proverb, early 17th century.

**It is easy to find a stick to beat a dog.**

it is easy to find reasons to criticize someone who is vulnerable; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**When you are in a hole, stop digging.**

complicated explanations and attempts to exculpate oneself often make a bad situation worse; late 20th century saying; often associated with the British Labour politician Denis Healey.

## Appearance

See also [BEAUTY](#), [THE BODY](#)

*The idea that Appearances are deceptive is reflected in a number of sayings. While it may be true that A carpenter is known by his chips, we are cautioned in a number of ways against judging by the outward look.*

**Appearances are deceptive.**

the outward form of something may not be a true guide to its real nature; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**A blind man's wife needs no paint.**

there is no point in making efforts that cannot be appreciated; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**A carpenter is known by his chips.**

the nature of a person's occupation or interest is demonstrated by the traces left behind; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**The cowl does not make the monk.**

warning against judging nature and moral character by appearance; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Distance lends enchantment to the view.**

English proverb, late 18th century, from the lines 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view, and robes the mountain in its azure hue', by Thomas Campbell (1777–1844) in *Pleasures of Hope* (1799).

**Do not judge a tree by its bark.**

a warning against making assumptions based on the outward appearance; Italian proverb.

**A fair skin hides seven defects.**

Japanese proverb; compare [Beauty is only skin deep](#) at beauty.

**A good horse cannot be of a bad colour.**

colour is not an indicator of a horse's quality; English proverb, early 17th century.

**A man without culture is like a zebra without stripes.**

African proverb (Masai).

**Merit in appearance is more rewarded than merit itself.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Never choose your women or linen by candlelight.**

warning against being deceived by apparent attractions seen in a poor light; English proverb, late 16th century.

**What you see is what you get.**

used generally to mean that the function and value of something can be deduced from its outward appearance, and that there are no hidden drawbacks or advantages; late 20th century computing expression, from which the acronym *wysiwig* derives.

**You can't tell a book by its cover.**

outward appearance is not a guide to a person's real nature; English proverb, early 20th century.

## Architecture

*Building is likely to involve expense, although the 17th-century view that Building and marrying of children are great wasters may be thought too severe.*

**The arch never sleeps.**

saying, meaning that an arch constantly thrusts against keystone and walls.

**Building and marrying of children are great wasters.**

comparing two major sources of expense for the head of a household; English proverb.

**In settling an island, the first building erected by a Spaniard will be a church; by a Frenchman, a fort; by a Dutchman, a warehouse; and by an Englishman, an alehouse.**

English proverb, late 18th century.

**It is easier to build two chimneys than to maintain one.**

the cost of using and maintaining a building may be much greater than the cost of building it; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**No good building without a good foundation.**

English proverb, late 15th century.

***Si monumentum requiris, circumspice* [If you seek a monument, gaze around].**

Latin inscription in St Paul's Cathedral, London, applied to Sir Christopher Wren, its architect, and attributed to Wren's son.

## Argument

See also [OPINION](#)

*Positive injunctions to avoid quarrelling, such as Birds in their little nests agree, are reinforced by pragmatic reflections as to the dangers of indulging in disagreement: While two dogs are fighting for a bone, a third runs away with it.*

**Birds in their little nests agree.**

used as a direction that young children should not argue among themselves; a nursery proverb from Isaac Watts *Divine Songs* (1715).

**Do not argue against the sun.**

there is no point in disputing what is obvious; saying, of Latin origin.

**It takes two to make a quarrel.**

some responsibility for a disagreement rests with each party to it; English proverb, early 18th century.

**The more arguments you win, the less friends you will have.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The only thing a heated argument ever produced is coolness.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**While two dogs are fighting for a bone, a third runs away with it.**

while the attention of two disputants is on their quarrel, they may lose possession of what they are fighting over to a third party; English proverb, late 14th century, which gave rise to the phrase 'bone of contention'.

## The Armed Forces

See also [WARFARE](#)

*A number of sayings reflect life within the armed forces over several centuries, from the naval toast A bloody war and a sickly season from the time of the Napoleonic wars, to the advice to soldiers in the Second World War: If it moves, salute it; if it doesn't move, pick it up; and if you can't pick it up, paint it.*

**The army knows how to gain a victory but not how to make proper use of it.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**An army of stags led by a lion would be more formidable than one of lions led by a stag.**

courage and tenacity can be negated by poor leadership, while a strong leader can provide crucial encouragement for weak forces; English military saying, of classical origin.

**A bloody war and a sickly season.**

naval toast in the time of Nelson, when an increased death rate meant more rapid promotion; compare [It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes](#) at ambition and [a willing foe and sea room](#) below.

**The first duty of a soldier is obedience.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**If it moves, salute it; if it doesn't move, pick it up; and if you can't pick it up, paint it.**

1940s military saying.

**Old soldiers never die.**



English proverb, early 20th century.

**Providence is always on the side of the big battalions.**

English proverb, early 19th century; a similar thought can be found earlier in other languages, as the words of the Roman senator and historian Tacitus, '*Deos fortioribus adesse* [The gods are on the side of the stronger]', and the comment in a letter of the French soldier and poet the Comte de Bussy Rabutin (1618–93), 'As you know, God is usually on the side of the big squadrons against the small.'

**A singing army and a singing people can't be defeated.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A soldier of the Great War known unto God.**

adopted by the War Graves Commission as the standard epitaph for the unidentified dead of the First World War.

**A willing foe and sea room.**

naval toast in the time of Nelson (compare [a bloody war and a sickly season](#) above).

**Your King and Country need you.**

1914 recruiting advertisement, showing Lord Kitchener with pointing finger.

**Your soul may belong to God, but your ass belongs to the army.**

American saying to new recruits, mid 20th century.

## Art

*Even a talented painter needs to practise their art: the advice Not a day without a line goes back to the classical world.*

**Every painter paints himself.**

Italian proverb, said to be of Renaissance origin.

**A good painter can draw a devil as well as an angel.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**Not a day without a line.**

traditional saying, attributed to the Greek artist Apelles (fl. 325 BC) by Pliny the Elder.

**Autumn**

See also [SPRING](#), [SUMMER](#), [WINTER](#)

*There are notably fewer proverbs about Autumn than the other seasons, and those in use today sound a cautionary note.*

**All autumns do not fill granaries.**

Estonian proverb.

**Chickens are counted in the autumn.**

Russian proverb; compare [Don't count your chickens before they are hatched](#) at optimism, and [May chickens come cheeping](#) at spring.

**If you do not sow in the spring, you will not reap in the autumn.**

Irish proverb.

**September blow soft till the fruit's in the loft.**

expressing the hope that fine weather often customary in September will hold until a crop of apples or other fruit has been picked and stored; English proverb, late 16th century.

**September dries up wells or breaks down bridges.**

traditional saying, suggesting that September can see either drought or flood.

# B

## Beauty

See also [APPEARANCE](#), [THE BODY](#)

*The early 20th-century advertising slogan Beauty is power reflects a traditional awareness of the force of physical attraction, but as far back as the 17th century we have also been warned that Beauty is only skin deep.*

### **Beauty draws with a single hair.**

asserting the powerful attraction of a woman's beauty (often shown as outdoing great physical strength); English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Beauty is a good letter of introduction.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.**

beauty is not judged objectively, but according to the beholder's estimation; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Beauty is only skin deep.**

physical beauty is no guarantee of a good character or temperament; English proverb, early 17th century; compare [A fair skin hides seven defects](#) at [APPEARANCE](#).

### **Beauty is power.**

advertising slogan for Helena Rubinstein's Valaze Skin Food, 1904.

### **Black is beautiful.**

slogan of American civil rights campaigners, mid 1960s.

**It is the beautiful bird that gets caged.**

beauty has its own dangers; Chinese proverb.

**Monday's child is fair of face.**

first line of a traditional rhyme, mid 19th century (compare qualities associated with birth on other days at entries under [GIFTS](#), [SORROW](#), [TRAVEL](#), and [WORK](#)).

**Please your eye and plague your heart.**

contrasting the pleasure given by the appearance of a beautiful person with the heartache they may cause; English proverb, early 17th century.

**The prettiest girl in the world can only give what she has.**

French proverb, *La plus belle fille du monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a.*

## Beginning

See also [CHANGE](#), [ENDING](#)

*Starting well is important, as we are told that A good beginning makes a good ending, but it is also wise to consider whether the course on which you are embarking is a wise one:* It is easier to raise the Devil than to lay him.

**Beginning is easy; continuing is hard.**

a good start is not enough, since success requires pertinacity; modern saying, said to be a Japanese proverb.

**First impressions are the most lasting.**

English proverb, early 18th century.

**The golden rule of life is, make a beginning.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A good beginning makes a good ending.**

getting things right at the outset is likely to ensure success; English proverb, early 14th century.

**It is easier to raise the Devil than to lay him.**

sometimes used to mean that it is easier to start a process than to stop it; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**It is the first step that is difficult.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**The longest journey begins with a single step.**

often used to emphasize how important a single decision may be; late 20th-century saying, ultimately derived from words of the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (c.604–c.531 BC) in the *Tao-te Ching*, ‘A tower of nine storeys begins with a heap of earth. The journey of a thousand *li* starts from where one stands.’

**The sooner begun, the sooner done.**

used as a warning against putting off a necessary but unwanted task; English proverb, late 16th century.

**There is always a first time.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**Well begun is half done.**

emphasizing the importance of a successful beginning to the completion of a project; English proverb, early 15th century.

## Behaviour

See also [MANNERS](#), [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

*While there is a traditional emphasis on the importance of right action, as in Do as I say, not as I do, there is also a certain scepticism about what may be only the appearance of good behaviour: Handsome is as handsome does.*

**Be what you would seem to be.**

English proverb, late 14th century; earlier in classical sources, as in *Seven against Thebes* by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus (c.525–456 BC), ‘He wishes not to appear but to be the best.’

**By a sweet tongue and kindness, you can drag an elephant by a hair.**

Middle Eastern proverb, commonly found in this form in Arabic; the equivalent proverb in Persian has ‘drag a snake’.

**Cleanliness is next to godliness.**

*next* here means ‘immediately following’, as in serial order, and is now often used humorously to mean ‘the second most desirable quality possible’; English proverb, late 18th century.

**Do as I say, not as I do.**

often used with an imputation of hypocrisy; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Evil communications corrupt good manners.**

proper conduct is harmfully influenced by false information or knowledge; the saying is also used to assert the deleterious effect of bad example; English proverb, early 15th century, from the Bible (1 Corinthians 15:33).

**Fake it ’til you make it.**

self-help motto from the 1970s, now often associated with Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Good behaviour is the last refuge of mediocrity.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Handsome is as handsome does.**

*handsome* here referred to chivalrous or genteel behaviour, although it is often popularly taken to refer to good looks; English proverb, late 16th century; compare **Pretty is as pretty does** below.

**He is a good dog who goes to church.**

good character is shown by moral custom and practice; English proverb, early 19th century.

**It is one thing to keep your morals on high plane; it's another to keep up with them.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Never do evil that good may come of it.**

the prospect of a good outcome cannot justify wrongdoing; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Pretty is as pretty does.**

American proverb, mid 19th century, equivalent of **Handsome is as handsome does** above.

**When in Rome, do as the Romans do.**

English proverb, late 15th century; ultimately deriving from a passage in a letter of St Ambrose, AD c.400, 'When I go to Rome, I fast on Saturday, but here [Milan] I do not. Do you also follow the custom of whatever church you attend, if you do not want to give or receive scandal.'

## Belief

See also [CERTAINTY AND DOUBT](#)

*Belief may relate to religious faith as in Faith will move mountains, but some traditional sayings deal with more general questions of how you should approach the world around you: Believe nothing of what you hear, and only half of what you see.*

**Believe nothing of what you hear, and only half of what you see.**

English proverb, mid 19th century; a related Middle English saying warns that you should not believe everything that is said or that you hear.

**A believer is a songless bird in a cage.**

American proverb, late 19th century.

**Believing has a core of unbelieving.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Don't strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.**

do not make difficulties over a small matter, when you have already accepted something of much greater importance; saying with biblical allusion, to Matthew 23:24, 'Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.'

**Faith will move mountains.**

with the help of faith something naturally impossible can be achieved; English proverb, late 19th century, in allusion to the Bible (Matthew 17:20, 'If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove').

**Pigs may fly, but they are very unlikely birds.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Seeing is believing.**

acceptance of the existence of something depends on actual demonstration; English proverb, early 17th century.

## Birds

*Sayings relating to birds are likely to reflect the associations of particular species, from the English magpies whose gathering may foretell sorrow or mirth, to the rare white heron of New Zealand.*

**Birds of prey do not sing.**

German proverb.

**The cuckoo comes in April, He sings his song in May; In the middle of June He changes his tune, And then he flies away.**

traditional rhyme.

**A mockingbird has no voice of his own.**

the mockingbird is known for its mimicry of the calls and songs of other birds; American proverb, mid 19th century.



**One for sorrow; two for mirth; three for a wedding, four for a birth.**

a traditional rhyme found in a variety of forms, referring to the number of magpies seen on a particular occasion; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**The robin and the wren are God's cock and hen; the martin and the swallow are God's mate and marrow.**

there was a traditional belief that the robin and the wren were sacred birds, and that to harm them in any way would be unlucky (*marrow* = 'companion'); English proverb, late 18th century.

**The swan brings snow on its bill.**

the arrival of migrating swans may be the harbinger of wintry weather; Russian proverb.

**The white heron is a bird of a single flight.**

the white heron is very rare; Maori proverb.

## The Body

See also [APPEARANCE](#), [BEAUTY](#), [THE SENSES](#)

*Physical characteristics may give a clue to inner qualities, from Cold hands, warm heart to The larger the body, the bigger the heart.*

**Cold hands, warm heart.**

an outward sign may contradict an inward reality; English proverb, early 20th century.

**The eyes are the window of the soul.**

it is in the eyes that a person's true nature may be discerned; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**The larger the body, the bigger the heart.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

## Books

See also [READING](#), [WRITING](#)

*While not every book is admirable (A great book is a great evil), the consensus of proverbial wisdom is in favour of the written word: A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.*

**Beware of the man of one book.**

warning against the person who places too much confidence in a single authority; Latin proverb.

**A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.**

Middle Eastern saying.

**A great book is a great evil.**

a long book is likely to be verbose and badly written; English proverb, early 17th century; a contraction of Callimachus (c.305–c.240 BC), ‘The great book is equal to a great evil.’

**A library is a repository of medicine for the mind.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

## [Borrowing](#)

See [DEBT AND BORROWING](#)

## [British Towns and Regions](#)

*Local pride is an enduring quality, whether expressed in a traditional saying such as Kirton was a borough town when Exon was a vuzzy down, or a 20th-century slogan such as Glasgow’s miles better.*

**Essex stiles, Kentish miles, Norfolk wiles, many a man beguiles.**

traditional saying, early 17th century.

**From Hell, Hull, and Halifax, good Lord deliver us.**

traditional saying, late 16th century.

**Glasgow’s miles better.**

slogan introduced by Provost Michael Kelly, 1980s.

**Kirton was a borough town when Exon was a vuzzy down.**

on the relative ages of Crediton (*Kirton*) and Exeter (*Exon*); traditional saying.

**Lincoln was, London is, and York shall be.**

referring to which is the greatest city; traditional saying, late 16th century.

**May God in His mercy look down on Belfast.**

traditional refrain.

**Northamptonshire for squires and spires.**

traditional saying, late 19th century.

**Peebles for pleasure.**

the town of Peebles in the Scottish Borders has traditionally been a favoured holiday resort; traditional saying, late 19th century.

**Some places of Kent have health and no wealth, some wealth and no health, some health and wealth.**

referring to the north and east part of the county, Romney Marsh, and the Weald respectively; traditional saying, late 16th century.

**Sussex won't be druv.**

asserting that Sussex people have minds of their own, and cannot be forced against their will (*druv* is a dialect version of *drove*, meaning *driven*); English proverb, early 20th century.

**Take away Aberdeen and twelve miles round, and where are you?**

Scottish saying, reflecting local pride in the city.

**There are more saints in Cornwall than in heaven.**

traditional saying, relating to the number of West Country saints known through their local cult.

## **What Manchester says today, the rest of England says tomorrow.**

English proverb, late 19th century, occurring in a variety of forms.

## **Yorkshire born and Yorkshire bred, strong in the arm and weak in the head.**

the names of other (chiefly northern) English counties and towns are also used instead of Yorkshire; English proverb, mid 19th century.

## Broadcasting

*The early days of broadcasting are associated with the high-minded aspirations of Nation shall speak peace unto nation; later years brought a somewhat more flippant approach, as in the American advice Always turn the radio on before you listen to it.*

### **Always turn the radio on before you listen to it.**

American saying, mid 20th century.

### **Assistant heads must roll!**

traditional solution to management problems in broadcasting.

### **Nation shall speak peace unto nation.**

motto of the BBC, adapted from the Bible (Isaiah 2:4, 'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more') by Montague John Rendall (1862–1950).

### **To inform, educate, and entertain.**

traditional expression of the mission of the BBC, associated with Lord Reith (1889–1971).

## Business

See also [BUYING AND SELLING](#)

*While not all sayings go as far as the modern Business is war, there is a consensus in favour of determined application: Business before pleasure,*

*and Business neglected is business lost.*

**Bull markets climb a wall of worry.**

signs of recovery from a recession are treated with scepticism; modern saying.

**Business before pleasure.**

often used to encourage a course of action; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Business goes where it is invited and stays where it is well treated.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Business is like a car: it will not run by itself except downhill.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Business is war.**

modern saying, sometimes said to be of Japanese origin.

**Business neglected is business lost.**

North American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The customer is always right.**

English proverb, early 20th century; compare a saying of the Swiss hotel proprietor César Ritz (1850–1918), '*Le client n'a jamais tort* [The customer is never wrong].'

**He that cannot abide a bad market does not deserve a good one.**

to be successful in business you must be able to deal with bad times as well as good; English proverb, late 17th century.

**If you don't speculate, you can't accumulate.**

outlay (and some degree of risk) is necessary if real gain is to be achieved; English proverb, mid 20th century.

**Keep your own shop and your shop will keep you.**

recommending attention to what is essential to one's livelihood; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Never try to catch a falling knife.**

do not invest in a failing business; figurative use of health and safety advice for caterers.

**No cure, no pay.**

known principally from its use on Lloyd's of London's Standard Form of Salvage Agreement; English proverb, late 19th century.

**No penny, no paternoster.**

if you want a thing you must pay for it (the allusion is to priests insisting on being paid for performing services); English proverb, late 16th century.

**Pay beforehand was never well served.**

payment in advance removes the incentive to finish the work; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Pile it high, sell it cheap.**

slogan coined by Jack Cohen (1898–1979), founder of the Tesco supermarket chain.

**There are tricks in every trade.**

the practice of every skill is likely to involve some trickery or dishonesty; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Trade follows the flag.**

commercial development is likely to follow military intervention; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Buying and Selling**

See also [BUSINESS](#)

*The warning Let the buyer beware, drawn ultimately from the classical world, enshrines a core belief about the world of commerce. More explicit advice along the same lines is found in the saying, The buyer has need of a hundred eyes, the seller of but one.*

**The bulls make money, the bears make money, but the hogs get slaughtered.**

money can be made through buying or selling stock, but greed is fatal; modern saying.

**The buyer has need of a hundred eyes, the seller of but one.**

stressing the responsibility of a purchaser to examine the goods on offer; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.**

sometimes with an implication of sharp practice; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Let the buyer beware.**

warning that it is up to a buyer to establish the nature and value of a purchase before completing the transaction; English proverb, early 16th century; the saying is also found in the form of the Latin tag *caveat emptor*.

**Sell in May and go away (come back on St Leger's Day).**

saying related to the cycle of activity on the London Stock Exchange. May, shortly after the start of the financial year, was traditionally a busy time, but during the summer months trading was slack as Londoners (including stockbrokers) took their holiday breaks away from the capital. The full form of the saying refers to the classic St Leger horse race, taken as marking the end of the English summer social calendar.

**You buy land, you buy stones; you buy meat, you buy bones.**

every purchase has its drawbacks; English proverb, late 17th century.

# C

## Cats

See also [DOGS](#)

*Sayings about cats emphasize not only their independence of humankind, but also their capacity to survive: A cat always lands on its feet.*

### **A cat always lands on its feet.**

a cat's natural agility typifies its ability to escape from trouble; traditional saying.

### **A cat has nine lives.**

traditional saying.

### **A cat may look at a king.**

even someone in a lowly position has a right to observe a person of power and influence; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Feed a dog for three days and he will remember your kindness for three years. Feed a cat for three years and she will forget your kindness in three days.**

Japanese proverb.

### **It is better to feed one cat than many mice.**

Norwegian proverb.

### **Touch not the cat but a glove.**

*but* = without, and the cat referred to here is a wild cat; Scottish proverb, early 19th century.



## Causes and Consequences

*Deliberate choice will have a result which may be unwelcome, as in After the feast comes the reckoning. However, traditional wisdom also emphasizes that something of apparent unimportance may have significant consequences: The mother of mischief is no bigger than a midge's wing.*

### **After the feast comes the reckoning.**

a period of pleasure or indulgence has to be paid for; English proverb, early 17th century, but now chiefly in modern North American use.

### **As you bake, so shall you brew.**

as you begin, so shall you proceed; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **As you brew, so shall you bake.**

your circumstances will be shaped by your own initial actions; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **As you make your bed, so you must lie upon it.**

as you begin, so shall you proceed; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **As you sow, so you reap.**

you will have to endure the consequences of your actions; English proverb, late 15th century; compare **They that sow the wind, shall reap the whirlwind** below.

### **A fence between makes love more keen.**

impediments between lovers are likely to increase fondness; German proverb.

### **Good seed makes a bad crop.**

something which has a sound basis will do well; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Great oaks from little acorns grow.**

great results may ensue from apparently small beginnings; English proverb, late 14th century.

**He who plants thorns must not expect to gather roses.**

Arabic proverb.

**If you see a turtle on a fencepost, it didn't get there by accident.**

regional American saying.

**If you want to see heaven, you have to die yourself.**

Indian proverb.

**Kill the chicken to scare the monkey.**

make an example of those in a weak position to frighten possible stronger opponents; Chinese saying.

**The mother of mischief is no bigger than a midge's wing.**

the origin of difficulties can be very small; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Sow much, reap much; sow little, reap little.**

Chinese proverb.

**There is reason in the roasting of eggs.**

however odd an action may seem, there is a reason for it; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**They that sow the wind, shall reap the whirlwind.**

those who have initiated a dangerous course must suffer the consequences; English proverb, late 16th century; compare [As you sow, so you reap](#) above.

**Who won't be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock.**

a ship which is not being steered on its course will run on to a rock; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Caution**

See also [DANGER](#)

*We may put ourselves at risk through lack of caution, but someone who adheres too closely to the advice Better be safe than sorry may miss out on possible benefits, since A cat in gloves catches no mice.*

**Be careful what you wish for, because you may get it.**

modern saying, suggesting that the fulfilment of an unwise objective may turn out to be unwelcome.

**Better be safe than sorry.**

urging the wisdom of taking precautions; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.**

it is better to accept what one has than to try to get more and risk losing everything; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**Call on God, but row away from the rocks.**

make an effort to avoid a dangerous situation; Indian proverb.

**A cat in gloves catches no mice.**

deliberate restraint and caution (or ‘pussyfooting’) often result in failure to achieve anything; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Caution is the parent of safety.**

American proverb, early 18th century.

**Cross the river by feeling the stones.**

Chinese proverb, advising progress through wary experimentation.

**Delhi is far away.**

warning that unexpected events may intervene in apparently dangerous circumstances; Indian proverb, deriving from the response of the 14th-century Sufi mystic Nizamuddin Aulia to a threat from the Sultan of Delhi (the Sultan in fact died before returning home); compare **God is high above, and the tsar is far away** and **The mountains are high, and the emperor is far away** at GOVERNMENT.

**Discretion is the better part of valour.**

often used to explain cautious action, and sometimes with allusion to Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* (1597), 'The better part of valour is discretion'; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Don't put all your eggs in one basket.**

you should not chance everything on a single venture, but spread the risk; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Don't put up your umbrella before it rains.**

do not take defensive action before it becomes necessary; modern saying.

**Duck and cover.**

US advice in the event of a missile attack, c.1950; associated particularly with the children's cartoon character 'Bert the Turtle'.

**Full cup, steady hand.**

used especially to caution against spoiling a comfortable or otherwise enviable situation by a careless action; English proverb, early 11th century.

**He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day.**

English proverb, mid 16th century.

**He who has been scalded by hot milk, blows even on cold lassi before drinking it.**

*lassi* = an Indian drink, traditionally based on diluted buttermilk or yoghurt, and usually served chilled; Indian proverb; compare **Once bitten by a snake, a man will be afraid of a piece of rope for three years** below.

**He who sups with the devil should have a long spoon.**

one should be cautious when dealing with dangerous persons; English proverb, late 14th century.

**If you can't be good, be careful.**

often used as a humorous warning; English proverb, early 20th century; the same idea is found in 11th-century Latin, *si non caste tamen caute*.

### **Let sleeping dogs lie.**

something which may be dangerous or difficult to handle is better left undisturbed; English proverb, late 14th century; compare [Poke a bush, a snake comes out](#) below.

### **Let well alone.**

often used as a warning against raising problems which will then be difficult to resolve; English proverb, late 16th century; compare [Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you](#) below.

### **Look before you leap.**

used to advise caution before committing oneself to a course of action; English proverb, mid 14th century.

### **The more you stir it [a turd] the worse it stinks.**

disturbance of something naturally unpleasant will only make it more disagreeable; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.**

another version of the advice that one should let well alone; English proverb, late 19th century.

### **Once bitten by a snake, a man will be afraid of a piece of rope for three years.**

Chinese proverb; compare [He who has been scalded by hot milk, blows even on cold lassi before drinking it](#) above, and [Once bitten, twice shy](#) at [EXPERIENCE](#).

### **Poke a bush, a snake comes out.**

warning against unnecessary disturbance; Japanese proverb; compare [Let sleeping dogs lie](#) above.

### **Safe bind, safe find.**

something kept securely will be readily found again; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Saw wood and say nothing.**

warning against unnecessary disturbance; American proverb, late 19th century.

### **Second thoughts are best.**

it is dangerous to act on one's first impulse without due thought; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Steady as she goes!**

injunction to hold carefully to the course set; nautical saying.

### **A stitch in time saves nine.**

a small but timely intervention will ensure against the need for much more substantial repair later; English proverb, early 18th century.

### **Those who play at bowls must look out for rubbers.**

one must beware of difficulties associated with a particular activity; *rubber* here is an alteration of *rub*, an obstacle or impediment to the course of a bowl; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **Trust, but verify.**

Russian proverb, used by President Ronald Reagan during negotiations with the Soviet Union and widely associated with him.

### **Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel.**

Arab proverb; compare **Put your trust in God, and keep your powder dry** at [PRACTICALITY](#).

### **We won't make a drama out of a crisis.**

advertising slogan for Commercial Union insurance.

## **Certainty and Doubt**

See also [BELIEF](#), [FAITH](#), [INDECISION](#)

*We may be urged to be definite in our views, but proverbially* Nothing is certain but death and taxes.

**The eyes believe themselves; the ears believe other people.**

others may persuade us not to believe the evidence of our own eyes; Greek proverb.

**In matters of principle, stand like a rock; in matters of taste, swim with the current.**

late 19th-century saying; from the mid 20th century associated with Thomas Jefferson, in the form 'In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.'

**Nothing is certain but death and taxes.**

summarizing what in life is inevitable and inescapable; English proverb, early 18th century.

## Chance and Luck

*Against the view that Blind chance sweeps the world along, there are suggestions that there are ways to make your own fortune: Diligence is the mother of good luck. Occasionally, too, the right patronage may be helpful: The Devil looks after his own.*

**Accidents will happen (in the best regulated families).**

the most orderly arrangements cannot prevent accidents from occurring; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**Blind chance sweeps the world along.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The devil looks after his own.**

often used to comment on the good fortune of someone undeserving; English proverb, early 18th century.

**The devil's children have the devil's luck.**

commenting on the good fortune of someone undeserving; English proverb, late 17th century.

**Diligence is the mother of good luck.**

success results more from application and practice than from good fortune; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Fools for luck.**

a foolish person is traditionally fortunate; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**A great fortune depends on luck; a smaller one on diligence.**

for outstanding success we need good luck as well as the capacity for hard work; Chinese proverb.

**The harder I work, the luckier I get.**

modern saying, often as a response to having success attributed to good fortune.

**If you want to live and thrive, let the spider run alive.**

It was traditionally unlucky to harm a spider or a spider's web; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**It is better to be born lucky than rich.**

often with the implication that riches can be lost or spent, but that good luck gives one the capacity of improve one's fortunes; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Lightning never strikes the same place twice.**

often used as an encouragement that a particular misfortune will not be repeated; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Lucky at cards, unlucky in love.**

suggesting that good fortune in gambling is balanced by lack of success in love; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Moses took a chance.**

used to urge someone to take a risk; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**See a pin and pick it up, all the day you'll have good luck; see a pin and let it lie, bad luck you'll have all day.**



extolling the virtues of thrift in small matters; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**There is luck in odd numbers.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**The third time is the charm.**

modern saying; compare [Third time lucky](#) below.

**Third time lucky.**

reflecting the idea that three is a lucky number; often used to suggest making another effort after initial failure; English proverb, mid 19th century; compare [The third time is the charm](#) above.

**Throw a lucky man into the sea, and he will come up with a fish in his mouth.**

a fortunate person will have further luck; Arabic proverb.

**You have two chances, Buckley's and none.**

Australian proverb; in Australia, *Buckley's chance* means a slim chance or no chance at all, and is sometimes said to derive from the name of William Buckley (died 1856), who, despite dire predictions as to his chances of survival, lived with the Aboriginals for many years.

## Change

See also [BEGINNING](#), [ENDING](#)

*Change may be refreshing* (A change is as good as a rest), *or tiring* (Three removals are as bad as a fire). *However, perhaps more importantly, there is an awareness that some things cannot be changed:* No matter how long a log floats in the river, it will never become a crocodile.

**Be sure you can better your condition before you make a change.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A change is as good as a rest.**

suggesting that a change of activity can be refreshing; English proverb, late 19th century.

**It is never too late to mend.**

one can always try to improve; English proverb, late 16th century.

**The leopard does not change his spots.**

a person cannot change their essential nature, from the Bible (Jeremiah 13:23), ‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?’; English proverb, mid 16th century; compare **By seeing one spot, you know the entire leopard** at [CHARACTER](#).

**Never say never.**

used as a warning against over-confidence that circumstances cannot change; late 20th century saying; compare **Never is a long time** and [TIME](#).

**New brooms sweep clean.**

often used in the context of someone newly appointed to a post who is making changes in personnel and procedures; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**New lords, new laws.**

new authorities are likely to change existing rules; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**No matter how long a log floats in the river, it will never become a crocodile.**

essential characteristics will not change; African proverb; compare **Feeding a snake with milk will not change its poisonous nature** at [CHARACTER](#).

**No more Mr Nice Guy.**

said to assert that one will no longer be amiable or cooperative; mid 20th-century saying.

**Nothing is for ever.**

late 20th-century saying.

**Other times, other manners.**

used in resignation or consolation; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Out with the old, in with the new.**

modern saying.

***Semper eadem.***

Latin, meaning ‘Ever the same’, the motto of Elizabeth I (1533–1603).

**There are no birds in last year’s nest.**

circumstances have changed, and former opportunities are no longer there; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Three removals are as bad as a fire.**

moving house is so disruptive and unsettling, that the effects of doing it three times are as devastating as a house fire; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**Times change and we with time.**

we adapt in response to changes in the world around us; English proverb, late 16th century.

**To change, and change for the better, are two different things.**

German proverb.

**Variety is the spice of life.**

English proverb, late 18th century, originally with allusion to William Cowper’s *The Task* (1785), ‘Variety’s the very spice of life,/That gives it all its flavour.’

**When the music changes, so does the dance.**

a reminder that we need to change with the times; African proverb.

**When the wind of change blows, some build walls, others build windmills.**

modern saying, sometimes claimed to be an old Chinese proverb, but found only from the late 20th century.

### **You can't put new wine in old bottles.**

often used in relation to the introduction of new ideas or practices; English proverb, early 20th century, from the Bible (Matthew 9:17), 'Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish.'

## Character

See also [THE HUMAN RACE](#), [REPUTATION](#)

*A number of sayings reflect on essential characteristics displayed through outward appearance: By seeing one spot, you know the entire leopard. However, there is some warning against making too ready assumptions from outer circumstances: The man who is born in a stable is not a horse.*

### **An ape's an ape, a varlet's a varlet, though they be clad in silk or scarlet.**

inward nature cannot be overcome by outward show; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **A bad penny always turns up.**

referring to the inevitable return of an unwanted or disreputable person; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **The bee sucks honey where the spider sucks poison.**

we make the best or worst of things depending on our own nature; English proverb.

### **Better a good cow than a cow of a good kind.**

good character is more important than distinguished lineage; English proverb, early 20th century.

### **By seeing one spot, you know the entire leopard.**

Japanese proverb; compare [The leopard does not change his spots](#) at [CHANGE](#).

***Cet animal est très méchant: Quand on l'attaque, il se défend***  
**['This animal is very vicious: when attacked, it defends itself'].**

ironic recognition that a natural urge to defend yourself may be interpreted as aggression; French proverb.

**Character is what we are; reputation is what others think we are.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The child is the father of the man.**

asserting the unity of character from childhood to adult life; English proverb, early 19th century; from Wordsworth's lines 'The Child is father of the Man; And I could wish my days to be Bound each to each by natural piety.'

**Eagles don't catch flies.**

great or important persons do not concern themselves with trifling matters; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Feeding a snake with milk will not change its poisonous nature.**

kindness will not alter a bad character; Indian proverb; compare **No matter how long a log floats in the river, it will never become a crocodile** at [CHANGE](#).

**Iron sharpens iron.**

friends of the same calibre can strengthen one another; modern saying, with biblical allusion to Proverbs 27:17, 'Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.'

**It takes all sorts to make a world.**

often used in recognition that a particular group may encompass a wide range of character and background; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Like a fence, character cannot be strengthened by whitewash.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The man who is born in a stable is not a horse.**

sometimes attributed to the Duke of Wellington, who asserted that being born in Ireland did not make him Irish; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Once a —, always a —.**

a particular way of life produces traits that cannot be eradicated; English proverb, early 17th century; compare [Once a priest, always a priest](#) at [CLERGY](#).

**The same fire that hardens the egg melts the butter.**

different people will react in different ways to the same experiences; modern saying, but the idea is found in the early 17th century in the words of Francis Bacon (1561–1623), ‘In one and the same fire, clay grows hard and wax melts.’

**A sleeping fox counts hens in his dreams.**

particular characteristics affect all we do; Russian proverb.

**Still waters run deep.**

now commonly used to assert that a placid exterior hides a passionate nature; English proverb, early 15th century; compare [Where the river is deepest, it makes the least noise](#) below.

**A stream cannot rise above its source.**

used to suggest that a person’s natural level is set by their ultimate origin; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The style is the man.**

one’s chosen style reflects one’s essential characteristics; English proverb, early 20th century, although a similar thought is found earlier in French, in the Comte de Buffon’s words to the Académie Française on 25 August 1753, ‘These things [subject matter] are external to the man; style is the man.’

**There’s many a good cock come out of a tattered bag.**

something good may emerge from unpromising surroundings (the reference is to cockfighting); English proverb, late 19th century.

**The tree is known by its fruit.**

a person is judged by what they do and produce; English proverb, early 16th century.

**What can you expect from a pig but a grunt?**

used rhetorically of coarse or boorish behaviour; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**What's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh.**

inherent characteristics will in the end become apparent; English proverb, late 15th century.

**When the going gets tough, the tough get going.**

pressure acts as a stimulus to the strong; English proverb, mid 20th century, often used by Joseph Kennedy (1888–1969) as an injunction to his children.

**Where the river is deepest, it makes the least noise.**

Italian proverb; compare [Still waters run deep](#) above.

**You cannot dream yourself into a character, you must forge one out for yourself.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

## Charity

See also [GENEROSITY](#)

*Together with praise for the natural springs of charity, The roots of charity are always green, there may be a note of self-interest: Keep your own fish-guts for your own sea-maws.*

**Charity begins at home.**

you should look first to needs in your immediate vicinity; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Charity is not a bone you throw to a dog but a bone you share with a dog.**

the recipient of one's charity should not be treated as an inferior; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Charity sees the need, not the cause.**

true charity succours need regardless of whether the needy person is responsible for their own situation; German proverb.

**Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.**

mid 20th century saying, perhaps deriving from a Chinese saying; compare [Who teaches me for a day, is my father for a lifetime](#) at [TEACHING](#).

**If everyone gives a thread, the poor man will have a shirt.**

a little from each person makes an effective whole; Russian proverb.

**Keep your own fish-guts for your own sea-maws.**

any surplus product should be offered first to those in need who are closest to you; Scottish proverb, early 18th century.

**The roots of charity are always green.**

true generosity constantly renews itself; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Service is the rent we pay for our room on earth.**

modern saying, deriving from the admission ceremony of Toc H, a society, originally of ex-servicemen and women, founded by Tubby Clayton (1885–1972) after the First World War to promote Christian fellowship and social service.

## Children

See also [THE FAMILY](#), [PARENTS](#), [YOUTH](#)

*Changes in attitude have moved the focus on child-rearing from the repressive Children should be seen and not heard and Spare the rod, and*



spoil the child *to the duty of society to nurture as expressed by the African saying*, It takes a village to raise a child.

**And the child that is born on the Sabbath day,**

**Is bonny, and blithe, and good and gay.**

line from a traditional rhyme (compare qualities associated with birth on other days at entries under [BEAUTY](#), [GIFTS](#), [SORROW](#), [TRAVEL](#), and [WORK](#)).

**The art of being a parent consists of sleeping when the baby isn't looking.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Children: one is one, two is fun, three is a houseful.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Children should be seen and not heard.**

originally applied specifically to (young) women; English proverb, early 15th century.

**It takes a village to raise a child.**

many in the community have a role in a child's development; African proverb (Yoruba).

**Little children, little sorrows; big children, great sorrows.**

even when grown up, children are likely to be a source of concern to their parents; Danish proverb.

**No moon, no man.**

recording the traditional belief that a child born at the time of the new moon or just before its appearance will not live to grow up; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Spare the rod and spoil the child.**

the result of not disciplining a child is to spoil it; English proverb, early 11th century, sometimes with allusion to the Bible (Proverbs 13:24), 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son.'

## Choice

See also [INDECISION](#)

*Choice may be inevitable, as in A door must be either shut or open, but it is noticeable how often the view is that we find ourselves choosing between unpalatable options: Small choice in rotten apples.*

### **Better red than dead.**

slogan of nuclear disarmament campaigners, late 1950s.

### **Different strokes for different folks.**

different ways of doing something are appropriate for different people (the saying is of US origin, and *strokes* here means ‘comforting gestures of approval’); late 20th-century saying.

### **A door must be either shut or open.**

said of two mutually exclusive alternatives; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **He that has a choice has trouble.**

choosing between two things or persons may cause difficulties; American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **No man can serve two masters.**

English proverb, early 14th century.

### **The obvious choice is usually a quick regret.**

selection on outward appearance alone soon disappoints; American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Of two evils choose the less.**

English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Small choice in rotten apples.**

if all options are unpalatable there is little choice to be had; English proverb, late 16th century.

**They offered death so you would be happy with a fever.**

a worse possibility makes something inherently unwelcome acceptable; Persian proverb.

**You pays your money and you takes your choice.**

said when there is little or nothing to choose between two options; English proverb, mid 19th century.

## The Christian Church

See also [CLERGY](#), [GOD](#), [RELIGION](#)

*The essential strength of the Church is seen in its capacity to withstand persecution:* The church is an anvil which has worn out many hammers.

**The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.**

persecution causes the Church to grow; English proverb, mid 16th century, perhaps ultimately deriving from the *Apologeticus* of the Roman theologian Tertullian (c. AD 160–c.225), ‘As often as we are mown down by you, the more we grow in numbers; the blood of Christians is the seed.’

**Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours, yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world, yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good.**

modern saying, often attributed to St Teresa of Ávila (1512–82), but not found in her writings.

**The Christians to the lions!**

saying reported by the Roman theologian Tertullian (c. AD 160–c.225) in his *Apologeticus*, ‘If the Tiber rises, if the Nile does not rise, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, famine, or pestilence, straightway the cry is . . .’

**The church is an anvil which has worn out many hammers.**

the passive strength of Christianity will outlast aggression; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**A church is God between four walls.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Meat and mass never hindered man.**

indicating human need for physical and spiritual sustenance; English proverb, early 17th century.

**The nearer the church, the farther from God.**

sometimes used to indicate a lack of true spirituality where it is most likely to be found; English proverb, early 14th century.

**You can't build a church with stumbling-blocks.**

members of a church need to work together in fellowship; American proverb, mid 20th century.

## Christmas

*Sayings about Christmas give particular emphasis to preparations for celebration, from the gifts appropriate to the Twelve Days to the anticipated feasting: Christmas is coming, and the goose is getting fat.*

**Christmas comes but once a year, and when it comes it brings good cheer.**

traditional saying, going back to the 16th century.

**Christmas is coming, and the goose is getting fat.**

from a traditional rhyme, recorded from the 19th century (goose was traditional Christmas fare).

**Christmas with the family, Easter with whomever you want.**

Italian proverb, *Natale con i tuoi, Pasqua con chi vuoi.*

**A green Yule makes a fat churchyard.**

a mild winter is traditionally unhealthy (*Yule* is an archaic term for Christmas); English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Only — shopping days to Christmas.**

the imminence of Christmas expressed in commercial terms.

## Circumstance and Situation

See also [CHANGE](#)

*It is as well to come to terms with circumstances, a consensus expressed in the advice offered by the Indian proverb, If you live in the river, you should make friends with the crocodile.*

### **Although the branch is broken off, the trunk remains.**

damage, while unpleasant, is not necessarily disastrous; Maori saying.

### **Circumstances alter cases.**

a general principle may be modified in the light of particular circumstances; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **If you do not know where you have been, you cannot know where you are going.**

understanding of your own situation is essential for effective action; African proverb.

### **If you live in the river, you should make friends with the crocodile.**

Indian proverb.

### **May you live in interesting times.**

used ironically, as eventful times are often dangerous or unpleasant; modern saying, said to derive from a Chinese curse, but likely to be apocryphal.

### **New circumstances, new controls.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **No rose without a thorn.**

even the pleasantest circumstances have their drawbacks; English proverb, mid 15th century.

### **One day honey, one day onions.**

Arab proverb.

**One man's loss is another man's gain.**

often said by the gainer in self-congratulation; English proverb, early 16th century.

**A rolling stone gathers no moss.**

used to imply that someone who does not settle down will not prosper, or form lasting ties; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**There's a time and place for everything.**

often used as a warning against doing or saying something at a particular time or in a particular situation; English proverb, early 16th century.

**There's no great loss without some gain.**

said in consolation or resignation; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The wheel has come full circle.**

the situation has returned to what it was in the past, as if completing a cycle, with reference to Shakespeare's *King Lear* 'The wheel is come full circle.'

## Cities

See [TOWNS AND CITIES](#)

## Clergy

See also [THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#)

*Sayings relating to the clerical profession include the rather bleak assessment of the likely pressure on a cleric's family: Clergyman's sons always turn out badly. However, there is no going back: Once a priest, always a priest.*

**Clergymen's sons always turn out badly.**

the implication is that the weight of expectation on clergymen's children is often itself damaging; English proverb, late 19th century.

### **Like people, like priest.**

English proverb, late 16th century; from the Bible (Hosea 4:9), ‘And there shall be like people, like priest.’

### **Nobody is born learned; bishops are made of men.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Once a priest, always a priest.**

English proverb, mid 19th century; compare **Once a —, always a —** at [CHARACTER](#).

## Computing

See also [TECHNOLOGY](#)

*Sayings about the world of computing date from early days of the technology, when the instruction Do not fold, spindle or mutilate was an important warning. However, some sayings are timeless: Garbage in, garbage out remains true through all developments.*

### **Do not fold, spindle or mutilate.**

instruction on punched cards (1950s, and in differing forms from the 1930s).

### **Garbage in, garbage out.**

in computing, incorrect or faulty input will always cause poor output; mid 20th century saying.

### **If you can't do it in Fortran, do it in assembly language. If you can't do it in assembly language, it's not worth doing.**

saying on computer programming (*Fortran* = a high-level programming language used especially for scientific calculations).

### **It's not a bug, it's a feature.**

*bug* = an error in a computer program or system; late 20th-century saying.

### **No manager ever got fired for buying IBM.**

IBM advertising slogan.

**There is no patch for stupid.**

21st-century saying relating to cybersecurity, implying that the human element is the weakest part of any system.

**To err is human but to really foul things up requires a computer.**

late 20th-century saying; compare [to err is human \(to forgive divine\)](#) at [MISTAKES](#).

## Conscience

See also [FORGIVENESS](#)

*Proverbial wisdom tends to dwell on the uncomfortable effects of a bad conscience. While A clean conscience is a good pillow, permitting easy sleep, awareness of guilt makes the waking life unpleasant: Evil doers are evil dreaders.*

**A clean conscience is a good pillow.**

a clear conscience enables its possessor to sleep soundly; English proverb, early 18th century.

**Conscience gets a lot of credit that belongs to cold feet.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Do right and fear no man.**

English proverb, mid 15th century.

**Evil doers are evil dreaders.**

someone engaged in wrongdoing is likely to be nervous and suspicious of others; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**A guilty conscience needs no accuser.**

awareness of one's own guilt has the same effect as an accusation; English proverb, late 14th century.



**Let your conscience be your guide.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A quiet conscience sleeps in thunder.**

someone with an untroubled conscience will sleep undisturbed whatever the noise; English proverb, late 16th century.

## Consequences

See [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#)

## Cooking

See also [EATING](#), [FOOD](#)

*Good equipment is important (A cook is no better than her stove), but you cannot always judge by outward appearances: All are not cooks who sport white caps and carry long knives.*

**All are not cooks who sport white caps and carry long knives.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A cook is no better than her stove.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Fish, to taste good, must swim three times—in water, in butter, and in wine.**

the best way to cook fish; Polish proverb.

**God sends meat, but the Devil sends cooks.**

anything which is in itself good or useful may be spoiled or perverted by the use to which it is put; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**It is a poor cook that cannot lick his own fingers.**

a good cook assesses their food with their own sense of taste; English proverb.

**Keep one eye on the frying-pan, and one on the cat.**

Italian proverb.

## Cooperation

*Sayings about cooperation emphasize the positive side of working with others, as in When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion. However, the dangers of not cooperating are also considered: If you don't believe in cooperation, watch what happens to a wagon when one wheel comes off.*

### **All arts are brothers; each is a light to the other.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

### **A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.**

often used when identifying a particular point of vulnerability; English proverb, mid 19th century; compare [You are the weakest link...goodbye](#) at [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#).

### **Cross the river in a crowd, and the crocodile won't eat you.**

Madagascar saying.

### **Dog does not eat dog.**

people of the same profession should not attack each other; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Each of us at a handle of the basket.**

Maori proverb.

### **Every little helps.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Four eyes see more than two.**

two people are more observant than one alone; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Hawks will not pick out hawks' eyes.**

powerful people from the same group will not attack one another; English proverb, late 16th century.

**He who travels fast, travels alone, and he who travels far, travels in the company of others.**

African proverb.

**If you don't believe in cooperation, watch what happens to a wagon when one wheel comes off.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**If you think cooperation is unnecessary, just try running your car a while on three wheels.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**It takes two to make a bargain.**

often used to imply that both parties must be prepared to give some ground; English proverb, late 16th century.

**It takes two to tango.**

meaning that a cooperative venture requires a contribution from both participants; mid 20th-century saying, from the 1952 song by Al Hoffman and Dick Manning.

**Little birds that can sing and won't sing must be made to sing.**

those who refuse to obey or cooperate will be forced to do so; English proverb, late 17th century.

**Many hands make light work.**

often used as an encouragement to join in with assistance; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**One good turn deserves another.**

English proverb, early 15th century.

**One hand washes the other.**

referring to cooperation between two closely linked persons or organizations; English proverb, late 16th century.

**A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle.**

when people combine, they can resist attack; Japanese proverb.

**A single bracelet does not jingle.**

to make an effect we need the help of others; African proverb.

**There is honour among thieves.**

sometimes used ironically; English proverb, early 19th century.

**A trouble shared is a trouble halved.**

discussing a problem will lessen its impact; English proverb, mid 20th century.

**Union is strength.**

English proverb, mid 17th century; *unity* is a popular alternative for *union*, especially when used as a trade-union slogan.

**United we stand, divided we fall.**

a watchword of the American Revolution, English proverb, late 18th century.

**We live in each other's shadow.**

Irish proverb.

**When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.**

African proverb.

**When the lips are gone, the teeth are cold.**

Chinese proverb.

**With your food basket, and with my food basket, the guest will have enough.**

Maori proverb.

**Corruption**

*Sayings such as A golden key can open any door remind us that there is always likely to be someone who is open to bribery—and that the practice may spread, given that The rotten apple injures its neighbour.*

**Corruption will find a dozen alibis for its evil deeds.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Every man has his price.**

everyone is susceptible to the right bribe; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**A golden key can open any door.**

any access is guaranteed if enough money is offered; English proverb, late 16th century.

**If gold rusts, what will iron do?**

if someone of admirable character succumbs to temptation, what is likely to happen to a person of less upright character; English proverb.

**It's not what you know, it's who you know.**

stressing the importance of personal influence; late 20th century saying.

**The rotten apple injures its neighbour.**

often used to mean that one corrupt person in an organization is likely to affect others; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**When money speaks, the truth keeps silent.**

Russian proverb.

## Countries and Peoples

*Sayings about countries and peoples may reflect either a cherished self-image (An Englishman's word is his bond), or a less flattering opinion from someone who does not belong to the people concerned: Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar.*

**Advance Australia.**

catchphrase used as a patriotic slogan or motto, mid 19th century onwards; the national anthem of Australia (officially adopted in 1984) includes the lines, 'In joyful strains then let us sing Advance Australia fair.'

***A mare usque ad mare.***

Latin, meaning 'From sea unto sea'; motto of Canada, taken from the Bible (Psalm 72), 'He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.'

**America is a tune. It must be sung together.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Australians wouldn't give a XXXX for anything else.**

advertising slogan for Castlemaine lager, 1986 onwards.

**England is the paradise of women, the hell of horses, and the purgatory of servants.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity.**

associated with the aspirations of Irish nationalism; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**An Englishman's word is his bond.**

a promise given is regarded as having the force of a legal agreement; English proverb, early 16th century.

**Every land has its own law.**

Scottish proverb, early 17th century, used to emphasize the individuality of a nation or group.

**Every Turk is born a soldier.**

Turkish saying.

**God made the world, but the Dutch made Holland.**

traditional saying, recorded from the 19th century.

**Good Americans when they die go to Paris.**

coinage attributed to Thomas Gold Appleton (1812–84); American proverb, mid 19th century.

**It is a striking coincidence that the word American ends in *can*.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A nation without a language is a nation without a heart.**

Welsh proverb.

**Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar.**

if a person is harmed their real national character will be revealed; English proverb, early 19th century.

## The Country and the Town

*The contrast between urban and rural life embodies what is often seen as a key cultural division.*

**An everyday story of country folk.**

traditional summary of the BBC's long-running radio soap opera *The Archers*.

**God made the country and man made the town.**

contrasting rural and urban life; English proverb, mid 17th century, in this form from William Cowper's poem *The Task* (1785).

**If you have not lived in the country, you do not know what hardship means.**

contrasting rural and urban poverty; Chinese proverb.

**You can take the boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of the boy.**

even when a person moves away from the place they were brought up in, they retain its essential manners and customs; English proverb, mid 20th century.

## Courage

See also [DANGER](#), [FEAR](#)

*Courage may be admirable itself, but proverbial wisdom also stresses the practical advantages that it may bring: Fortune favours the brave.*

### **Attack is the best form of defence.**

English proverb, late 18th century; compare [The best defence is a good offence](#) below.

### **The best defence is a good offence.**

late 20th-century American version of [Attack is the best form of defence](#) above.

### **A bully is always a coward.**

English proverb, early 19th century.

### **Courage is fear that has said its prayers.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Courage without conduct is like a ship without ballast.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Don't cry before you're hurt.**

sometimes used as a warning against appealing for sympathy on the assumption of an unpleasant outcome; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Faint heart never won fair lady.**

often used as an encouragement to action; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **For every Pharaoh there is a Moses.**

a liberator will arise against every oppressor; Middle Eastern proverb.

### **Fortune favours the brave.**

a person who acts bravely is likely to be successful; English proverb, late 14th century, originally often with allusion to *Phormio* by the Roman comic



dramatist Terence, ‘Fortune assists the brave’, and Virgil *The Aeneid*, ‘Fortune assists the bold.’

**None but the brave deserve the fair.**

English proverb, late 17th century, from Dryden’s poem *Alexander’s Feast* (1697), ‘None but the brave deserves the fair.’

**You never know what you can do till you try.**

often used as encouragement to the reluctant; English proverb, early 19th century.

## Crime and Punishment

See also [GUILT](#), [JUSTICE](#), [THE LAW](#), [MURDER](#)

*From Ill gotten goods never thrive in the 16th century, to Crime doesn’t pay in the 20th century, there is a consensus that wrongdoing is unlikely benefit the perpetrator—even if society does not follow the kind of draconian practice enshrined in the recommendation, Hang a thief when he’s young, and he’ll no steal when he’s old.*

**A conservative is a liberal who’s been mugged.**

American saying, 1980s.

**Crime doesn’t pay.**

American proverb, early 20th century; a slogan of the FBI and the cartoon detective Dick Tracy.

**Crime leaves a trail like a water beetle.**

Malay proverb.

**Crime must be concealed by crime.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Hang a thief when he’s young, and he’ll no steal when he’s old.**

Scottish proverbial saying, early 19th century.

**If there were no receivers, there would be no thieves.**

English proverb, late 14th century.

**Ill gotten goods never thrive.**

something which is acquired dishonestly is unlikely to be the basis of lasting prosperity; English proverb, early 16th century.

**Little thieves are hanged, but great ones escape.**

sufficient power and influence can ensure that a wrongdoer is not punished; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Opportunity makes a thief.**

often used to imply that the carelessness of the person who is robbed has contributed to the crime; English proverb, early 13th century.

**Three strikes and you're out.**

referring to legislation which provides that an offender's third felony is punishable by life imprisonment or other severe sentence; deriving from the terminology of baseball, in which a batter who has had three strikes, or three fair opportunities of hitting the ball, is out; late 20th-century saying.

**When thieves fall out, honest men come by their own.**

meaning that it is through thieves quarrelling over their stolen goods that they are likely to be caught, and the goods recovered; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**You'll die facing the monument.**

warning of the end of a life of crime; in Glasgow, prisoners were hanged facing Nelson's Monument on Glasgow Green; Scottish proverb.

## Crises

*Sayings on this topic focus on how to meet a crisis, whether by 'keeping calm' or taking more active measures.*

**Any port in a storm.**

when one is in trouble or difficulty, support or shelter from any source is welcome; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **Keep calm and carry on.**

poster designed by the Ministry of Information in 1939 but not used in the Second World War; rediscovered and popularized in the early 21st century.

### **Never waste a good crisis.**

modern saying in various forms, often linked with the advice ‘Never let a serious crisis go to waste’ of Rahm Emmanuel, Chief of Staff in Barack Obama’s first administration.

### **When disaster strikes and all hope is gone, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton.**

paraphrase of Apsley Cherry-Garrard’s tribute to the Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton (1874–1922) by British geologist Raymond Priestley (1886–1974) in a lecture ‘Twentieth Century Man against Antarctica’ (1950).

## Criticism

See also [LIKES AND DISLIKES](#)

*While self-examination can be a wholesome discipline, we should not be too ready to criticize others: Don’t judge a man till you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.*

### **The best place for criticism is in front of your mirror.**

judge yourself before others; American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Criticism is something you can avoid by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.**

abstaining from criticism will result in complete inaction; American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Don’t judge a man till you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.**

warning against judging without understanding circumstances; modern saying, said to be of Native American origin.

## Custom and Habit

*Sayings about custom tend towards the negative: there is a perception that enshrined practice is likely to lead to someone being less able to deal with changes: You can't teach an old dog new tricks.*

### **A bad custom is like a good cake, better broken than kept.**

we should use our judgement to decide whether a custom is worthy of respect; English proverb.

### **Custom is mummified by habit and glorified by law.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Habits are cobwebs at first, and cables at last.**

traditional saying, recorded from the 19th century.

### **Old habits die hard.**

it is difficult to break long-established habits; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **Sow an act, and reap a habit.**

recommending the development of good practice; English proverb.

### **What is new cannot be true.**

used to imply that innovation is less soundly based than custom which has been proved by experience; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **You cannot shift an old tree without it dying.**

often used to suggest the risk involved in moving an elderly person who has lived in the same place for many years; English proverb, early 16th century.

### **You can't teach an old dog new tricks.**

someone who is already set in their ways is not able to learn new ways of doing things; English proverb, mid 16th century.

# D

## Dance

*Dancing may require some innate ability—You need more than dancing shoes to be a dancer—but dancing is still seen as a natural form of expression: We're fools whether we dance or not, so we might as well dance.*

### **One who cannot dance blames the uneven floor.**

Indian proverb; compare **A bad workman blames his tools** at [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#).

### **We're fools whether we dance or not, so we might as well dance.**

modern saying, claimed to be a Japanese proverb.

### **When you go to dance, take heed whom you take by the hand.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

### **You need more than dancing shoes to be a dancer.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

## Danger

See also [CAUTION](#), [COURAGE](#), [FEAR](#)

*A risk may be taken rightly, since The post of honour is the post of danger, but peril can result from overconfidence: When the lion shows its teeth, don't assume that it is smiling.*

### **Adventures are to the adventurous.**

the person who wants exciting things to happen must take the initiative;  
English proverb, mid 19th century.

**A common danger causes common action.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Heaven protects children, sailors, and drunken men.**

often used (in a number of variant forms) to imply that someone unable to look after themselves has been undeservedly lucky; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**He who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount.**

once a dangerous or troublesome venture is begun, the safest course is to carry it through to the end; English proverb, late 19th century.

**If you play with fire you get burnt.**

if you involve yourself with something potentially dangerous you are likely to be hurt; English proverb, late 19th century.

**It is the calm and silent water that drowns the man.**

the greatest danger may be concealed beneath an innocent appearance;  
African proverb.

**Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water.**

advertising copy for the film *Jaws 2* (1978), featuring the return of the great white shark to bathing beaches.

**Light the blue touch paper and retire immediately.**

traditional instruction for lighting fireworks.

**More than one yew bow in Chester.**

you may escape danger once, but not a second time (*Chester* representing the English, the traditional enemy for Wales); Welsh proverb.

**The post of honour is the post of danger.**

English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Three things are not to be trusted; a cow's horn, a dog's tooth, and a horse's hoof.**

one may be gored, bitten, or kicked, without warning; English proverb, late 14th century.

**We have no friends but the mountains.**

inhospitable terrain is more reliable than an ally as a source of safety; Kurdish proverb.

**When the lion shows its teeth, don't assume that it is smiling.**

a warning sign from a source of power should not be taken lightly; Arab proverb.

**When you ask a bear to dance, you can't stop just because you are tired.**

modern American saying.

**Who dares wins.**

motto of the British Special Air Service regiment; from 1942.

**The wolves are well fed and the sheep are safe.**

when a predator's immediate needs have been satisfied, there is temporary safety for the prey; Russian proverb.

**Women and children first.**

order given on a ship in difficulty, indicating that women and children should be allowed onto the lifeboats before men; in allusive (and often humorous) use, warning of a risky or unpleasant situation; from the mid 19th century.

## Death

See also [MOURNING](#)

*The end of life may offer an escape from some pressures, since Death pays all debts, but the main note is one of resignation in the face of the inevitable:* There is a remedy for everything except death.

**As a tree falls, so shall it lie.**

one should not alter one's long-established practices and customs because of approaching death; English proverb, mid 16th century, from the Bible (Ecclesiastes 11:3), 'In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.'

**Blessed are the dead that the rain rains on.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

**[Death is] Nature's way of telling you to slow down.**

American life insurance saying, in *Newsweek* 25 April 1960.

**Death is the great leveller.**

all people will be equal in death, whatever their material prosperity; English proverb, early 18th century.

**Death pays all debts.**

the death of a person cancels out their obligations; English proverb, early 17th century.

***Et in Arcadia ego.***

Latin tomb inscription, 'And I too in Arcadia', of disputed meaning, often depicted in classical paintings, notably by Poussin in 1655.

**One funeral makes many.**

sometimes with the implication that attendance at a deathbed or funeral may have fatal consequences; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Stone-dead hath no fellow.**

traditionally used by advocates of the death penalty, to suggest that only when a dangerous person is dead can one be sure that they will pose no further threat; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**There is a remedy for everything except death.**

English proverb, mid 15th century.

**You can only die once.**



used to encourage someone in a dangerous or difficult enterprise; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**Young men may die, but old men must die.**

death is inevitable for all, and can at best be postponed until old age; English proverb, mid 16th century.

## Debt and Borrowing

See also [THRIFT](#)

*The idea that a national debt could be a national blessing might sound upbeat, but more sayings stress the dangers of getting into debt, summed up generally in the 15th-century assertion He that goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing.*

**Better to go to bed supperless than rise in debt.**

English proverb, mid 17th-century saying.

**A borrowed cloak does not keep you warm.**

Arabic proverb, warning against relying on resources borrowed from another.

**Have a horse of your own, and you may borrow another's.**

evidence that you have resources of your own makes it more likely that you will be lent something; English proverb.

**He that goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing.**

involving oneself in debt is likely to lead to unhappiness; English proverb, late 15th century.

**Lend your money and lose your friend.**

debt puts a strain on friendship; English proverb, late 15th century.

**A man in debt is caught in a net.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A national debt, if it is not excessive, will be to us a national blessing.**

American proverb; often attributed to the American politician Alexander Hamilton (c.1755–1804).

**Neither a borrower, nor a lender be.**

advising caution in financial dealings with others; English proverb, early 17th century, from the words of Polonius to his son Laertes in Shakespeare *Hamlet* (1601), ‘Neither a borrower, nor a lender be, For loan oft loses both itself and friend.’

**Out of debt, out of danger.**

someone in debt is vulnerable and at risk from others; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Short reckonings make long friends.**

the prompt settlement of any debt between friends ensures that their friendship will not be damaged; English proverb, mid 16th century.

## Deception

See also [LIES](#)

*Deception may not benefit the perpetrator, since we are told that Cheats never prosper, but there is also a warning that we have some responsibility for ensuring that we are not deceived: Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.*

**Cheats never prosper.**

English proverb, early 19th century.

**Deceit is a lie, that wears a smile.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.**

if someone is deceived twice by the same person, their own stupidity is to blame; late 20th-century saying.

## **The quickness of the hand deceives the eye.**

saying associated with the art of conjuring; recorded from the mid 19th century.

## Deeds

See [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

## Defiance

See also [DETERMINATION](#)

*Apart from the traditional reflection that You can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink, defiance is often expressed through a slogan, from the 17th-century No surrender! to the anti-Poll Tax cry Can't pay, won't pay of the early 1990s.*

## **Burn, baby, burn.**

black extremist slogan in use during the Los Angeles riots, August 1965.

## **Can't pay, won't pay.**

anti-Poll Tax slogan, c.1990.

## ***Ils ne passeront pas.***

French, 'They shall not pass', slogan used by the French army at the defence of Verdun in 1916; variously attributed to Marshal Pétain and to General Robert Nivelle, and subsequently taken up by Republicans in the Spanish Civil War in the form *No pasarán!*

## ***Nemo me impune lacessit.***

Latin, 'No one provokes me with impunity', motto of the Crown of Scotland and of all Scottish regiments.

## **No surrender!**

Protestant Northern Irish slogan originating with the defenders of Derry against the Catholic forces of James II in 1689.

## **They haif said: Quhat say they? Lat thame say.**

motto of the Earl Marischal of Scotland, inscribed at Marischal College, Aberdeen, 1593; a similarly defiant motto in Greek has been found engraved in remains from classical antiquity.

**You can take a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink.**

even if you create the right circumstances you cannot persuade someone to do something against their will; English proverb, late 12th century.

**The wiser man gives in.**

obstinate defiance is likely to be damaging to yourself; German proverb.

## Delay

See [HASTE AND DELAY](#)

## Determination

See also [DEFIANCE](#)

*Refusal to be deterred by apparent failure can overcome both disappointment, as in the encouraging Fall seven times, stand up eight, and difficult circumstances, since A determined fellow can do more with a rusty monkey wrench than a lot of people can with a machine shop.*

**The best fish swim near the bottom.**

patience and persistence are necessary for the best results; English proverb.

**Beyond mountains there are more mountains.**

overcoming the first obstacle is likely to bring you face to face with another; Haitian proverb.

**Constant dropping wears away a stone.**

primarily used to mean that persistence will achieve a difficult or unlikely object; English proverb, mid 13th century.

**A determined fellow can do more with a rusty monkey wrench than a lot of people can with a machine shop.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Fall seven times, stand up eight.**

Japanese proverb; compare **If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again** below.

**He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar.**

if someone is determined on an end they will not be dissuaded (*Cupar* is a town in Fife, Scotland); Scottish traditional saying, early 18th century.

**He who wills the end, wills the means.**

someone sufficiently determined upon an outcome will also be ready to accept whatever is necessary to achieve it; English proverb, late 17th century.

**If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.**

English proverb, mid 19th century; compare **Fall seven times, stand up eight** above.

**It is idle to swallow the cow and choke on the tail.**

when a serious matter has been accepted, there is no point in quibbling over a trifle; when a great task is almost completed, it is senseless to give up; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**It's dogged as does it.**

steady perseverance will bring success; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Just say no.**

motto of the Nancy Reagan Drug Abuse Fund, founded 1985.

**Little strokes fell great oaks.**

a person of size and stature can be brought down by a series of small blows; English proverb, early 15th century.

***Nil carborundum illegitimi.***

cod Latin for 'Don't let the bastards grind you down', in circulation during the Second World War, though possibly of earlier origin.

**Put a stout heart to a stey brae.**

determination is needed to climb a steep ('stey') hillside; Scottish proverb, late 16th century.

***Revenons à ces moutons.***

an exhortation to stop digressing and get back to the subject in hand; French, literally 'Let us return to these sheep', with allusion to the confused court scene in the Old French *Farce de Maistre Pierre Pathelin* (c.1470).

**The show must go on.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Slow and steady wins the race.**

from the story of the race between the hare and the tortoise, in Aesop's *Fables*, in which the winner was the slow but persistent tortoise and not the swift but easily distracted hare; mid 18th-century saying.

**A stern chase is a long chase.**

a *stern chase* is a chase in which the pursuing ship follows directly in the wake of the pursued; English proverb, early 19th century.

**The third time pays for all.**

success after initial failure makes up for earlier disappointment; English proverb, late 16th century.

**We shall not be moved.**

title of labour and civil rights song (1931), adapted from an earlier gospel hymn.

**We shall overcome.**

title of song, originating from before the American Civil War, adapted as a Baptist hymn ('I'll Overcome Some Day', 1901) by C. Albert Tindley; revived in 1946 as a protest song by black tobacco workers, and in 1963 during the black civil rights campaign.

**Where there's a will there's a way.**

anything can be done if one has sufficient determination; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **A wilful man must have his way.**

a person set on their own ends will disregard advice in pursuing their chosen course; English proverb, early 19th century.

## Difference

See [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#)

## Discontent

See [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#)

## Discoveries

See [INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES](#)

## Dislikes

See [LIKES AND DISLIKES](#)

## Dogs

See also [CATS](#), [HORSES](#)

*The idea of the dog as protector goes back to the Cave canem of the classical world, and is reinforced by the Persian proverb, The dog is a lion in his own house.*

### ***Cave canem.***

Latin, 'beware of the dog', deriving originally from the Roman satirist Petronius (d. 65), '*Canis ingens, catena vinctus, in pariete erat pictus superque quadrata littera scriptum "Cave Canem".*'

[A huge dog, tied by a chain, was painted on the wall and over it was written in capital letters "Beware of the dog." ']

### **The dog is a lion in his own house.**

Persian proverb.

**A dog is for life, not just for Christmas.**

slogan of the National Canine Defence League (now Dogs Trust), from 1978.

**Love me, love my dog.**

English proverb, early 16th century.

**There is no good flock without a good shepherd, and no good shepherd without a good dog.**

motto of the International Sheep Dog Society, said to derive from a Scottish proverb.

## Doubt

See [CERTAINTY AND DOUBT](#)

## Dreams

See also [SLEEP](#)

*Apart from the warning from 19th-century America that Dreams retain the infirmities of our character, dreams are traditionally seen as predictive, if they can be correctly interpreted.*

**Dream of a funeral and you hear of a marriage.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Dreams go by contraries.**

English proverb, early 15th century.

**Dreams retain the infirmities of our character.**

American proverb, late 19th century.

**Morning dreams come true.**

English proverb, mid 16th century, recording a traditional superstition.

**Those who lose dreaming are lost.**



modern saying, said to be an Australian Aboriginal proverb.

**To dream of the dead is a sign of rain.**

traditional saying.

## Dress

See also [APPEARANCE](#)

*Dress may be important as protection from the elements (Ne'er cast a clout till May be out), or as allowing us to make a good impression: If you want to get ahead, get a hat.*

**Blue and green should never be seen.**

traditional warning against wearing the two colours together.

**Clothes make the man.**

what one wears is taken by others as an essential signal of status; English proverb, early 20th century.

**Dress for the job you want, not for the job you have.**

modern saying, used especially in the context of interviews.

**Fine feathers make fine birds.**

beautiful clothes confer beauty or style on the wearer; English proverb, late 16th century.

**If you want to get ahead, get a hat.**

advertising slogan for the British Hat Council, 1965.

**It takes 40 dumb animals to make a fur coat, but only one to wear it.**

slogan of an anti-fur campaign poster, 1980s; sometimes attributed to the English photographer David Bailey (1938–).

**Ne'er cast a clout till May be out.**

warning against leaving off old or warm clothes until the end of the month of May (the saying is sometimes mistakenly understood to refer to

hawthorn blossom or *may*); English proverb, early 18th century.

**Nine tailors make a man.**

literally, a gentleman must select his attire from a number of sources (later also associated with bell-ringing, with the *nine tailors* or *tellers* indicating the nine knells traditionally rung at the death of a man); English proverb, early 17th century.

**Drink**

See also [DRUNKENNESS](#), [FOOD](#)

*Sayings about drink often emphasize the attractions or characteristics of a particular form of alcohol, whether it be beer, vodka, or whisky.*

**Alcohol will preserve anything but a secret.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Don't ask a man to drink and drive.**

British road safety slogan, from 1964.

**Guinness is good for you.**

reply universally given to researchers asking people why they drank Guinness; advertising slogan for Guinness, from c.1929.

**Heineken refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach.**

slogan for Heineken lager, from 1975 onwards.

**If you are cold, tea will warm you; if you are too heated, it will cool you; if you are depressed, it will cheer you; if you are excited, it will calm you.**

modern saying, attributed to W. E. Gladstone (1809–98) since the mid 20th century.

**I'm only here for the beer.**

slogan for Double Diamond beer, 1971 onwards.

**Today's rain is tomorrow's whisky.**

modern Scottish saying.

### **Vodka is an aunt of wine.**

Russian proverb.

## Drunkenness

See also [DRINK](#)

*Apart from the risks of becoming addicted (The drunkard's cure is to drink again), there are other dangers in falling under the influence of alcohol: When the wine is in, the wit is out.*

### **The drunkard's cure is drink again.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **He that drinks beer, thinks beer.**

warning against the effect of intoxication; English proverb, early 19th century.

### **There is truth in wine.**

a person who is drunk is more likely to speak the truth; English proverb, mid 16th century (the saying is found earlier in Latin as *in vino veritas*).

### **When the wine is in, the wit is out.**

when one is drunk one is likely to be indiscreet or to speak or act foolishly; English proverb, late 14th century.

# E

## Eating

See also [COOKING](#), [FOOD](#), [HEALTH](#)

*In the 21st century, the saying You are what you eat has gained a new prominence, but earlier proverbs may be more likely to reflect a world in which eating was not something to be taken for granted: Hunger is the best sauce.*

### **After dinner rest a while, after supper walk a mile.**

the implication is that dinner is a heavy meal, while supper is a light one; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **After meat, mustard.**

traditional comment on some essential ingredient which is brought too late to be of use; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dine like a pauper.**

modern saying, recommending lighter meals as you move through the day.

### **Eat to live, not live to eat.**

distinguishing between necessity and indulgence; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Fingers were made before forks.**

commonly used as a polite excuse for eating with one's hands at table; English proverb, mid 18th century; the earlier variant 'God made hands before knives is found in the mid 16th century.

### **Go to work on an egg.**

advertising slogan for the British Egg Marketing Board, from 1957; perhaps written by Fay Weldon or Mary Gowing.

### **Hunger is the best sauce.**

food which is needed will be received most readily; English proverb, early 16th century.

### **The way one eats is the way one works.**

Czech proverb; compare **You are what you eat** below.

### **We must eat a peck of dirt before we die.**

often used as a consolatory remark in literal contexts; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **You are what you eat.**

English proverb, mid 20th century; in the early 19th century, the French jurist and gourmet Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755–1826) wrote, ‘Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are’; compare **The way one eats is the way one works** above.

## Education

See also [KNOWLEDGE](#), [TEACHING](#)

*The saying As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined reflects an awareness of the importance of early influences, but for late developers there is the encouragement, It is never too late to learn.*

### **As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.**

early influences have a permanent effect; English proverb, early 18th century.

### **Education doesn't come by bumping your head against the school house.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Genius without education is like silver in the mine.**

American proverb, mid 18th century.

**Give me a child for the first seven years, and you may do what you like with him afterwards.**

traditionally regarded as a Jesuit maxim; recorded in Lean's *Collectanea* vol. 3 (1903).

**The ink of a scholar is holier than the blood of a martyr.**

modern saying, said to derive from an Arab proverb, but of uncertain origin.

**It is never too late to learn.**

English proverb, late 17th century.

**Never let your education interfere with your intelligence.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Never too old to learn.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.**

learning requires effort on the part of the student; Chinese proverb.

**There is no royal road to learning.**

English proverb, early 19th century, deriving from the words of the Greek mathematician Euclid (fl. c.300 BC) addressed to Ptolemy I of Egypt, 'There is no "royal road" to geometry.'

**When the pupil is ready, the master arrives.**

Indian proverb, deriving from Sanskrit.

## Effort

See also ACHIEVEMENT

*Proverbs such as He that would eat the fruit must climb the tree and No pain, no gain emphasize how essential effort is to achievement. There is*

*comparatively little concern that the effort might be expended ineffectually, although by implication we are warned to set our sights on an achievable goal: If the sky falls, we shall catch larks.*

**Easy come, easy go.**

something which is acquired without effort will be lost without regret; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**He that would eat the fruit must climb the tree.**

someone who wishes to attain success must first make the necessary effort; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**If a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing well.**

if something is worth any effort at all, it should be taken seriously; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**If the sky falls we shall catch larks.**

used dismissively to indicate that something will be attainable only in the most unlikely circumstances; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**Much cry and little wool.**

referring to a disturbance without tangible result; in early usage, the image was that of shearing a pig, which would cry loudly but yield no wool; English proverb, late 15th century.

**No pain, no gain.**

nothing worth having can be achieved without effort; English proverb, late 16th century.

**One cannot become a good sailor sailing in a tranquil sea.**

a person must be disciplined and educated to become a useful citizen; Chinese proverb.

**We're number two. We try harder.**

advertising slogan for Avis car rentals.

## [Employment](#)

See also [MANAGEMENT](#)

*One saying from the 18th century and one saying from the 20th offer very different views of employment: the belief that The eye of a master does more work than both his hands contrasts with the cynical comment from Soviet Russia: We pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us.*

**The eye of a master does more work than both his hands.**

employees work harder when the person who is in charge is present; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**Jack of all trades and master of none.**

a person who tries to master too many skills will learn none of them properly; English proverb, early 17th century.

**We pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us.**

Russian saying of the Soviet era.

## Ending

See also [BEGINNING](#), [CHANGE](#)

*Whether or not an ending is as successful as that implied by The end crowns the work, it will inevitably arrive. However, we should not assume too quickly that something has been completed: The opera isn't over till the fat lady sings.*

**All good things must come to an end.**

nothing lasts; although the addition of 'good' is a later development; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**All's well that ends well.**

often used with the implication that difficulties have been successfully negotiated; English proverb, late 14th century.

**And they all lived happily ever after.**

traditional ending for a fairy story.



**Better an end with terror than terror without end.**

20th-century German saying, associated with Philipp Scheidemann (1865–1939), second head of government in the Weimar Republic.

**The end crowns the work.**

the fulfilment of a process is its finest and most notable part; English proverb, early 16th century.

**End good, all good.**

a good outcome means that the work has been worthwhile; German proverb.

**Everything has an end.**

no condition lasts for ever; English proverb, late 14th century.

**In my end is my beginning.**

motto of Mary, Queen of Scots (1542–87).

**The opera isn't over till the fat lady sings.**

using an informal description of the culmination of a traditional opera to indicate that a process is not yet complete; late 20th century saying.

**Enemies**

See also [DANGER](#)

*While we should be cautious in our dealings with an enemy (Do not call a wolf to help you against the dogs), shared enmity can be useful: The enemy of my enemy is my friend.*

**Dead men don't bite.**

killing an enemy puts an end to any threat they may pose; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Do not call a wolf to help you against the dogs.**

advising against making alliance with someone likely to destroy you in your turn; Russian proverb.

**The enemy of my enemy is my friend.**

shared enmity provides common ground; American proverb, mid 20th century, often said to be ‘an old Arab proverb’; compare **My brother and I against my cousin and my cousin and I against the stranger** at FAMILY.

**Love your enemy—but don’t put a gun in his hand.**

indicating the practical limitations of charity; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Strike the serpent’s head with your enemy’s hand.**

use one opponent to defeat another; English proverb.

**There is no little enemy.**

any enemy can be dangerous; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## The Environment

*In recent years political slogans such as Think globally, act locally and sayings believed to derive from cultures in touch with a pre-industrial way of living such as Touch the earth lightly have combined to urge sensitivity and care in dealing with the natural world.*

**The earth is man’s only friend.**

Bulgarian proverb.

**The earth laughs at him who calls a place his own.**

Indian proverb.

**However high a bird may soar, it seeks its food on earth.**

Danish proverb.

**Save the whale.**

environmental slogan associated with the alarm over the rapidly declining whale population which led in 1985 to a moratorium on commercial whaling.

**Take only photos, leave only footprints.**

encouraging responsible behaviour when travelling in wilderness areas; mid 20th-century saying, first found as ‘Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints’, and often attributed to Chief Seattle (1786–1866) of the Suquamish and Duwamish in the form ‘Take only memories, leave only footprints.’

**Think globally, act locally.**

Friends of the Earth slogan, c.1985.

**Touch the earth lightly.**

modern saying, said to derive from an Australian Aboriginal proverb.

**We do not inherit the earth from our parents, we borrow it from our children.**

modern saying, said to be of Native American origin.

**When the last tree is cut, the last river poisoned, and the last fish dead, we will discover that we can't eat money.**

Canadian saying, sometimes said to be of Native American origin.

**You have to be in the black to be in the green.**

a landowner who is in debt is more likely to damage the environment; modern New Zealand saying.

## Envy

*While being envied may sustain our pride, to feel envy is likely to make us discontented: The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.*

**Better be envied than pitied.**

even if one is unhappy it is preferable to be rich and powerful rather than poor and vulnerable; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Envy eats nothing but its own heart.**

German proverb.

**Envy feeds on the living; it ceases when they are dead.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.**

something just out of reach always appears more desirable than what one already has; English proverb, mid 20th century.

**If envy were a fever, all the world would be ill.**

Envy is a common vice; Danish proverb.

## Equality

*An idea expressed through several images.*

**After the game, the king and the pawn go into the same box.**

rank is no protection against death; Italian proverb.

**Diamond cuts diamond.**

used of persons who are evenly matched in wit or cunning (only a diamond is hard enough to cut another diamond); English proverb, early 17th century.

**Jack is as good as his master.**

‘Jack’ is used variously as a familiar name for a sailor, a member of the common people, a serving man, and one who does odd jobs; English proverb, early 18th century.

## Evil

See [GOOD AND EVIL](#)

## Excellence

*True excellence may be seldom encountered, since If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.*

**Corruption of the best becomes the worst.**

translation of the Latin saying *Corruptio optimi pessima*; English proverb, early 19th century.

**If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.**

late 20th-century saying.

## Excess

See also [MODERATION](#)

*The idea that You can have too much of a good thing occurs in many cultures, from the medieval English warning that The pitcher will go to the well once too often, to the Chinese Do not add legs to the snake after you have finished drawing it.*

**Do not add legs to the snake after you have finished drawing it.**

advising against making superfluous and undesirable additions; Chinese proverb.

**Even nectar is a poison, if taken to excess.**

too much of anything is inadvisable; Hindu proverb.

**It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back.**

the addition of one quite minor problem may prove crushing to someone who is already overburdened; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The last drop makes the cup run over.**

the addition of something in itself quite minor causes an excess; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The pitcher will go to the well once too often.**

one should not repeat a risky action too often, or push one's luck too far; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**You can have too much of a good thing.**

excess even of something which is good in itself can be damaging; English proverb, late 15th century.

## Excuses

See [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#)

## Experience

*While there is no doubt that experience is worth having (Experience is the father of wisdom), it may be gained at the cost of some unpleasantness: A burnt child dreads the fire.*

### **Appetite comes with eating.**

desire or facility increases as an activity proceeds; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **A burnt child dreads the fire.**

the memory of past hurt may act as a safeguard in the future; English proverb, mid 13th century.

### **Experience is the best teacher.**

sometimes used with the implication that learning by experience may be painful; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Experience is the comb which fate gives a man when his hair is all gone.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Experience is the father of wisdom.**

real understanding of something comes only from direct experience of it; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Experience keeps a dear school.**

lessons learned from experience can be painful; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **A fall into a ditch makes you wiser.**

Chinese proverb.

### **Good soup is made in an old pot.**

successful results are due to age and experience; French proverb.

### **Live and learn.**

often as a resigned or rueful comment on a disagreeable experience; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Once bitten, twice shy.**

someone who has suffered an injury will in the future be very cautious of the cause; English proverb, mid 19th century; compare **Once bitten by a snake, a man will be afraid of a piece of rope for three years** at CAUTION.

**Some folks speak from experience; others, from experience, don't speak.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**They that live longest, see most.**

often used to comment on the experience of old age; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Walking ten thousand miles is better than reading ten thousand books.**

theoretical knowledge must be consolidated by practical experience; Chinese proverb; compare **Walking ten thousand miles; reading ten thousand books** at KNOWLEDGE.

**You cannot catch old birds with chaff.**

the wise and experienced are not easily fooled; English proverb, late 15th century.

**You cannot put an old head on young shoulders.**

you cannot expect someone who is young and inexperienced to show the wisdom and maturity of an older person; English proverb, late 16th century.

**You should make a point of trying every experience once, excepting incest and folk-dancing.**

20th-century saying, repeated by Arnold Bax in *Farewell my Youth* (1943), quoting 'a sympathetic Scot'.

## Extravagance

See [THRIFT AND EXTRAVAGANCE](#)



# F

## Fact

See [HYPOTHESIS AND FACT](#)

## Failure

See [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

## Fame

See also [REPUTATION](#)

*Lasting fame is not easily achieved, since even if it is well founded, without a written record it may be forgotten: Brave men lived before Agamemnon.*

### **Brave men lived before Agamemnon.**

to be remembered the exploits of a hero must be recorded; English proverb, early 19th century, from Horace (65–8 BC) *Odes*, ‘Many brave men lived before Agamemnon’s time, but they are all, unmourned and unknown, covered by the long night, because they lack their sacred poet.’

### **Common fame is seldom to blame.**

reputation is generally founded on fact rather than rumour; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **If any man seek for greatness, let him forget greatness and seek truth.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **More people know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows.**

English proverb, mid 17th century; *Tom Fool* was a name given to the part of the fool in a play or morris dance.

**A tall tree attracts the wind.**

fame may make you the subject of hostile attention; Chinese proverb.

## Familiarity

See also [NEIGHBOURS](#)

*While it may be safer to stick with what you know (Better the devil you know, than the devil you don't), it may be difficult to recognize the virtues of the familiar. Without the enchantment lent by distance, Local ginger is not hot.*

**Better the devil you know than the devil you don't.**

understanding of the nature of a danger may give one an advantage, and is preferable to something which is completely unknown, and which may well be worse; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Better wed over the mixen than over the moor.**

it is better to marry a neighbour than a stranger (a *mixen* is a midden); English proverb, early 17th century.

**Blue are the hills that are far away.**

a distant view lends enchantment; English proverb, early 20th century.

**Come live with me and you'll know me.**

the implication is that only by living with a person will you learn their real nature; English proverb, early 20th century.

**Familiarity breeds contempt.**

we value least the things which are most familiar; English proverb, late 14th century.

**If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas.**

asserting that human failings, such as dishonesty and foolishness, are contagious; English proverb, late 16th century (earlier in Latin).

### **Local ginger is not hot.**

modern saying, said to derive from a Chinese proverb; compare **A prophet is not without honour save in his own country** below.

### **A man is known by the company he keeps.**

originally used as a moral maxim or exhortation in the context of preparation for marriage; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **No man is a hero to his valet.**

English proverb, mid 18th century, found earlier in French, in a letter from the society hostess Mme Cornuel (1605–94).

### **A prophet is not without honour save in his own country.**

English proverb, late 15th century, from the Bible (Matthew 13:57), ‘A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house’; compare **Local ginger is not hot** above.

### **There is nothing new under the sun.**

English proverb, late 16th century, from the Bible (Ecclesiastes 1:9), ‘The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.’

## **The Family**

See also [CHILDREN](#), [PARENTS](#)

*Proverbial wisdom on the subject of the family finds a consensus in the view that Blood will tell. The idea is expressed in detail in the Chinese saying, Dragons beget dragons, phoenixes beget phoenixes, and burglars’ children learn how to break into houses.*

### **The apple never falls far from the tree.**

family characteristics will assert themselves; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Blood is thicker than water.**

in the end family ties will always count; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Blood will tell.**

family characteristics or heredity will in the end be dominant; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**The child of a frog is a frog.**

Japanese proverb.

**Children are certain cares, but uncertain comforts.**

emphasizing the continuing responsibility and anxiety of parenthood; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Dragons beget dragons, phoenixes beget phoenixes, and burglars' children learn how to break into houses.**

Chinese proverb; see [Like father, like son](#) below.

**I belong by blood relationship; therefore I am.**

on the importance of family ties in one's sense of identity; African proverb.

**A large family, quick help.**

those related to you will provide ready help in time of need; Serbian proverb.

**Like father, like son.**

often used to call attention to similarities in behaviour; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**Like mother, like daughter.**

English proverb, early 14th century; the ultimate allusion is to the Bible (Ezekiel 16:44), 'As is the mother, so is her daughter.'

**My brother and I against my cousin and my cousin and I against the stranger.**

Arab proverb; compare [The enemy of my enemy is my friend](#) at [ENEMIES](#).

**The shoemaker's son always goes barefoot.**

the family of a skilled or knowledgeable person are often the last to benefit from their expertise; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **The son of a duck floats.**

Arabic saying.

## Fate

See also [THE FUTURE](#)

*Views on fate see it as unlikely to be altered by human intervention: Man proposes, God disposes. The only strongly contrary assessment is found in the modern American saying, Fate can be taken by the horns, like a goat, and pushed in the right direction.*

### **Every hog has its Martinmas.**

everyone has their destiny; *Martinmas*, the feast of St Martin, 11 November, was the season at which pigs and other domestic animals were slaughtered before winter; traditional saying.

### **Fate can be taken by the horns, like a goat, and pushed in the right direction.**

with sufficient determination one need not be a helpless victim of fate; American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Hanging and wiving go by destiny.**

an expression of fatalism about the course of one's life; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **If you're born to be hanged then you'll never be drowned.**

used to qualify apparent good luck which may have an unhappy outcome; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Man proposes, God disposes.**

often now said in consolation or resignation when plans have been disrupted; English proverb, mid 15th century.

### **The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.**

English proverb, mid 17th century; in its current form, it derives from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's translation of *Sinnegedichte* by Friedrich von Logau, 'Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds he all' (Von Logau's first line is itself a translation of an anonymous verse in Sextus Empiricus *Adversus Mathematicos*).

### **Sour, sweet, bitter, pungent, all must be tasted.**

We have to experience both happiness and sadness in life; Chinese proverb.

### **What goes up must come down.**

commonly associated with wartime bombing and anti-aircraft shrapnel, and often used with the implication that an exhilarating rise must be followed by a fall; early 20th-century saying.

### **What must be, must be.**

used to acknowledge the force of circumstances; English proverb, late 14th century.

## Fear

See also [COURAGE](#), [DANGER](#)

*A fearful person is likely to suffer from more than just the effects of the danger they fear: Cowards may die many times before their death.*

### **Cowards may die many times before their death.**

English proverb, late 16th century; in this form, a misquotation from Shakespeare *Julius Caesar* (1599) 'Cowards die many times before their deaths; /The valiant never taste of death but once.'

### **Fear makes the wolf bigger than he is.**

Fear exaggerates what we are afraid of; German proverb.

## Feelings

See also [LOVE](#)

*Good feeling is seen as something without which there can be little real enjoyment: Better a dinner of herbs than a stalled ox where hate is. Beyond this, ill will directed against another may rebound on the perpetrator: Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.*

### **Better a dinner of herbs than a stalled ox where hate is.**

simple food accompanied by goodwill and affection is preferable to luxury in an atmosphere of ill will; English proverb, mid 16th century, with allusion to the Bible (Proverbs 15:17), 'Better a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox with hatred therewith.'

### **Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.**

ill will directed at another is likely to rebound on the originator; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.**

overwhelming feeling will express itself in speech; English proverb, late 14th century, originally with allusion to the Bible (Matthew 12:34), 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'

### **Sing before breakfast, cry before night.**

warning against overconfidence in early happiness presaging a reversal of good fortune; English proverb, early 17th century.

## **Flattery**

See [PRAISE AND FLATTERY](#)

## **Flowers**

See also [GARDENS](#)

*Flowers are a natural source of enjoyment, but they require nurturing and protection: It is not enough for a gardener to love flowers; he must also hate weeds.*

### **All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today.**

Indian proverb; compare **A seed hidden in the heart of an apple is an orchard invisible** at TREES.

**It is not enough for a gardener to love flowers; he must also hate weeds.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Say it with flowers.**

slogan for the Society of American Florists, from 1917.

## Food

See also [COOKING](#), [DRINK](#), [EATING](#)

*Some sayings focus on particular foodstuffs, as in the traditional warning Don't eat oysters unless there is an R in the month. However, and more importantly, food is recognized as the most basic necessity: No dinner without bread.*

**An apple pie without some cheese is like a kiss without a squeeze.**

traditional saying, early 20th century.

**Don't eat oysters unless there is an R in the month.**

from the tradition that oysters were likely to be unsafe to eat in the warmer months between May and August.

**Every pomegranate has one seed that has come from heaven.**

Arabic proverb.

**God never sends mouths but He sends meat.**

used in resignation or consolation; English proverb, late 14th century.

**A hungry man is an angry man.**

someone deprived of a basic necessity will not be easily placated; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**It's ill speaking between a full man and a fasting.**



someone in need is never on good terms with someone who has all they want; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The more butter, the worse cheese.**

the more cream used for butter, the less available for cheese; traditional saying.

**No dinner without bread.**

Russian proverb.

**Of soup and love, the first is best.**

Spanish proverb.

**Twice-cooked cabbage is death.**

Latin proverb.

## Fools

*Despite the hopeful note struck by the saying Fortune favours fools, the consensus is that a foolish person is more likely to be unfortunate: A fool and his money are soon parted.*

**Ask a silly question and you get a silly answer.**

often used to indicate that the answer is so obvious that the question should not have been asked; English proverb, early 14th century.

**Empty vessels make the most sound.**

foolish and empty-headed people make the most noise; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**A fool and his money are soon parted.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**Fools build houses and wise men live in them.**

a shrewd person chooses to save themselves trouble, and benefit from the effort expended by another; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **Fortune favours fools.**

a foolish person is traditionally fortunate; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity.**

modern saying, often known as ‘Hanlon’s razor’.

### **A wise man changes his mind, a fool never.**

obstinacy is a mark of folly; Spanish proverb.

## **Foresight**

See also [THE FUTURE](#)

*Foresight is seen as desirable (Prevention is better than cure), but hard to achieve—while conversely, It’s easy to be wise after the event.*

### **The afternoon knows what the morning never suspected.**

Swedish proverb.

### **He who can see three days ahead will be rich for three thousand years.**

even limited foresight is of great value; Japanese proverb.

### **If a man’s foresight were as good as his hindsight, we would all get somewhere.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **It is easy to be wise after the event.**

the difficult thing is to make a correct judgement without the benefit of hindsight; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **It’s too late to shut the stable door after the horse has bolted.**

preventive measures taken after things have gone wrong are of little effect; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**Nothing is certain but the unforeseen.**

warning against an overconfident belief in a future occurrence; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Prevention is better than cure.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

**To know the road ahead, ask those coming back.**

Chinese proverb.

**Forgiveness**

See also [CONSCIENCE](#), [GUILT](#)

*Not only should we be ready to seek forgiveness (A fault confessed is half redressed), refusal to forgive is associated with the likelihood that we have wronged another: Offenders never pardon.*

**Charity covers a multitude of sins.**

charity as a virtue outweighs many faults; English proverb, early 17th century.

**A fault confessed is half redressed.**

by confessing what you have done wrong you have begun to make amends; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Forgiving the unrepentant is like drawing pictures on water.**

forgiveness is meaningless unless there is true repentance on the part of the offender; Japanese proverb.

**Good to forgive, best to forget.**

it is even better to forget that you have been injured than to forgive the injury; North American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Never let the sun go down on your anger.**

recommending a swift reconciliation after a quarrel; from the Bible (Ephesians 4:26), 'Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon

your wrath.'

### **Offenders never pardon.**

the experience of having wronged someone often fosters a continuing resentment of the victim; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **To know all is to forgive all.**

English proverb, mid 20th century; the idea is found earlier in French, in Mme de Stael *Corinne* (1807), '*Tout comprendre rend très indulgent* [To be totally understanding makes one very indulgent].'

## Friendship

*Although the good intentions of our friends can sometimes be a burden (Save us from our friends), we depend on having them: A friend in need is a friend indeed.*

### **Be kind to your friends: if it weren't for them, you would be a total stranger.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **A friend in need is a friend indeed.**

a *friend in need* is one who helps when someone is in need or difficulty; English proverb, mid 11th century.

### **A friend to all is a friend to none.**

traditional saying affirming the value of true friendship over surface amiability.

### **Hold a true friend with both your hands.**

real friendship is something to be cherished; African proverb.

### **Life without a friend, is death without a witness.**

friendship gives meaning to life; Spanish proverb.

### **The road to a friend's house is never long.**

Danish proverb.

### **Save us from our friends.**

the earnest help of friends can sometimes be unintentionally damaging; English proverb, late 15th century.

### **Two is company, but three is none.**

often used with the alternative ending 'three's a crowd'; English proverb, early 18th century.

## **Futility**

See also [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

*There are a number of ways of invoking the picture of a futile course of action, from Dogs bark, but the caravan goes on to You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.*

### **Dogs bark, but the caravan goes on.**

trivial criticism will not deflect the progress of something important; English proverb, late 19th century.

### **Do not push the river, it will flow by itself.**

typifying pointless activity; Polish proverb.

### **Hot water does not burn down the house.**

typifying ineffective action; African proverb.

### **In vain the net is spread in the sight of the bird.**

a person who has seen the process by which someone intends to harm them is unlikely to be in danger; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Sue a beggar and catch a louse.**

it is pointless to try to obtain restitution from someone without resources; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **You cannot carry two watermelons in one hand.**

typifying an attempted action that is bound to fail; modern saying, said to be an Arabic proverb.

### **You cannot get a quart into a pint pot.**

used of any situation in which the prospective contents are too large for the container; English proverb, late 19th century.

### **You cannot get blood from a stone.**

often used, as a resigned admission, to mean that it is hopeless to try to extort money or sympathy from those who have none; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **You cannot make bricks without straw.**

nothing can be made or achieved if one does not have the correct materials; English proverb, mid 17th century, with allusion to the Bible (Exodus) in Pharaoh's decree to the taskmasters set over the Israelites in Egypt, 'Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.'

### **You can put lipstick on a pig, but it will still be a pig.**

superficial improvements will not alter the fundamental structure; modern saying.

### **You can put your boots in the oven but that doesn't make them biscuits.**

modern American saying.

### **You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.**

inherent nature cannot be overcome by nurture; English proverb, early 16th century.

### **You can't unscramble scrambled eggs.**

the results of some actions cannot be undone; modern saying.

## **The Future**

See also [FORESIGHT](#), [THE PAST](#), [THE PRESENT](#)

*The future may be bright, but too much focus on it may mean that we lose sight of what is actually happening: There is no future like the present.*

**Coming events cast their shadow before.**

some initial effects indicating the nature of an event may be felt before it takes place; English proverb, early 19th century.

**He that follows freits, freits will follow him.**

someone who looks for portents of the future will find himself dogged by them (*freits* are omens); Scottish proverb, early 18th century.

**An inch ahead is darkness.**

we have no knowledge of the future; Japanese proverb.

**There is no future like the present.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Today you; tomorrow me.**

often used in the context of the inevitability of death to each person; English proverb, mid 13th century.

**Tomorrow is another day.**

English proverb, early 16th century.

**Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the year.**

commenting on the tendency to put off necessary work; Spanish proverb.

**Tomorrow never comes.**

used in the context of something which is constantly predicted to be imminent, but which never comes; English proverb, early 16th century.

**You can have apricots tomorrow.**

Arabic saying.

# G

## Games

See [SPORTS AND GAMES](#)

## Gardens

See also [FLOWERS](#)

*Gardening is seen as a source of joy, but also one that requires a good deal of attention, especially where keeping control of weeds is concerned: One year's seeding makes seven years' weeding.*

### **The answer lies in the soil.**

traditional gardening advice.

### **Dig for victory.**

Second World War slogan, encouraging production of food in gardens and allotments.

### **A garden is never finished.**

no true gardener ever feels their work is complete; modern saying.

### **If you would be happy for a week take a wife; if you would be happy for a month kill a pig; but if you would be happy all your life plant a garden.**

the saying exists in a variety of forms, but marriage is nearly always given as one of the ephemeral forms of happiness; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **Life begins on the day you start a garden.**

modern saying, claimed to be a Chinese proverb.



**More things grow in the garden than the gardener sows.**

some plants will appear as part of the natural process; Spanish proverb.

**One year's seeding makes seven years' weeding.**

the allusion is to the danger of allowing weeds to grow and seed themselves; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Parsley seed goes nine times to the Devil.**

parsley is often slow to germinate, and there was a superstition that it belonged to the Devil, and had to be sown nine times before it would come up; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Select a proper site for your garden and half your work is done.**

Chinese proverb.

**Sow corn in clay, and plant vines in sand.**

Spanish traditional saying.

**Sow dry and set wet.**

seeds should be sown in dry ground and then given water; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Walnuts and pears you plant for your heirs.**

both trees are traditionally slow growing, so that the benefit will be felt by future generations; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## Generosity

See also [GRATITUDE](#)

*Generosity is seen as an obligation (It is better to give than to receive), and one which should be readily fulfilled: He gives twice who gives quickly.*

**Be kind. Everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.**

modern saying (sometimes misattributed to Plato).

**A bird never flew on one wing.**

frequently used to justify a further gift, especially another drink; early 18th-century proverb, mainly Scottish and Irish.

### **Friday's child is loving and giving.**

English proverb, mid 19th century, from a traditional rhyme (compare qualities associated with birth on other days at entries under [BEAUTY](#), [SORROW](#), [TRAVEL](#), and [WORK](#)).

### **Give a thing, and take a thing, to wear the devil's gold ring.**

a school children's rhyme, chanted when a person gives something and then asks for it back; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **He gives twice who gives quickly.**

associating readiness to give with generosity; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **It is better to give than to receive.**

English proverb, late 14th century, ultimately with allusion to the Bible (Acts 20:35), 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

### **It is easy to be generous with other people's property.**

traditional saying, of classical origin.

## [God](#)

*While God may be omnipotent (All things are possible with God), we are expected to make some efforts on our own behalf: God helps them that help themselves.*

### **All things are possible with God.**

English proverb, late 17th century, from the Bible (Matthew 19:26), 'With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.'

### **God helps them that help themselves.**

often used in urging someone to action; English proverb.

### **God writes straight with crooked lines.**

God can use any instrument to achieve His ends; Portuguese proverb.

**The nature of God is a circle of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere.**

medieval saying, said to have been traced to a lost treatise of Empedocles; quoted in the *Roman de la Rose*, and by St Bonaventura in *Itinerarius Mentis in Deum*.

**There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.**

slogan for a secular poster campaign on London buses, January 2009.

## Good and Evil

See also [VIRTUE](#)

*Although some goodness is unassailable* (The sun loses nothing by shining into a puddle), *there is an insistence on the corrupting effects of evil*: He that touches pitch shall be defiled.

**The greater the sinner, the greater the saint.**

a sinner who has reformed is likely to be more virtuous than someone who is morally neutral; English proverb, late 18th century.

**He that touches pitch shall be defiled.**

a person who chooses to put themselves in contact with wrongdoing will be marked by it; English proverb, early 14th century, with allusion to the Bible (Ecclesiasticus 13:1), 'He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith.'

***Honi soit qui mal y pense.***

French, 'Evil be to him who evil thinks', the motto of the Order of the Garter, originated by Edward III, probably on 23 April of 1348 or 1349.

**Ill weeds grow apace.**

used to comment on the apparent success enjoyed by an ill-doer; English proverb, late 15th century.

**Satan rebuking sin.**

originally meaning that the worst possible stage has been reached; in later use, an ironic comment on the nature of the person delivering the rebuke; English proverb, early 17th century.

**The sun loses nothing by shining into a puddle.**

something which is naturally clear and radiant cannot be tainted or diminished by association; English proverb, early 14th century, of classical origin.

**Two blacks don't make a white.**

one injury or instance of wrongdoing does not justify another; English proverb, early 18th century.

**Two wrongs don't make a right.**

a first injury does not justify a second in retaliation; English proverb, late 18th century.

**What is got under the Devil's back is spent under his belly.**

what is gained improperly will be spent on folly and debauchery; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Where God builds a church, the Devil will build a chapel.**

the establishment of something which is itself good may also create the opening for something evil; English proverb, mid 16th century.

## Gossip

*While gossip may be seen as a natural part of human relations (Gossip is the lifeblood of society), it is more generally seen as likely to be damaging: according to the wartime security slogan, Careless talk costs lives.*

**Careless talk costs lives.**

Second World War security slogan.

**A dog that will fetch a bone will carry a bone.**

someone given to gossip carries talk both ways; English proverb, early 19th century.

**Give a dog a bad name and hang him.**

once a person's reputation has been blackened his plight is hopeless;  
English proverb, early 18th century.

**Gossip is the lifeblood of society.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Gossip is vice enjoyed vicariously.**

American proverb, early 20th century.

**The greater the truth, the greater the libel.**

English proverb, late 18th century.

**Loose lips sink ships.**

American Second World War security slogan.

**A tale never loses in the telling.**

implying that a story is often exaggerated when it is repeated; English  
proverb, mid 16th century.

**Those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.**

it is unwise to criticize or slander another if you are vulnerable to  
retaliation; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**What the soldier said isn't evidence.**

hearsay evidence alone cannot be relied on; English proverb, mid 19th  
century, originally from Charles Dickens *Pickwick Papers* (1837), 'You  
must not tell us what the soldier, or any other man, said . . . it's not  
evidence.'

**Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you.**

a warning against enjoyment of gossip; Spanish proverb.

## Government

See also [POLITICS](#), [SOCIETY](#)

*From the point of view of the subject, government is seen not only as powerful but also often as out of reach: God is high above, and the tsar is far away.*

**The cat, the rat, and Lovell the dog, rule all England under the hog.**

contemporary rhyme referring to William *Catesby*, Richard *Ratcliffe*, and Francis *Lovell*, favourites of Richard III, whose personal emblem was a white boar.

**Divide and rule.**

government control is more easily exercised if possible opponents are separated into factions; English proverb, early 17th century.

**God is high above, and the tsar is far away.**

the source of central power is out of the reach of local interests; Russian proverb; compare **The mountains are high, and the emperor is far away** below, and **Delhi is far away** at CAUTION.

**The mountains are high, and the emperor is far away.**

the source of central power is out of the reach of local interests; Chinese proverb; compare **God is high above, and the tsar is far away** above, and **Delhi is far away** at CAUTION.

**No fist is big enough to hide the sky.**

there are limits to the powers of even the most repressive regime; African saying.

## Gratitude

See also [GENEROSITY](#)

*The ungrateful person may discover too late the value of what they have received: You never miss the water till the well runs dry.*

**The Devil was sick, the Devil a saint would be.**

promises made in adversity may not be kept in prosperity; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Don't overload gratitude, if you do, she'll kick.**

American proverb, mid 18th century.

**Never look a gift horse in the mouth.**

warning against questioning the quality or use of a lucky chance or gift; referring to the fact that it is by a horse's teeth that its age is judged; English proverb, early 16th century.

**The river that forgets its source will dry up.**

ingratitude brings its own punishment; African proverb.

**When you drink water, remember who dug the well.**

a warning against taking the efforts of others for granted; modern saying, said to be a Chinese proverb.

**You never miss the water till the well runs dry.**

applied to situations in which it is only when a source of support or sustenance has been withdrawn that its importance is understood; English proverb, early 17th century.

## Greed

See also [MONEY](#)

*When we give in to greed we are likely to find the appetite insatiable: Much would have more.*

**The more you get the more you want.**

English proverb, mid 14th century.

**Much would have more.**

the ownership of substantial possessions creates in the owner the desire for still more; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**Need makes greed.**

Scottish proverb.

**Pigs get fat, but hogs get slaughtered.**

used as a warning against greed; modern saying.

**The sea refuses no river.**

the sea's capacity is so great that anyone who chooses may find a place there; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Where the carcass is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.**

English proverb, mid 16th century, from the Bible (Matthew 24:28), 'Whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.'

## Guilt

See also [CRIME AND PUNISHMENT](#)

*The experience of guilt is likely to be intolerable* (The guilty one always runs); *we may as well Confess and be hanged.*

**Confess and be hanged.**

guilt must be confessed and the due punishment accepted for true repentance; English proverb, late 16th century.

**The guilty flee when no man pursueth.**

saying, with biblical allusion to Proverbs 28:1, 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.'

**The guilty one always runs.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Not guilty, but don't do it again.**

comment on what is taken as a lucky escape from conviction; informal legal saying.

**We are all guilty.**

supposedly typical of the liberal view that all members of society bear responsibility for its wrongs; used particularly as a catchphrase by the psychiatrist 'Dr Heinz Kiosk', created by the satirist Peter Simple (pseudonym of Michael Wharton, 1913–2006).



**We name the guilty men.**

supposedly now a cliché of investigative journalism; *Guilty Men* was the title of a tract by Michael Foot, Frank Owen, and Peter Howard, published under the pseudonym of 'Cato', which attacked the supporters of the Munich agreement and the appeasement policy of Neville Chamberlain.

# H

## Habit

See [CUSTOM AND HABIT](#)

## Happiness

See also [HOPE](#)

*The unwise person will recognize happiness only when it is lost (Blessings brighten as they take their flight). An alternative way is to find reasons for happiness in unpromising circumstances: It is a poor heart that never rejoices.*

### **Blessings brighten as they take their flight.**

it is only when something is lost that one realizes its value; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **Call no man happy till he dies.**

traditionally attributed to the Athenian statesman and poet Solon (c.640–after 556 BC) in the form ‘Call no man happy before he dies, he is at best but fortunate’; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **A good time was had by all.**

title of a collection of poems published in 1937 by Stevie Smith (1902–71), taken from the characteristic conclusion of accounts of social events in parish magazines.

### **Happiness is the only thing we can give without having.**

modern saying.

### **Happiness is what you make of it.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Hell is where heaven is not.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**If I keep a green bough in my heart a singing bird will come.**

we have some role in creating our own happiness; Chinese proverb.

**It is a poor heart that never rejoices.**

often used to explain a celebratory action, and implying that circumstances are not in general unrelievedly bad; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Time flies when you are having fun.**

modern saying, often in ironical usage.

## Haste and Delay

*While the hurried action associated with lack of thought is likely to be ineffectual (More haste, less speed), procrastination in itself is not an answer: Delays are dangerous.*

**Always in a hurry, always behind.**

North American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Delays are dangerous.**

used as a warning against procrastination; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Don't hurry—start early.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Haste is from the Devil.**

often used to mean that undue haste results in work being done badly or carelessly; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Haste makes waste.**

hurried work is likely to be wasteful; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Make haste slowly.**

advising a course of careful preparation; English proverb, late 16th century; the idea is found in the classical world in the words of the Roman Emperor Augustus (63 bc–ad 14), ‘*Festina lente* [Make haste slowly].’

### **More haste, less speed.**

*speed* here meant originally ‘success’ rather than ‘swiftness’, and the meaning is that hurried work is likely to be less successful; English proverb, mid 14th century.

### **Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.**

English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Procrastination is the thief of time.**

someone who continually puts things off ultimately achieves little; English proverb, mid 18th century, from Edward Young *Night Thoughts* (1742–5).

## Health

See also [EATING](#), [MEDICINE](#), [SICKNESS](#)

*The preservation of health is seen as lying in our own hands, though the medium of adopting a sensible lifestyle: Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.*

### **An apple a day keeps the doctor away.**

eating an apple each day keeps one healthy; English proverb, mid 19th century; compare [Eat leeks in March and ramsons in May, and all the year after physicians may play](#) below.

### **Don’t die of ignorance.**

Aids publicity campaign, 1987.

### **Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.**

linking a healthy and sober lifestyle with material success; English proverb, late 15th century.

**Eat leeks in March and ramsons in May, and all the year after physicians may play.**

*ramsons* = wild garlic; Welsh proverb; compare [An apple a day keeps the doctor away](#) above.

**Eat till you're cold, live to grow old.**

traditional saying.

**Even your closest friends won't tell you.**

advertising slogan for Listerine mouthwash, US, 1923.

**Every good quality is contained in ginger.**

Indian proverb.

**Health is wealth.**

traditional saying.

**He who has health has hope; and he who has hope has everything.**

Arabic proverb.

**More die of food than famine.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Slip, slop, slap.**

sun protection slogan, meaning slip on a T-shirt, slop on some sunscreen, slap on a hat; Australian health education programme, 1980s.

**Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness.**

traditional saying.

**Your food is your medicine.**

Indian proverb.

[History](#)

*To make a mark on history is not necessarily something to be sought: Happy is the country which has no history. Beyond this, the objectivity of history is seen rather sceptically: Until the lions produce their own historian, the story of the hunt will gratify the hunter.*

**Happy is the country which has no history.**

memorable events are likely to be unhappy and disruptive; English proverb, early 19th century; compare a comment attributed to the French political philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1755) by Thomas Carlyle, ‘Happy the people whose annals are blank in history-books!’

**History is a fable agreed upon.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**History is fiction with the truth left out.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**History is written by the victors.**

modern saying.

**History repeats itself.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Until the lions produce their own historian, the story of the hunt will glorify the hunter.**

African proverb.

## The Home

See also [HOUSEWORK](#)

*There are various ways of expressing the importance of having a home, from East, west, home’s best, to the Chinese assertion that Falling leaves have to return to their roots.*

**East, west, home’s best.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **An Englishman's home is his castle.**

a person has the right to refuse entry to his home; reflecting a legal principle, as formulated by the English jurist Edward Coke (1552–1634), 'For a man's house is his castle, *et domus sua cuique est tutissimum refugium* [and each man's home is his safest refuge]'; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Every cock will crow upon his own dunghill.**

everyone is confident and at ease on their home; English proverb, mid 13th century.

### **Falling leaves have to return to their roots.**

everything must ultimately return to its origins; Chinese proverb.

### **Home is home though it's never so homely.**

no place can compare with one's own home; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Home is where the heart is.**

one's true home is wherever the person one loves most is; English proverb, late 19th century.

### **Home is where the mortgage is.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Lang may yer lum reek!**

long may your chimney smoke, often used as a toast; Scottish saying.

### **There's no place like home.**

English proverb, late 16th century; the saying is found earlier in Greek, in the work of the Greek poet Hesiod (c.700 BC).

## **Honesty**

See also [CORRUPTION](#), [DECEPTION](#), [LIES](#), [TRUTH](#)

*Honesty is essential in even the smallest actions (It's a sin to steal a pin), although it is not always realistically to be expected (Honesty is more praised than practised). However, apart from moral duty there may be pragmatic reasons for adopting it: Honesty is the best policy.*

**Children and fools tell the truth.**

implying that they lack the cunning to see possible danger; tradition sometimes adds drunkards; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Confession is good for the soul.**

confession is essential to repentance and forgiveness; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**He who steals an egg will steal a camel.**

someone who is guilty of petty dishonesty is likely to be guilty of more serious theft; modern saying, said to be an Arabic proverb.

**Honesty is more praised than practised.**

it is easier to advise another person to be honest than to be honest oneself; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Honesty is the best policy.**

as well as being right, to be honest may also achieve a more successful outcome; English proverb, early 17th century.

**A howlin' coyote ain't stealin' no chickens.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**It's a sin to steal a pin.**

even if what is stolen is of little value, the action is still wrong; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Nothing is stolen without hands.**

if money or goods are missing, someone has stolen them; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Sell honestly, but not honesty.**



a play on words meaning that honesty is the essential virtue in commerce; American proverb, mid 20th century.

## Hope

See also [HAPPINESS](#), [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#)

*Hope may make difficult circumstances bearable (If it were not for hope, the heart would break), but over-indulgence in its promises will not lead to happiness: He that lives in hope dances to an ill tune.*

### **Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.**

English proverb, early 18th century, originally with allusion to Alexander Pope (1688–1744), ‘ “Blessed is the man who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed” was the ninth beatitude.’

### **A drowning man will clutch at a straw.**

when hope is slipping away one grasps at the slightest chance; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **He that lives in hope dances to an ill tune.**

hoping for something better may constrain one’s freedom of action; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Hope deferred makes the heart sick.**

implying that it is worse to have had one’s hopes raised and then dashed, than to have been resigned to not having something; English proverb, late 14th century, from the Bible (Proverbs 13:12), ‘Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.’

### **Hope is a good breakfast but a bad supper.**

while it is pleasant to begin something in a hopeful mood, the hopes need to have been fulfilled by the time it ends; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **Hope is the pillar of the world.**

African proverb.

### **Hope springs eternal.**

English proverb, mid 18th century, from Alexander Pope (1688–1744) *An Essay on Man* (1733), ‘Hope springs eternal in the human breast: /Man never Is, but always To be blest.’

### **If it were not for hope, the heart would break.**

referring to the role of hope in warding off complete despair; English proverb, mid 13th century.

### **In the kingdom of hope, there is no winter.**

Russian proverb.

### **It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.**

often with the implication that something long sought may be disappointing when achieved; English proverb, late 19th century; from Robert Louis Stevenson *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), ‘To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.’

### **While there’s life there’s hope.**

often used as encouragement not to despair in an unpromising situation; English proverb, mid 16th century.

## **Horses**

See also [CATS](#), [DOGS](#)

*Sayings about horses reflect interests in choosing, and keeping, a horse, with an emphasis on personal judgement and management: Care, and not fine stables, makes a good horse.*

### **Care, and not fine stables, makes a good horse.**

Danish proverb.

### **No foot, no horse.**

relating to horse care, and recorded in North America as ‘no hoof, no horse’; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**One white foot, buy him; two white feet, try him; three white feet, look well about him; four white feet, go without him.**

on horse-dealing, categorizing features in a horse which are believed to be unlucky; English proverb, recorded in various forms from the 15th century.

**Pace makes the race.**

from horse racing, relating to the setting of odds; modern saying.

**There is nothing so good for the inside of a man as the outside of a horse.**

recommending the healthful effects of horse-riding; English proverb, early 20th century.

**The wind of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears.**

saying, said to be an Arabic proverb.

## Hospitality

*Hospitality is a natural source of enjoyment (It is merry in hall when beards wag all), but guests can overstay their welcome. An African proverb recommends a way of dealing with this: Treat your guest as a guest for two days; on the third day give him a hoe.*

**Always leave the party when you are still having a good time.**

implying that pleasure of this kind is transient; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The company makes the feast.**

the success of a social occasion depends on those present rather than on the food and drink provided; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The first day a guest, the second day a guest, the third day a calamity.**

Indian proverb.

**Fish and guests stink after three days.**

one should not outstay one's welcome; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Food without hospitality is medicine.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A guest is like the morning dew.**

a good guest does not stay very long; African proverb.

**Hospitality and medicine must be confined to three days.**

Indian proverb.

**It is merry in hall when beards wag all.**

when conversation is in full flow; English proverb, early 14th century.

**The pot boils; friendship lives.**

some friendships will not outlast the provision of hospitality; proverb of classical origin.

**There isn't much to talk about at some parties until after one or two couples leave.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Treat your guest as a guest for two days; on the third day give him a hoe.**

African proverb.

## Housework

See also [THE HOME](#)

*Apart from slogans promoting cleaning devices such as Hoover's It beats as it sweeps as it cleans, sayings about housework tend to focus on it as the traditional sphere of activity for women: A woman's work is never done.*

**He that will thrive must first ask his wife.**

the husband's material welfare depends on the way in which his wife manages the household; English proverb, late 15th century.

**It beats as it sweeps as it cleans.**

advertising slogan for Hoover vacuum cleaners, 1919.

**Persil washes whiter—and it shows.**

advertising slogan for Persil washing powder, 1970s.

**They that wash on Monday**

**Have all the week to dry;**

**They that wash on Tuesday**

**Are not so much awry;**

**They that wash on Wednesday**

**Are not so much to blame;**

**They that wash on Thursday**

**Wash for very shame;**

**They that wash on Friday**

**Wash in sorry need;**

**And they that wash on Saturday,**

**Are lazy folk indeed.**

traditional rhyme.

**A woman's work is never done.**

reflecting the traditional responsibilities of the housewife; English proverb, late 16th century.

## **The Human Race**

*The view that Man is the measure of all things can be traced back to the classical world, but later sayings suggest more of a limitation: The best of men are but men at best, or even the dialect summary, There's nowt so queer as folk.*

**All mankind is divided into three classes: those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move.**

modern saying, said to be an Arabic proverb.

**Am I not a man and a brother?**

motto on the seal of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1787, depicting a kneeling slave in chains uttering these words (subsequently a popular Wedgwood cameo).

**The best of men are but men at best.**

even someone of great moral worth is still human and fallible; English proverb, late 17th century.

**God sleeps in the stone, dreams in the plant, stirs in the animal, and awakens in man.**

traditional saying, frequently said to be of Indian origin; the wording varies in different languages.

**Man is a wolf to man.**

English proverb, mid 16th century, from the Roman comic dramatist Plautus (c.250–184 BC), ‘A man is a wolf rather than a man to another man, when he hasn’t yet found out what he’s like.’

**Man is the measure of all things.**

everything could be understood in terms of humankind; English proverb, mid 16th century; found earlier in the classical world in the words of the Greek sophist Protagoras (b. c.485 BC), ‘That man is the measure of all things.’

**There’s nowt so queer as folk.**

English proverb, early 20th century.

**What is the most important thing in life? It is people, people, people.**

Maori proverb.

## **Young saint, old devil.**

unnaturally good and moral behaviour at an early age is likely to change in later life; English proverb, early 15th century.

## **Hypothesis and Fact**

See also [SCIENCE](#), [THINKING](#)

*While Facts are stubborn things, they will not always be reached through speculation: the question How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? has become a type of fruitless hypothesis.*

## **The exception proves the rule.**

originally this meant that the recognition of something as an exception proved the existence of a rule, but it is now more often used or understood as justifying divergence from a rule (compare [There is an exception to every rule](#) below); English proverb, mid 17th century.

## **Facts are stubborn things.**

used to indicate a core of reality that cannot be adjusted to people's wishes; English proverb, early 18th century.

## **How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?**

regarded satirically as a characteristic speculation of scholastic philosophy, particularly as exemplified by 'Doctor Scholasticus' (Anselm of Laon, d. 1117) and as used in medieval comedies.

## ***Nullius in verba.***

Latin, 'in the word of none', motto of the Royal Society, emphasizing reliance on experiment rather than authority; adapted from the Roman poet Horace *Epistles*, 'Not bound to swear allegiance to any master, wherever the wind takes me I travel as a visitor.'

## **One story is good till another is told.**

doubt may be cast on an apparently convincing account by a second told from a different angle; English proverb, late 16th century.

## **The proof of the pudding is in the eating.**

the truth of an assertion will be demonstrated by how things actually turn out; proof here means test'; English proverb, early 14th century.

**There is an exception to every rule.**

English proverb, late 16th century; compare **The exception proves the rule** above.



## Idleness

See also [ACTION AND INACTION](#), [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

*Idleness is not only seen as damaging and dangerous in itself (An idle brain is the devil's workshop), it is not even necessarily enjoyable for the person who gives way to it: Idle people have the least leisure.*

### **As good be an addled egg as an idle bird.**

an idle person will produce nothing; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Better be idle than ill doing.**

Scottish proverb.

### **Better to wear out than to rust out.**

it is better to remain active than to succumb to idleness; in this form frequently attributed to Richard Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough (1631–1718); English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **A day without work is a day without food.**

modern saying, associated with Zen Buddhism.

### **The devil finds work for idle hands to do.**

someone who has no work to do will get into mischief; English proverb, early 18th century.

### **Doing nothing is doing ill.**

failing to do anything is effectively wrong-doing; traditional saying.

### **An idle brain is the devil's workshop.**

those who do not apply themselves to their work are most likely to get into trouble; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Idleness is never enjoyable unless there is plenty to do.**

American proverb, mid 20th century; the idea is found in the Jerome K. Jerome *Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow* (1886), 'It is impossible to enjoy idling thoroughly unless one has plenty of work to do.'

**Idleness is the root of all evil.**

English proverb, early 15th century; the idea has been attributed to the French theologian, monastic reformer, and abbot St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153); compare **Money is the root of all evil** at [MONEY](#).

**Idle people have the least leisure.**

lazy people are the least able to manage their time efficiently; English proverb, late 17th century.

**If you won't work you shan't eat.**

essential sustenance is seen as a reward for industry; English proverb, mid 16th century, from the Bible (II Thessalonians 3:10), 'If any would not work, neither should he eat.'

**Who is more busy than he who has the least to do?**

English proverb, early 17th century.

## Ignorance

*Ignorance is not necessarily seen as an unhappy state: Ignorance is bliss from the 18th century finds an echo from a Russian saying of the Soviet era, The less you know, the better you sleep.*

**The husband is always the last to know.**

relating to marital infidelity; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Ignorance is bliss.**

English proverb, mid 18th century, from Thomas Gray *Ode on a Prospect of Eton College* (1747), 'Where ignorance is bliss,' Tis folly to be wise.'

**Ignorance is voluntary misfortune.**

one has chosen not to remedy the condition; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**It is dark at the foot of the lighthouse.**

we often miss what is closest to us; Japanese proverb.

**The last one to know about the sea is the fish.**

the person with most reason to know about something often knows least; modern saying, claimed to be a Chinese proverb.

**The less you know, the better you sleep.**

Russian saying of the Soviet era.

**Man is the enemy of that of which he is ignorant.**

fear is a common response to the unknown; Arab proverb.

**Nothing so bold as a blind mare.**

those who know least about a situation are least likely to be deterred by it; English proverb, early 17th century.

**A slice off a cut loaf isn't missed.**

if someone has already been diminished or damaged, further damage may go unnoticed; English proverb, late 16th century (first recorded in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, 1592).

**What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over.**

now sometimes used with the implication that information is being withheld to prevent difficulties; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**What you don't know can't hurt you.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**When the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**

when a person is guided by someone equally inexperienced, both are likely to come to grief; English proverb, late 9th century, from the Bible (Matthew

15:14), ‘They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.’

## Inaction

See [ACTION AND INACTION](#)

## Indecision

See also [CERTAINTY AND DOUBT](#)

*The consensus on indecision is that the person who cannot make a choice is likely to lose by it: Between two stools one falls to the ground.*

### **Between two stools one falls to the ground.**

inability to choose between, or accommodate oneself to, alternative viewpoints or courses of action may end in disaster; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **The cat would eat fish, but would not wet her feet.**

commenting on a situation in which desire for something is checked by unwillingness to risk discomfort in acquiring it; English proverb, early 13th century.

### **Councils of war never fight.**

people discussing matters in a group never reach the decision to fight, which an individual would make; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **First thoughts are best.**

advice to trust an instinctive reaction, often used as a warning against indecision; English proverb, early 20th century.

### **He who hesitates is lost.**

often used to urge decisive action on someone; English proverb, early 18th century; early usages refer specifically to women, as in Joseph Addison *Cato* (1713), ‘The woman that deliberates is lost.’

### **If you run after two hares you will catch neither.**

one must decide on one's goal; English proverb, early 16th century.

**Indecision is fatal, so make up your mind.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

## Inventions and Discoveries

*A theme which stresses the challenge of the new.*

**Always something new out of Africa.**

English proverb, mid 16th century; from the words of Pliny the Elder (ad 23–79), ‘*Semper aliquid novi Africam adferre* [Africa always brings [us] something new]’, originally referring to the hybridization of African animals.

**Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.**

late 20th-century saying, often attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82), but not found in his works.

**Here be dragons.**

alluding to a traditional indication of early map-makers that a region was unexplored and potentially dangerous.

**If you don't make mistakes you don't make anything.**

English proverb, late 19th century; the idea is found in a speech made at the Mansion House in London by the American lawyer and diplomat Edward John Phelps (1822–1900) on 24 January 1889: ‘The man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything.’

**There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world; and that is an idea whose time has come.**

mid 20th-century saying; the idea is found in Victor Hugo *Histoire d'un Crime* (written 1851–2, published 1877), ‘A stand can be made against invasion by an army; no stand can be made against invasion by an idea.’

**Turkeys, heresy, hops, and beer came into England all in one year.**

perhaps referring to 1521. The *turkey*, found domesticated in Mexico in 1518, was soon afterwards introduced into Europe; in 1521, the Pope conferred on Henry VIII the title Defender of the Faith, in recognition of his opposition to the Lutheran *heresy*; the *hop* plant is believed to have been introduced into the south of England from Flanders between 1520 and 1524; and *beer* as the name of hopped malt liquor became common only in the 16th century; English proverb, late 16th century.

# J

## Journalism

See [NEWS AND JOURNALISM](#)

## Justice

See also [CRIME AND PUNISHMENT](#), [THE LAW](#)

*Fairness and honest dealing are desirable in themselves (Fair play's a jewel), but beyond this there are serious consequences in making it difficult for anyone to obtain justice: Justice delayed is justice denied.*

### **All's fair in love and war.**

in certain conditions rules do not apply, and any measures are acceptable; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Be just before you're generous.**

often used in the context of advising that one should settle any obligations before indulging in generosity; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **A fair exchange is no robbery.**

sometimes used of an action regarded as cancelling out an obligation which has been incurred; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Fair play's a jewel.**

applauding the value of honest dealing; English proverb, early 19th century.

### **The fox should not be on the jury at the goose's trial.**

a member of a jury must be unbiased; English proverb.

### **Give and take is fair play.**

English proverb, late 18th century.

**Give the Devil his due.**

one should acknowledge the strengths and capabilities of even the most unpleasant person; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Justice delayed is justice denied.**

English proverb, late 20th century; compare a clause from Magna Carta (1215), 'To no man will we sell, or deny, or delay, right or justice.'

**One law for the rich and another for the poor.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**There are two sides to every question.**

a problem can be seen from more than one angle; English proverb, early 19th century.

**Turn about is fair play.**

recommending equality of opportunity; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**We all love justice—at our neighbour's expense.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**What goes around comes around.**

often used as a comment on someone becoming subject to what they have visited on others; late 20th century, of US origin.

**What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.**

originally meaning that what is suitable for a woman is also suitable for a man, but now sometimes used in wider contexts; English proverb, late 17th century.



# K

## Knowledge

*While knowledge is to be sought* (The larger the shoreline of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder, *and more simply* Knowledge is power), *we may be betrayed by over-confidence in our prowess: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.*

### **The cobbler to his last and the gunner to his linstock.**

the gunner's *linstock* was a long pole used to hold a match for firing a cannon, and the saying is a fanciful extension of **let the cobbler stick to his last** below; English proverb, mid 18th century.

### **Every picture tells a story.**

advertisement for Doan's Backache Kidney Pills (early 1900s).

### **The good Christian should beware of mathematicians, and all those who make empty prophecies. The danger already exists that mathematicians have made a covenant with the Devil to darken the spirit and to confine man in the bonds of Hell.**

mistranslation of St Augustine's *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 'Hence, a devout Christian must avoid astrologers and all impious soothsayers, especially when they tell the truth, for fear of leading his soul into error by consorting with demons and entangling himself with the bonds of such association' (the Latin word *mathematicus* means both 'mathematician' and 'astrologer').

### **I pointed out to you the stars and all you saw was the tip of my finger.**

African proverb.

**Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used until they are seasoned.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Knowledge is power.**

English proverb, late 16th century, often with allusion to Francis Bacon *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), 'Knowledge itself is power.'

**The larger the shoreline of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.**

North American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Learning is a treasure that follows its owner everywhere.**

reflecting on the advantage knowledge has over material possessions; Chinese proverb.

**Learning is better than house and land.**

reflecting on the difference between knowledge and material, and therefore ephemeral, possessions; English proverb, late 18th century.

**Let the cobbler stick to his last.**

people should concern themselves only with things they know something about (the cobbler's *last* is a shoemaker's model for shaping or repairing a shoe or boot); English proverb, mid 16th century; compare **The cobbler to his last and the gunner to his linstock** above.

**A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.**

English proverb, early 18th century; alteration of Alexander Pope *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), 'A little learning is a dangerous thing; Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.'

**One half of the world does not know how the other half lives.**

often used to comment on a lack of communication between neighbouring groups; English proverb, early 17th century.

**The sea of learning has no end.**

Chinese proverb.

**Straws tell which way the wind blows.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

**There will be trouble if the cobbler starts making pies.**

a warning against stepping outside one's area of expertise; modern saying, said to be a Russian proverb.

**Walking ten thousand miles; reading ten thousand books.**

theoretical knowledge and practical experience are of equal value; Chinese proverb, compare **Walking ten thousand miles is better than reading ten thousand books** at [EXPERIENCE](#).

**What's hit is history, what's missed is mystery.**

on the importance of securing a dead specimen of a new species; late 19th century saying.

**When a pine needle falls in the forest, the eagle sees it, the deer hears it, and the bear smells it.**

modern saying, said to be of Native American origin.

**When house and land are gone and spent, then learning is most excellent.**

contrasting the value of learning with the ephemeral nature of material possessions; English proverb, mid 18th century.

# L

## The Law

See also [CRIME AND PUNISHMENT](#), [JUSTICE](#)

*The legal world is often seen as a perilous one* (The more laws, the more thieves and bandits), *although not every saying goes as far as the Scottish proverb: Home is home*, as the Devil said when he found himself in the Court of Session.

### **The devil makes his Christmas pies of lawyers' tongues and clerks' fingers.**

the lawyers' tongues and clerks' fingers stand for the words and actions of the legal profession as welcomed by the Devil; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Gray's Inn for walks, Lincoln's Inn for a wall, The Inner Temple for a garden, And the Middle Temple for a hall.**

on the four Inns of Court; traditional rhyme, mid 17th century.

### **Hard cases make bad law.**

difficult cases cause the clarity of the law to be obscured by exceptions and strained interpretations; the saying may now also be used to imply that a law framed in response to a particularly distressing case may not be well thought out or well based; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Home is home, as the Devil said when he found himself in the Court of Session.**

The *Court of Session* is the supreme civil tribunal of Scotland, established in 1532; Scottish proverbial saying, mid 19th century.

### **Ignorance of the law is no excuse for breaking it.**

English proverb, early 15th century.

### **A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client.**

English proverb, early 19th century.

### **The more laws, the more thieves and bandits.**

a rigid and over-detailed code of law is likely to foster rather than prevent lawbreaking; English proverb, late 16th century; the idea is found in the *Tao-te Ching* of Lao Tzu (c.604–531 BC), ‘The more laws and orders are made prominent, The more thieves and bandits there will be.’

### **No one should be judge in his own cause.**

it is impossible to be impartial where your own interest is involved; English proverb, mid 15th century.

### **Possession is nine points of the law.**

although it does not reflect any specific legal ruling, in early use the satisfaction of ten (sometimes twelve) points was commonly asserted to attest to full entitlement or ownership; possession, represented by nine (or eleven) points is therefore the closest substitute for this; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Rules are made to be broken.**

English proverb, mid 20th century; the idea expressed by Christopher North in *Blackwood's Magazine* for May 1830, ‘Laws were made to be broken.’

### **Where the law is uncertain, there is no law.**

legal saying, late 18th century; earliest found in Latin *Ubi jus incertum, ibi jus nullum*.

## **Leadership**

See also [MANAGEMENT](#)

*While the health of an organization can be judged by that of its leadership (The fish always stinks from the head downwards), there is also an*

*awareness that a successful leader can also at need give loyalty and support to another: A good leader is also a good follower.*

**As one fern frond dies, another is born to take its place.**

Maori proverb, applied particularly to chiefs.

**Equality is difficult, but superiority is painful.**

on the difficulties of leadership; African proverb.

**The fish always stinks from the head downwards.**

as the freshness of a dead fish can be judged from the condition of its head, any corruption in a country or organization will be manifested first in its leaders; English proverb, late 16th century.

**A good leader is also a good follower.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**He that cannot obey cannot command.**

the experience of being under orders teaches one how they should be given; English proverb, late 15th century.

**He who would lead must be a bridge.**

Welsh saying.

**If the people will lead, then the leaders must follow.**

modern saying.

**If you are not the lead dog the view never changes.**

Canadian saying.

**One mountain cannot accommodate two tigers.**

there cannot be two leaders; Chinese proverb.

## Leisure

See also [IDLENESS](#), [WORK](#)

*Leisure is more than idleness in that it provides essential refreshment: All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.*

**All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.**

warning against a lifestyle without any form of relaxation; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The busiest men have the most leisure.**

someone who is habitually busy is likely to make best use of their time; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Take time to smell the roses.**

it is important to spend some time in leisure; modern saying.

**The gods do not subtract from a man's allotted span the time spent fishing.**

modern saying, sometimes claimed to have originated in an Assyrian tablet.

## Letters

*Letters can be a key form of human communication: A love letter sometimes costs more than a three-cent stamp.*

**Do not close a letter without reading it.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**A love letter sometimes costs more than a three-cent stamp.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Someone, somewhere, wants a letter from you.**

advertising slogan for the British Post Office, 1960s.

## Lies

See also [DECEPTION](#), [HONESTY](#), [TRUTH](#)

*Lies have their own power (A lie can go round the world and back again while the truth is lacing up its boots), but in the end a falsehood will be*

*exposed*: The liar's candle lasts till evening.

**An abomination unto the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble.**

definition of a lie, an amalgamation of lines from the Bible (Proverbs 12:22, 'Lying lips are abomination to the Lord', and Psalms 46:1, 'God is our hope and strength: a very present help in trouble'), often attributed to the American politician Adlai Stevenson (1900–62).

**Even a liar tells the truth sometimes.**

modern saying.

**Half the truth is often a whole lie.**

something which is partially true can still convey a completely false impression; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**A liar ought to have a good memory.**

implying that one lie is likely to lead to the need for another; English proverb, mid 16th century, 1st century ad in Latin.

**The liar's candle lasts till evening.**

a lie will be exposed sooner or later; Turkish proverb.

**A lie can go around the world and back again while the truth is lacing up its boots.**

American proverb, late 19th century; a variant is recorded in the words of C. H. Spurgeon in *Gems from Spurgeon* (1859), 'It is well said in the old proverb, "a lie will go round the world while truth is pulling its boots on." '

**One seldom meets a lonely lie.**

implying that one is likely to lead to the need for another; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**To tell a falsehood is like the cut of a sabre, for though the wound may heal the scar will remain.**

Persian proverb.



## Life

See also [LIFESTYLES](#)

*While not necessarily easy* (Life isn't all beer and skittles), *the ultimate verdict is positive, if somewhat bleak*: A live dog is better than a dead lion.

### **Art is long and life is short.**

originally from the Greek physician Hippocrates (c.460–357 BC), comparing the difficulties encountered in learning the art of medicine or healing with the shortness of human life ('Art' is now commonly understood in the proverb in a less specific sense); often quoted in the Latin version *Ars longa, vita brevis* from the rendering by the Roman philosopher and poet Seneca; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Be happy while y'er leevin, For y'er a lang time deid.**

Scottish motto for a house.

### **Life is a sexually transmitted disease.**

graffito found on the London Underground.

### **Life is harder than crossing a field.**

Russian proverb.

### **Life isn't all beer and skittles.**

life is not unalloyed pleasure or relaxation; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Life is the best gift; the rest is extra.**

African proverb (Swahili).

### **Life's a bitch, and then you die.**

modern saying, late 20th century.

### **A live dog is better than a dead lion.**

often used in the context of a lesser person taking the place of a greater one who has died; English proverb, late 14th century, from the Bible (Ecclesiastes 9:4), 'A living dog is better than a dead lion.'

## **Man cannot live by bread alone.**

a person needs spiritual as well as physical sustenance; English proverb, late 19th century, after the Bible (Matthew 4:4), ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’

## ***Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse.***

French, meaning ‘everything passes, everything perishes, everything palls’.

## **Lifestyles**

See also [LIFE](#)

*Common wisdom enshrines suggestions for essential principles by which to order our lives, from the simple Do as you would be done by, to the Middle Eastern advice If you have two coins, use one to buy bread, the other to buy hyacinths.*

**Anyone can carry his burden, however heavy, until nightfall.  
Anyone can do his work, however hard, for a day. Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly, purely, till the sun goes down.  
And this is all that life really means.**

traditional saying, late 19th century; associated with the writer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94) from the early 20th century.

**Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.**

Zen saying.

**Do as you would be done by.**

English proverb, late 16th century; in Charles Kingsley’s *The Water Babies* (1863), Mrs *Doasyouwouldbedoneby* is the motherly and benevolent figure who is contrasted with her stern sister, Mrs *Bedonebyasyoudid*.

**Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.**

English proverb, early 10th century; from the Bible (Matthew), ‘Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.’

**Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.**

a conflation of two biblical sayings, Ecclesiastes 8:15, 'A man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry', and Isaiah 22:13, 'Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die'; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Fear less, hope more; Eat less, chew more; Whine less, breathe more; Talk less, say more; Love more, and all good things will be yours.**

Swedish saying.

**If you have two coins, use one to buy bread, the other to buy hyacinths.**

both the mind and the body should be fed; Middle Eastern proverb (sometimes roses or lilies are suggested instead).

**Make love not war.**

student slogan, 1960s.

**Likes and Dislikes**

See also [CRITICISM](#)

*From One man's meat is another man's poison to Tastes differ, there is an acceptance that there is no consensus of personal preference.*

**Every man to his taste.**

often used to comment on someone else's choice; English proverb, late 16th century.

**One man's meat is another man's poison.**

pointing out that what may be necessary to one person is injurious to another; English proverb, late 16th century.

**One man's trash is another man's treasure.**

modern saying.

### **Tastes differ.**

different people will like or approve of different things; English proverb, early 19th century.

### **There is no accounting for tastes.**

often used in recognition of a difference in choice between two people; English proverb, late 18th century.

### **You can't please everyone.**

English proverb, late 15th century.

## Losing

See [WINNING AND LOSING](#)

## Love

See also [MARRIAGE](#), [RELATIONSHIPS](#)

*Love may be a powerful force (Love makes the world go round), but it does not necessarily bring ease: The course of true love never did run smooth.*

### **The course of true love never did run smooth.**

English proverb, late 16th century; originally from Shakespeare A *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595–6).

### **It is best to be off with the old love before you are on with the new.**

English proverb, early 19th century.

### **Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury.**

English proverb, mid 16th century; from the Roman poet Tibullus (c.50–19 BC) and ultimately from the Greek poet Hesiod (c.700 BC).

### **Kissing goes by favour.**

a kiss is often given as a reward for something done; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Love and a cough cannot be hid.**

love can no more be concealed than a cough can be suppressed; English proverb, early 14th century.

### **Love begets love.**

English proverb, early 16th century.

### **Love is blind.**

Cupid, the god of love, was traditionally portrayed as blind, shooting his arrows at random, but the saying is generally used to mean that a person is often unable to see faults in the one they love; English proverb, late 14th century; compare **L'amour est aveugle; l'amitié ferme les yeux** at [RELATIONSHIPS](#).

### **Love laughs at locksmiths.**

love is too strong a force to be denied by ordinary barriers; English proverb, early 19th century, from the title of a play by George Colman the Younger (1762–1836).

### **Love makes the world go round.**

English proverb, mid 19th century, from a traditional French song.

### **Love makes time pass, and time makes love pass.**

French proverb.

### **Love will find a way.**

love is a force which cannot be stemmed or denied; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **One cannot love and be wise.**

English proverb, early 16th century; the statement 'to love and be wise is scarcely allowed to God' is found in Latin in the writings of the 1st-century Roman writer Publilius Syrus.

### **The quarrel of lovers is the renewal of love.**

love can be renewed through reconciliation; English proverb, early 16th century.

**There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.**

now often used as a consolation to rejected lovers in the form ‘there are plenty more fish in the sea’; English proverb, late 16th century.

**’Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all.**

English proverb, early 18th century.

**When the furze is in bloom, my love’s in tune.**

with the implication that some furze can always be found in bloom; English proverb, mid 18th century; compare **When the gorse is out of bloom, kissing’s out of fashion below.**

**When the gorse is out of bloom, kissing’s out of fashion.**

the idea behind the saying is that gorse is always in flower somewhere (compare **When the furze is in bloom, my love’s in tune** above).

## Loyalty

*Loyalty is a key virtue (It’s an ill bird that fouls its own nest) that is best demonstrated over a long period: Quickly come, quickly go.*

**It’s an ill bird that fouls its own nest.**

a condemnation of a person who brings his own family, home, or country into disrepute by his words; English proverb, mid 13th century.

**Love me little, love me long.**

love of great intensity is unlikely to last; English proverb, early 16th century.

**Quickly come, quickly go.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

Luck

See CHANCE AND LUCK

# M

## Management

See also [EMPLOYMENT](#), [LEADERSHIP](#)

*One traditional saying can be seen as an endorsement of the principle of delegation: Why keep a dog and bark yourself?*

**A committee is a group of the unwilling, chosen from the unfit, to do the unnecessary.**

20th-century saying.

**Hire slow, fire fast.**

modern saying.

**The nail that sticks up is certain to be hammered down.**

Japanese proverb.

**We trained hard . . . but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization.**

late 20th-century saying, frequently (and wrongly) attributed to the Roman satirist Petronius Arbiter (d. AD 65).

**Why keep a dog and bark yourself?**

often used to advise against carrying out work which can be done for you by somebody else; English proverb, late 16th century.



**You cannot control the winds, but you can adjust the sails.**

you may not be able to control matters, but you can respond deftly to them; modern saying.

**You can only manage what you can measure.**

modern saying.

## Manners

See also [BEHAVIOUR](#)

*While courtesy is seen as an obligation (Manners maketh man), there is also a note of pragmatism: There is nothing lost by civility.*

**Civility costs nothing.**

one should behave with at least minimal courtesy; English proverb, early 18th century.

**A civil question deserves a civil answer.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Everyone speaks well of the bridge which carries him over.**

someone is naturally well disposed towards a source of help, whether or not it has been beneficial to others; English proverb, late 17th century.

**Manners maketh man.**

motto of William of Wykeham (1324–1404), bishop of Winchester and founder of Winchester College; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**Striking manners are bad manners.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The test of good manners is being able to put up pleasantly with bad ones.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**There is nothing lost by civility.**

English proverb, late 19th century.

## Marriage

See also [LOVE](#), [MEN AND WOMEN](#), [WEDDINGS](#)

*Despite the assertion that Marriages are made in heaven, much proverbial wisdom takes a sceptical view of the happiness offered by the wedded state: Needles and pins, needles and pins, when a man marries his trouble begins.*

### **Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave.**

English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Better one house spoiled than two.**

said of two wicked or foolish people joined in marriage; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Change the name and not the letter, change for the worse and not the better.**

it is unlucky for a woman to marry a man whose surname begins with the same letter as her own; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **A deaf husband and a blind wife are always a happy couple.**

each will remain unaware of drawbacks in the other (the saying is sometimes reversed to a blind husband and a deaf wife); English proverb, late 16th century.

### **The grey mare is the better horse.**

the wife rules, or is more competent than, the husband; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Marriage is a lottery.**

referring either to one's choice of partner, or more generally to the element of chance involved in how a marriage will turn out; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **Marriages are made in heaven.**

often used ironically; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Marry in haste and repent at leisure.**

the formula is also applied to rash steps taken in other circumstances; English proverb, mid 16th century; the idea is found in William Congreve's play *The Old Bachelor* (1693), 'Thus grief still treads upon the heels of pleasure: /Married in haste, we may repent at leisure.'

**Needles and pins, needles and pins, when a man marries his trouble begins.**

traditional saying (originally a nursery rhyme), perhaps reflecting on the pressures of domestic life; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Never marry for money, but marry where money is.**

distinguishing between monetary gain as a primary object and a side benefit; English proverb, late 19th century.

**There goes more to marriage than four bare legs in a bed.**

physical compatibility is not enough for a successful marriage; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Wedlock is a padlock.**

English proverb, late 17th century.

**A widow is a rudderless boat.**

Chinese proverb.

**You do not marry the person you love, you love the person you marry.**

Indian proverb.

**A young man married is a young man marred.**

often used as an argument against marrying too young; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Means**

See [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

## Medicine

See also [SICKNESS](#)

*What drugs can do may be limited* (The best doctors are Dr Diet, Dr Quiet, and Dr Merryman), *and some remedies may be in our own hands*: Laughter is the best medicine.

### **The best doctors are Dr Diet, Dr Quiet, and Dr Merryman.**

outline of an appropriate regime for someone who is ill; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Good ethics start with good facts.**

modern saying in medical ethics.

### **Good medicine always has a bitter taste.**

modern saying, sometimes claimed to be a Japanese proverb.

### **Keep taking the tablets.**

supposedly traditional advice from a doctor, especially when little change in the patient's condition is envisaged.

### **Laughter is the best medicine.**

late 20th-century saying; the idea is an ancient one, as in the Bible (Proverbs 17:22), 'A merry heart doeth good like medicine.'

### **Medicine can prolong life, but death will seize the doctor, too.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### ***Similia similibus curantur.***

Latin, 'Like cures like,' motto of homeopathic medicine attributed to S. Hahnemann (1755–1843), although not found in this form in Hahnemann's writings.

## Meeting and Parting

See also [ABSENCE](#)

*While parting may be seen as a regrettable inevitability (The best of friends must part), meeting is not necessarily welcome: Talk of the Devil, and he is bound to appear.*

### **The best of friends must part.**

no friendship is so close that separation is impossible; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Nice to see you—to see you, nice.**

catchphrase used by Bruce Forsyth in ‘The Generation Game’ on BBC Television, 1973 onwards.

### **Talk of the Devil, and he is bound to appear.**

to speak of the Devil may be to invite his presence; often abbreviated to ‘Talk of the Devil’, and used when a person just spoken of is seen; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## **Men**

See also [MEN AND WOMEN](#)

*Proverbial wisdom about men seems to be summed up in the succinct, Boys will be boys.*

### **Boys will be boys.**

English proverb, early 17th century, often used ironically.

### **I married my husband for life, not for lunch.**

20th-century saying, origin unknown.

### **The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.**

English proverb, early 19th century.

## **Men and Women**

See also [MARRIAGE](#), [MEN](#), [WOMEN](#)

*A loving partnership between men and women is seen as the natural pattern of life: Every Jack has his Jill.*

**Every Jack has his Jill.**

all lovers have found a mate; English proverb, early 17th century.

**A good Jack makes a good Jill.**

used of the effect of a husband on his wife; English proverb, early 17th century.

**A man is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks.**

both parts of the proverb are sometimes used on their own; English proverb, late 19th century.

**The Mind**

See also [THINKING](#)

*The mind is seen as essential to independent life: Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.*

**A mind enlightened is like heaven; a mind in darkness is hell.**

Chinese proverb.

**Mind has no sex.**

modern saying, ultimately an alteration of the thought of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97) in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), ‘To give a sex to mind was not very consistent with the principles of a man [Rousseau] who argued so warmly, and so well, for the immortality of the soul.’

**A mind is a terrible thing to waste.**

motto of the United Negro College Fund.

**Our memory is always at fault, never our judgement.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.**

often used to comment on a foolish action seen as self-destructive in its effect; English proverb, early 17th century; the idea is found in the

medieval period, in a scholiastic annotation to Sophocles's *Antigone*, 'Whenever God prepares evil for a man, He first damages his mind, with which he deliberates.'

## Misfortunes

See also [ADVERSITY](#), [CHANCE AND LUCK](#)

*Misfortunes are inevitable* (The bread never falls but on its buttered side), *but we should not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by a sense of our own bad luck*: I cried because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet.

### **Bad things come in threes.**

the belief that an accident or misfortune is likely to be accompanied by two more is traditional, although in this form it is only recorded from the late 20th century.

### **The bread never falls but on its buttered side.**

if something goes wrong, the outcome is likely to be as bad as possible; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Help you to salt, help you to sorrow.**

in which salt is regarded as a sign of bad luck (especially if spilt at table); English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **I cried because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet.**

modern saying derived from a Persian original; compare the words of the Persian poet Sadi (c.1213–91) in *The Rose Garden*, 'I never complained at the vicissitudes of fortune . . . excepting once, when my feet were bare, and I had not the means of procuring myself shoes. I entered the great mosque at Cufah with a heavy heart when I beheld a man who had no feet. I offered up praise and thanks giving to God for his bounty, and bore with patience the want of shoes.'

### **If anything can go wrong, it will.**

modern saying reflecting a supposed law of nature, said to have been coined as a maxim in 1949 by George Nichols, as the development of a remark

made by a colleague, Captain E. Murphy; the rule is popularly known as 'Murphy's Law'.

**It is no use crying over spilt milk.**

it is pointless to repine when it is too late to prevent the misfortune; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**It never rains but it pours.**

if one thing has gone wrong, worse will follow; English proverb, early 18th century.

**Misfortunes never come singly.**

English proverb, early 14th century.

## Mistakes

*Not even the greatest expert can avoid making some mistakes: we are warned that Homer sometimes nods, and Even monkeys sometimes fall off a tree.*

**Even monkeys sometimes fall off a tree.**

even the most adept can be careless and make errors; Japanese proverb.

**He is always right who suspects that he makes mistakes.**

warning against overconfidence; Spanish proverb.

**He who slaps his own face should not cry out.**

there is no point in complaining about trouble caused by your own error; Arabic proverb.

**Homer sometimes nods.**

even the greatest expert may make a mistake (nods here means 'becomes drowsy', implying a momentary lack of attention); English proverb, late 14th century, ultimately with allusion to the Roman poet Horace (65–8 BC), 'I'm aggrieved when sometimes even excellent Homer nods.'

**A miss is as good as a mile.**



if you miss the target, it hardly matters by how much; the syntax has been distorted by abridgement, and the original form was ‘an inch in a miss is as good as an ell’ (an *ell* being a former measure of length equal to about 1.1 metres); English proverb, early 17th century.

### **There’s many a slip ’twixt cup and lip.**

much can go wrong between the initiation of a process and its completion, often used as a warning; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **To err is human (to forgive divine).**

English proverb, late 16th century (in its given form, from Alexander Pope’s *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), ‘To err is human: to forgive, divine’; compare **To err is human but to really foul things up requires a computer** at [COMPUTERS](#)).

### **Wink at sma’ fauts, ye hae great anes yoursel.**

avoid criticizing the mistakes of others, as you yourself have great ones; Scottish proverb; the idea is found in the Bible (Matthew 7:3), ‘Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?’

## **Moderation**

See also [EXCESS](#), [GREED](#)

*Moderation is not only a sensible precaution against overindulgence (Enough is as good as a feast), it can be positively beneficial in making an effect: Less is more.*

### **Enough is as good as a feast.**

used as a warning against overindulgence, or overdoing something; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Enough is enough.**

originally used as an expression of content or satisfaction, but now more usually employed as a reprimand, warning someone against persisting in an inappropriate or excessive course of action; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **The half is better than the whole.**

advising economy or restraint; English proverb, mid 16th century, from the Greek poet Hesiod (fl. c.700 BC) *Works and Days*, ‘the half is greater than the whole.’

### **Keep no more cats than will catch mice.**

recommending efficiency and the ethic of steady work to justify one’s place; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **Less is more.**

something simple often has more effect; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Moderation in all things.**

English proverb, mid 19th century, from the Greek poet Hesiod (fl. c.700 BC) *Works and Days*, ‘Observe due measure; moderation is best in all things’; compare **There is measure in all things** below.

### **There is measure in all things.**

English proverb, late 14th century; compare **Moderation in all things** above.

## **Money**

See also **THRIFT**, **WEALTH**

*It is natural to want money* (Get the money honestly if you can), *but its power is in the end limited*: Money can’t buy happiness.

### **Bad money drives out good.**

money of lower intrinsic value tends to circulate more freely than money of higher intrinsic and equal nominal value, though what is recognized as money of higher value being hoarded; English proverb, early 20th century; known as ‘Gresham’s law’ from Thomas Gresham (d. 1579), English financier and founder of the Royal Exchange.

### **The best things in life are free.**

English proverb, early 20th century, originally from the title of a song (1927) by Buddy De Sylva and Lew Brown.

**Cash is king.**

modern saying, summarizing the position in a recession.

**Get the money honestly if you can.**

American proverb, early 19th century; the idea is found in the classical world, in the poetry of Horace (65–8 BC), ‘If possible honestly, if not, somehow, make money.’

**He that cannot pay, let him pray.**

if you have no material resources, prayer is your only resort; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Money can’t buy happiness.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Money has no smell.**

English proverb, early 20th century in this form, but originally deriving from a comment made by the Roman Emperor Vespasian (AD 9–79), in response to an objection to a tax on public lavatories; compare **Where there’s muck there’s brass** below.

**Money is like sea water. The more you drink, the thirstier you become.**

possession of wealth creates an addiction to money; modern saying.

**Money isn’t everything.**

often said in consolation or resignation; English proverb, early 20th century.

**Money is power.**

English proverb, mid 18th century.

**Money is the root of all evil.**

English proverb, mid 15th century, deriving from the Bible (I Timothy 6:10), ‘The love of money is the root of all evil’; compare **Idleness is blue**

**root of all evil** at [IDLENESS](#).

**Money, like manure, does no good till it is spread.**

English proverb, early 19th century; the idea is found earlier in the *Essays* of Francis Bacon (1561–1626), ‘Money is like muck, not good except it be spread.’

**Money makes the dog dance.**

Spanish proverb.

**Money makes the mare to go.**

referring to money as a source of power; English proverb, late 15th century.

**Money talks.**

money has influence; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Shrouds have no pockets.**

worldly wealth cannot be kept and used after death; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Time is money.**

often used to mean that time spent fruitlessly on something represents a real loss of money which could have been earned in that time; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Where there’s muck there’s brass.**

dirty or unpleasant activities are also lucrative (brass here means ‘money’); English proverb, late 17th century; compare [Money has no smell](#) above.

**You cannot serve God and Mammon.**

now generally used of wealth regarded as an evil influence; English proverb, mid 16th century, ultimately from the Bible (Matthew 6:24), ‘No man can serve two masters . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon.’

## [Mourning](#)

See also [DEATH](#), [SORROW](#)

*Mourning is inevitable and natural (Grief is the price we pay for love), but overindulgence in it is not a sign of sincere feeling: A bellowing cow soon forgets her calf.*

**A bellowing cow soon forgets her calf.**

the person who laments most loudly is the one who is soonest comforted; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Grief is the price we pay for love.**

late 20th-century saying.

**Let the dead bury the dead.**

often used to mean that the past should be left undisturbed; English proverb, early 19th century (see Matthew 8:22).

**No flowers by request.**

an intimation that no flowers are desired at a funeral.

**You can shed tears that she is gone or you can smile because she has lived.**

preface to the Order of Service at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, 2002.

## Murder

*Traditional sayings emphasize not only that murder cannot be concealed (Murder will out), but also that it is likely to breed further killing: Blood will have blood.*

**Blood will have blood.**

killing will provoke further killing; English proverb, mid 15th century; in this form from Shakespeare *Macbeth* (1606), 'It will have blood, they say blood will have blood.'

**Guns don't kill people; people kill people.**

National Rifle Association slogan.

### **Killing no murder.**

English proverb, mid 17th century, originally from the title of a pamphlet by Edward Sexby (d. 1658), 'Killing no murder briefly discoursed in three questions', an apology for tyrannicide.

### **Murder will out.**

the crime of murder can never be successfully concealed; English proverb, early 14th century.

## Music

*The world of music may offer great enjoyment, but it is not a shield from reality: we are told from the 17th century that Music helps not the toothache.*

### **It takes seven years to make a piper.**

Scottish proverb.

### **Music helps not the toothache.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **Why should the devil have all the best tunes?**

commonly attributed to the English evangelist Rowland Hill (1744–1833); many hymns are sung to popular secular melodies, and this practice was especially favoured by the Methodists.

# N

## Names

*Names enshrine the essence of individual identity:* If the cap fits, wear it.

**The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names.**

modern saying claimed to be a Chinese proverb.

**By Tre, Pol, and Pen, you shall know the Cornish men.**

traditional saying, referring to the frequency of these elements in Cornish names; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**If the cap fits, wear it.**

used with reference to the assumed suitability of a name or description to a person's behaviour; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**If the shoe fits, wear it.**

one has to accept it when a particular comment is shown to apply to oneself; found mainly in the US; English proverb, late 18th century.

**It is not what you call me. It is what I answer to.**

African proverb.

**Only the camel knows the hundredth name of God.**

saying from Arab folklore; in Islam there are ninety-nine names for Allah (referred to as the ninety-nine names of God'), in the main taken or derived from the Koran.

## Nature

See also [THE ENVIRONMENT](#)

*Nature is seen as a powerful force beyond our control: You can drive out nature with a pitchfork, but she keeps on coming back.*

**Nature abhors a vacuum.**

English proverb, mid 16th century.

**One for the mouse, one for the crow, one to rot, one to grow.**

traditionally used when sowing seed, and enumerating the ways in which some of the crop will be lost, leaving the residue to germinate; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**You can drive out nature with a pitchfork but she keeps on coming back.**

English proverb, mid 16th century, from the Roman poet Horace (65–8 BC) *Epistles*, ‘You may drive out nature with a pitchfork, but she will always return.’

## Necessity

*Necessity may accustom us to difficult choices (Desperate diseases must have desperate remedies), but it may also have possible benefits: Necessity sharpens industry.*

**Beggars can't be choosers.**

someone who is destitute is in no position to criticize what may be offered; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Desperate diseases must have desperate remedies.**

in a difficult or dangerous situation it may be necessary to take extreme or risky measures; English proverb, mid 16th century; compare **Exceptional times require exceptional measures** below.

**Even a worm will turn.**

even a meek person will resist or retaliate if pushed too far; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Exceptional times require exceptional measures.**



modern saying; compare **Desperate diseases must have desperate remedies** above.

**Hunger drives the wolf out of the wood.**

even the fiercest animal will be driven from shelter by acute need; English proverb, late 15th century.

**If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain.**

used in the context of an apparently insoluble situation. The saying refers to a story of Muhammad recounted by Francis Bacon in his *Essays*, in which the Prophet called a hill to him, and when it did not move, made this remark; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Make a virtue of necessity.**

one should do with a good grace what is unavoidable; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Necessity is the mother of invention.**

need is often a spur to the creative process; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Necessity knows no law.**

someone in extreme need will disregard rules or prohibitions; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Necessity sharpens industry.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Needs must when the devil drives.**

used in recognition of overwhelming force of circumstance; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**When all fruit fails, welcome haws.**

often used of someone taking of necessity an older or otherwise unsuitable lover (*haws*, the red fruit of the hawthorn, are contrasted with fruits generally eaten as food); English proverb, early 18th century.

## **Who says A must say B.**

only recorded in English from North American sources, and meaning that if a first step is taken; the second will inevitably follow; English proverb, mid 19th century.

## Neighbours

See also [FAMILIARITY](#), [FRIENDSHIP](#)

*Common wisdom advises care in not overstepping limits with one's neighbours, both in terms of territory (Good fences make good neighbours) and personal intimacy (You should know a man seven years before you stir his fire).*

### **Good fences make good neighbours.**

this reduces the possibility of disputes over adjoining land; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **A hedge between keeps friendship green.**

it is wise to have a clear boundary between neighbours; English proverb.

### **Love your neighbour, but don't pull down your hedge.**

do not let feelings of friendship lead you to act unwisely; English proverb.

### **A wall between both best preserves friendship.**

it is wise to have a clear boundary between neighbours; Spanish proverb.

### **What a neighbour gets is not lost.**

one is likely to benefit from the gain of a neighbour or friend; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **You should know a man seven years before you stir his fire.**

used as a caution against over-familiarity on slight acquaintance; English proverb, early 19th century.

## News and Journalism

*The traditional view that Bad news travels fast is countered by an African saying: One who sees something good must tell of it.*

**All the news that's fit to print.**

motto of the *New York Times*, from 1896; coined by Adolph S. Ochs (1858–1935).

**Bad news travels fast.**

bad news is more likely to be talked about; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Light for all.**

slogan of the *Baltimore Sun*.

**No news is good news.**

often used in consolation or resignation; English proverb, early 17th century.

**One who sees something good must tell of it.**

African proverb.

**Watch this space!**

further developments are expected and more information will be given later; *space* = an area of a newspaper for a specific purpose, especially for advertising.

# O

## Opinion

See also [ARGUMENT](#), [THINKING](#)

*Independent ideas may be approved (Thought is free), but too great an affection for one's own views can degenerate into obstinacy: Those who never retract their opinions, love themselves more than they love truth.*

### **He that complies against his will is of his own opinion still.**

English proverb, late 17th century, from Samuel Butler *Hudibras* pt 3 (1680), 'He that complies against his will, Is of his own opinion still.'

### **So many men, so many opinions.**

the greater the number of people involved, the greater the number of different opinions there will be; English proverb, late 14th century, from Terence (c.190–159 BC) *Phormio*, 'There are as many opinions as there are people: each has his own correct way.'

### **Those who never retract their opinions, love themselves more than they love truth.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Thought is free.**

while speech and action can be limited, one's powers of imagination and speculation cannot be regulated; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Where there are two Jews, there are three opinions.**

Jewish saying.

### **The wish is father to the thought.**

one's opinions are influenced by one's wishes; English proverb, late 16th century, from Shakespeare *2 Henry IV* (1597), 'Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought.'

## Opportunity

*While we may have many opportunities* (The world is one's oyster), *we are warned that an opportunity missed will not come again*: He that will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay.

### **All is fish that comes to the net.**

everything can be used to advantage; English proverb, early 16th century.

### **All is grist that comes to the mill.**

all experience or knowledge is useful (*grist* is corn that is ground to make flour); English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **A bleating sheep loses a bite.**

opportunities may be lost through idle chatter; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Every crisis provides an opportunity.**

often used as encouragement in facing difficult circumstances; modern saying.

### **Every dog has his day.**

everyone, however insignificant, has a moment of strength and power; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **He that will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay.**

if an opportunity is not taken when offered, it may well not occur again; English proverb, late 10th century.

### **If the camel once gets his nose in the tent, his body will soon follow.**

an apparently insignificant opening is likely to lead to more serious developments; Arabic proverb.

**If you snooze, you lose.**

it is advisable to stay alert to opportunities; modern saying.

**It is good fishing in troubled waters.**

a difficult situation offers opportunities to those prepared to exploit it; English proverb, late 16th century.

**It's not what you know, but whom you know.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Make hay while the sun shines.**

one should take advantage of favourable circumstances which may not last; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**The mill cannot grind with the water that is past.**

an opportunity that has been missed cannot then be used; English proverb, early 17th century.

**No time like the present.**

often used to urge swift and immediate action; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Opportunities look for you when you are worth finding.**

North American proverb, mid 20th century; compare **Opportunity never knocks for persons not worth a rap** below.

**Opportunity never knocks for persons not worth a rap.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Opportunity never knocks twice at any man's door.**

a chance once missed will not occur again; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**A person who misses his chance, and the monkey who misses his branch, can't be saved.**

Indian proverb.

### **A postern door makes a thief.**

referring to the opportunity offered by a back or side entrance; English proverb, mid 15th century.

### **Strike while the iron is hot.**

one should take advantage of opportunity; the allusion was originally to the work of a blacksmith; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Take the goods the gods provide.**

one should accept and be grateful for unearned benefits; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **Time and tide wait for no man.**

often used as an exhortation to act, in the knowledge that a favourable moment will not last for ever; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **When one door shuts, another opens.**

as one possible course of action is closed off, another opportunity offers; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **When the cat's away, the mice will play.**

many will take advantage of a situation in which rules are not enforced or authority is lacking; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **A wise man turns chance into good fortune.**

traditional saying.

### **The world is one's oyster.**

opportunities are unlimited; an *oyster* is seen as both a delicacy and a source of pearls. Perhaps originally with allusion to Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597), 'The world's mine oyster, which I, with sword will open'; English proverb, early 17th century.

## **Optimism and Pessimism**

See also [HOPE](#)

*Adopting a positive attitude may be recommended* (Turn your face to the sun, and the shadows fall behind you), *but we should beware of overconfidence*: Don't halloo till you are out of the wood.

**All's for the best in the best of all possible worlds.**

English proverb, early 20th century, from Voltaire *Candide* (1759), 'In this best of possible worlds . . . all is for the best.'

**Another day, another dollar.**

a world-weary comment on routine toil to earn a living, originally referring to the custom of paying sailors by the day, so that the longer the voyage, the greater the financial reward; American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The darkest hour is just before dawn.**

suggesting that the experience of complete despair may mean that matters have reached the lowest point and may shortly improve; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Don't bargain for fish that are still in the water.**

Indian proverb; compare **Don't sell the skin till you have caught the bear** below.

**Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.**

one should not make, or act upon, an assumption (usually favourable) which may turn out to be ill-founded; English proverb, late 16th century; compare **Chickens are counted in the autumn** at [AUTUMN](#).

**Don't halloo till you are out of the wood.**

you should not exult until danger and difficulty are past (halloo means 'shout in order to attract attention'); English proverb, late 18th century.

**Don't sell the skin till you have caught the bear.**

do not act upon an assumption of success which may turn out to be ill-founded; English proverb, late 16th century (early versions have *lion* or *beast* in place of *bear*); compare **Don't bargain for fish that are still in the water** above.



**Every cloud has a silver lining.**

even the gloomiest circumstance has some hopeful element in it; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**God's in his heaven; all's right with the world.**

English proverb, from early 16th century in the form 'God is where he was'; now largely replaced by this poem from Robert Browning *Pippa Passes* (1841), 'God's in his heaven—All's right with the world!'

**If ifs and ands were pots and pans, there'd be no work for tinkers' hands.**

traditional response to an over-optimistic conditional expression, in which *ands* is the plural form of *and* = 'if'; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.**

what one wishes for is often far from reality; English proverb, early 17th century.

**If you had teeth of iron, you could eat iron coconuts.**

saying from Senegal.

**It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.**

good luck may arise from the source of another's misfortune; English proverb, early 17th century.

**The sharper the storm, the sooner it's over.**

the more intense something is, the shorter time it is likely to last; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Turn your face to the sun, and the shadows fall behind you.**

recommending a positive attitude; modern saying, said to derive from a Maori proverb.

**When the axe came into the forest, the trees said 'The handle is one of us!'**

relying for safety on a supposed link with a potential aggressor may offer a false hope; Russian proverb.

**When things are at their worst they begin to mend.**

when a bad situation has reached its worst possible point, the next change must reflect at least a small improvement; English proverb, mid 18th century.

## Parents

See also [CHILDREN](#), [THE FAMILY](#)

*Pride and affection in one's child* (Praise the child, and you make love to the mother) *may be associated with ambitions for the child's worldly success*: Parents want their children to become dragons.

**A father is a banker provided by nature.**

French proverb.

**He who takes the child by the hand takes the mother by the heart.**

Danish proverb.

**It is a wise child that knows its own father.**

a child's legal paternity might not reflect an actual blood link; English proverb, late 16th century.

**A mother understands what a child does not say.**

Jewish proverb.

**My son is my son till he gets him a wife, but my daughter's my daughter all the days of her life.**

while a man who establishes his own family relegates former blood ties to second place, a woman's filial role is not affected by her marriage; English proverb, late 17th century.

**Parents want their children to become dragons.**

parents want their children to be successful; Chinese proverb.

**Praise the child, and you make love to the mother.**

English proverb, early 19th century.

**Send the beloved child on a journey.**

Japanese proverb.

**To understand your parents' love, you must raise children yourself.**

Chinese proverb.

**When drinking water, remember the source.**

advocating filial piety; Chinese proverb.

## Parting

See [MEETING AND PARTING](#)

## The Past

See also [THE FUTURE](#), [HISTORY](#), [THE PRESENT](#)

*The past may represent something that cannot now be changed (The past at least is secure), or which still has the power to affect the future: The past is always ahead of us.*

**Old sins cast long shadows.**

current usage is likely to refer to the wrong done by one generation affecting its descendants; English proverb, early 20th century.

**The past always looks better than it was; it's only pleasant because it isn't here.**

American proverb, late 19th century.

**The past at least is secure.**

American proverb, early 19th century.

**The past is always ahead of us.**

the past is a reminder of what has been and what may be; Maori proverb.

**Things past cannot be recalled.**

what has already happened cannot be changed; English proverb, late 15th century.

**What's done cannot be undone.**

English proverb, mid 15th century.

**You have drunk from wells you did not dig, and been warmed by fires you did not build.**

the present generation depends on those who have gone before; modern saying, said to be of Native American origin.

**Patience**

See also [DETERMINATION](#), [HASTE AND DELAY](#)

*Not only is patience recommended as in itself the right way to behave (Bear and forbear), it promises ultimate satisfaction: If you sit by the river long enough, you will see the body of your enemy float by.*

**All commend patience, but none can endure to suffer.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**All things come to those who wait.**

often used as an adjuration to patience; English proverb, early 16th century.

**Bear and forbear.**

recommending patience and tolerance; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Don't put the cart before the horse.**

don't reverse the proper order of things; English proverb, early 16th century.

**First thing first.**

English proverb, late 19th century.

**Hurry no man's cattle.**

sometimes used as an injunction to be patient with someone; English proverb, early 19th century.

**If you sit by the river long enough, you will see the body of your enemy float by.**

advocating patience in the face of wrongs; modern saying, said to derive from a Japanese proverb.

**I sit on the shore, and wait for the wind.**

what is expected will arrive sooner or later; Russian proverb.

**It is a long lane that has no turning.**

commonly used as an assertion that an unfavourable situation will eventually change for the better; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**The longest way home is the shortest way home.**

not trying to take a short cut is often the most effective way; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.**

a major enterprise begins with small but essential tasks; modern saying, claimed to be a Chinese proverb.

**Nothing should be done in haste but gripping a flea.**

used as a warning against rash action; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**One step at a time.**

recommending cautious progression along a desired route; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Patience is a virtue.**

often used as an exhortation; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Rome was not built in a day.**

used to warn against trying to achieve too much at once; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Slow but sure.**

*sure* here means ‘sure-footed, deliberate’; English proverb, late 17th century.

**Softly, softly, catchee monkey.**

advocating caution or guile as the best way to achieve an end; English proverb, early 20th century.

**There is luck in leisure.**

it is often advisable to wait before acting; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Time brings roses.**

patience is likely to be rewarded; German proverb.

**A watched pot never boils.**

to pay too close an attention to the development of a desired event appears to inhibit the result; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**We must learn to walk before we can run.**

a solid foundation is necessary for faster progress; English proverb, mid 14th century.

**What can't be cured must be endured.**

there is no point in complaining about what is unavoidable; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Where water flows, a channel is formed.**

success will come when conditions are right; Chinese proverb.

**With time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes satin.**

allowing time for a process to complete itself will be rewarded (silkworms feed chiefly on mulberry leaves); English proverb, late 17th century.

## Peace

See also [WARFARE](#)

*Peace may be desirable, but is perhaps only fully appreciated in contrast to strife: After a storm comes a calm.*

### **After a storm comes a calm.**

often used with the implication that a calm situation is only achieved after stress and turmoil; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Ban the bomb.**

US anti-nuclear slogan, 1953 onwards, adopted by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

### **Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Peace is the dream of the wise; war is the history of man.**

saying, recorded from the 19th century.

## Pessimism

See [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#)

## Politics

See also [GOVERNMENT](#)

*Sayings about politics can bring together a wide range of views, perhaps exemplified in the words, Politics makes strange bedfellows.*

### **Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?**

formal question put to those appearing before the Committee on UnAmerican Activities during the McCarthy campaign of 1950–4 against alleged Communists in the US government and other institutions; the allusive form *are you now or have you ever been?* derives from this.



**As Maine goes, so goes the nation.**

American political saying relating to presidential elections, c.1840.

**Democracy is better than tyranny.**

an imperfect system is better than a bad one; American proverb.

**I am a Marxist—of the Groucho tendency.**

slogan found at Nanterre in Paris, 1968.

**In politics a man must learn to rise above principle.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**It'll play in Peoria.**

catchphrase of the Nixon administration (early 1970s) meaning 'it will be acceptable to middle America', but originating in a standard music hall joke of the 1930s.

**Lean liberty is better than fat slavery.**

asserting that freedom matters more than any material comfort; English proverb, early 17th century.

***Liberté! Égalité! Fraternité!***

French, 'Freedom! Equality! Brotherhood!', motto of the French Revolution, 1789, but of earlier origin.

**Not to be a republican at twenty is proof of want of heart; to be one at thirty is proof of want of head.**

often used in the form 'Not to be a socialist...'; saying attributed to Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929) and to François Guizot (1787–1874).

**The passion for freedom never dies.**

saying, claimed to be a Greek proverb.

**The personal is political.**

1970s feminist slogan, coined by Carol Hanisch.

**A politician is an animal who can sit on a fence and yet keep both ears to the ground.**

American saying, mid 20th century.

**Politics makes strange bedfellows.**

political alliances in a common cause may bring together those of widely differing views; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Power to the people.**

slogan of the Black Panther movement, from c.1968 onwards.

**A straw vote only shows which way the hot air blows.**

American proverb, early 20th century.

**Three acres and a cow.**

regarded as the requirement for self-sufficiency; late 19th-century political slogan.

**The voice of the people is the voice of God.**

English version of the Latin *vox populi, vox dei*; English proverb, early 15th century; the Latin form is found in the writings of the English scholar and theologian Alcuin (c.735–804), ‘And those people should not be listened to who keep saying the voice of the people is the voice of God, since the riotousness of the crowd is always very close to madness.’

**Vote early and vote often.**

American election slogan, already current when quoted by William Porcher Miles in the House of Representatives, 31 March 1858.

## Possessions

*There is considerable emphasis on the idea of ensuring that you keep what you have (What you have, hold), even if you do not immediately feel that it has a purpose: Keep a thing seven years and you’ll always find a use for it.*

**Finders keepers (losers weepers).**

English proverb, early 19th century.

**Findings keepings.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**If you have nothing, you have nothing to lose.**

modern saying, claimed to be an Arabic proverb.

**Keep a thing seven years and you'll always find a use for it.**

recommending caution and thrift; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Light come, light go.**

something gained without effort can be lost without much regret; English proverb, late 14th century.

**What you have, hold.**

with reference to an uncompromising position based on a refusal to make any concession; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**What you spend, you have.**

the only real possessions one has are those of which one can dispose; English proverb, early 14th century.

**You cannot lose what you never had.**

used in consolation or resignation; English proverb, late 16th century.

## Poverty

See also [MONEY](#), [WEALTH](#)

*Poverty can be destructive, both in sapping independence (Empty sacks will never stand upright) and destroying relationships: When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.*

**Both poverty and prosperity come from spending money—  
prosperity from spending it wisely.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Empty sacks will never stand upright.**

those in an extremity of need cannot survive; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **Make poverty history.**

slogan of a campaign launched in 2005 by a coalition of charities and other groups to pressure governments to take action to reduce poverty.

### **A moneyless man goes fast through the market.**

someone without resources is unable to pause to buy anything (or, in a modern variant, rushes to wherever what they lack may be found); English proverb, early 18th century.

### **Poverty comes from God, but not dirt.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Poverty is a blessing hated by all men.**

poverty may shield you from worldly temptations, but it is unpleasant to experience; Italian proverb.

### **Poverty is no disgrace, but it's a great inconvenience.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Poverty is not a crime.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

### **When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.**

the strains of living in poverty often destroy a loving relationship; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## **Power**

*The exercise of power may make someone predatory (Big fish eat little fish), but we should remember that even an apparently weak person can be effective: A mouse may help a lion.*

### **Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.**

it is preferable to be at the head of a small organization than in a lowly position in a large one; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Big fish eat little fish.**

the rich and powerful are likely to prey on those who are less strong, often used with the implication that each predator is in turn victim to a stronger one; English proverb, early 13th century.

**He who pays the piper calls the tune.**

the person financially responsible for something can control what is done; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Kings have long arms.**

a king's power reaches a long way; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Might is right.**

English proverb, early 14th century.

**A mouse may help a lion.**

alluding to Aesop's fable of the lion and the rat, in which a rat saved a lion which had been trapped in a net by gnawing through the cords which bound it; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Power corrupts.**

English proverb, late 19th century.

**Power is like an egg; if you hold it too tightly, it breaks, and if you hold it too loosely, it drops and breaks.**

power should be exercised with proper attention, but without repression; African proverb.

**Set a beggar on horseback, and he'll ride to the Devil.**

a person unused to power will make unwise use of it; English proverb, late 16th century.

**They that dance must pay the fiddler.**

you must be prepared to make recompense for the provision of an essential service; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**When elephants fight, it is the grass that gets hurt.**

the weak are likely to suffer as a result of the conflicts of the strong and powerful; African proverb (Swahili).

**When whales fight, the shrimp's back is broken.**

Korean proverb.

**Where the needle goes, the thread must follow.**

Polish saying.

## Practicality

See also [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#)

*We should be ready to accept the limitations imposed by circumstances:* Cut your coat according to your cloth.

**A big fish is caught with a big bait.**

African saying.

**Cut your coat according to your cloth.**

actions taken should suit one's circumstances or resources; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**He who wants a rose must respect the thorn.**

someone wanting a desirable object needs to be aware of the dangers it brings with it; Persian proverb; compare **No rose without a thorn** at [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#) and **Do not grieve that rose trees have thorns, rather rejoice that thorny bushes bear roses** at [SATISFACTION](#).

**The only part of a pig that can't be used is its squeak.**

traditional saying.

**Put your trust in God, and keep your powder dry.**

often attributed to Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658); English proverb, mid 19th century; compare **Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel** at [CAUTION](#).

**You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs.**

often used in the context of a regrettable political necessity which is said to be justified because it will benefit the majority; English proverb, mid 19th century.

## Praise and Flattery

*Praise that is well based is worth having* (Praise from Sir Hubert is praise indeed), *but flattery is worthless*: Flattery, like perfume, should be smelled, not swallowed.

**The cuckoo praises the rooster because the rooster praises the cuckoo.**

Russian saying, based on Ivan Krylov's fable 'The Cuckoo and the Rooster' (1834).

**Flattery is soft soap, and soft soap is ninety per cent lye.**

distinguishing between soundly based compliment and insincere congratulation (*lye* is a strongly alkaline solution, especially of potassium hydroxide, used for washing or cleansing); American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Flattery, like perfume, should be smelled, not swallowed.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Give credit where credit is due.**

English proverb, late 18th century.

**Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.**

English proverb, early 19th century, from Charles Caleb Colton *Lacon* (1820).

**Praise from Sir Hubert is praise indeed.**

popular saying, a misquotation of a line from Thomas Morton *A Cure for the Headache* (1797), ‘Approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed.’

## Prejudice and Tolerance

*While we should accept the views of others (Live and let live), real prejudice is both unwelcome and difficult to eradicate: No tree takes so deep a root as prejudice.*

### **Judge not, that ye be not judged.**

used as a warning against overhasty criticism of someone; English proverb, late 15th century, from the Bible (Matthew 7:1).

### **Live and let live.**

often used in the context of coexistence between deeply divided groups; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **No tree takes so deep a root as prejudice.**

emphasizing how difficult it is to eradicate prejudice; American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **There’s none so blind as those who will not see.**

used in reference to someone who is unwilling to recognize unwelcome facts; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **There’s none so deaf as those who will not hear.**

used to refer to someone who chooses not to listen to unwelcome information; English proverb, mid 16th century.

## Preparation and Readiness

*Forethought is endorsed (The early bird catches the worm), but we should not expend too much attention on circumstances that have not yet arisen: Don’t cross the bridge till you come to it.*

### **Be prepared.**



motto of the Scout and Guide organizations, deriving from the initials of Robert Baden-Powell (1857–1941), the founder.

**Dig the well before you are thirsty.**

make necessary preparations before you are in need; Japanese proverb.

**Don't cross the bridge till you come to it.**

warning that you should not concern yourself with possible difficulties unless and until they arise; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Don't throw away the old bucket, until you know whether the new one holds water.**

do not get rid of a useful resource until you are sure that its replacement functions properly; Swedish proverb.

**The early bird catches the worm.**

someone who is energetic and efficient is most likely to be successful; English proverb, mid 17th century; compare [It's the second mouse that gets the cheese](#) below.

**The early man never borrows from the late man.**

someone who has made their preparations has no need to turn to someone less efficient; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Forewarned is forearmed.**

if one has been warned in advance about a problem one can make preparations for dealing with it; English proverb, early 16th century.

**For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the man was lost.**

often quoted allusively to imply that one apparently small circumstance can result in a large-scale disaster; English proverb, early 17th century (late 15th century in French).

**Have an umbrella ready before it rains.**

be sure you are prepared for difficult times; modern saying.

**Hope for the best and prepare for the worst.**

recommending a balance between optimism and realism; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**If you want peace, you must prepare for war.**

a country in a state of military preparedness is unlikely to be attacked; English proverb, mid 16th century; the idea is found in the classical world in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, ‘We make war that we may live in peace.’

**It’s the second mouse that gets the cheese.**

modern addition to [The early bird catches the worm](#) above, suggesting the dangers of being the first to make a venture, and the possible benefits of following directly behind a pioneer; compare [The only free cheese is in a mousetrap](#) at [TEMPTATION](#).

**Measure seven times, cut once.**

care taken in preparation will prevent errors (originally referring to carpentry and needlework); Russian proverb.

**No one was ever lost on a straight road.**

if you know where you are going you will not make mistakes; Indian proverb.

**Pick your battles.**

modern saying.

**No plan survives first contact with the enemy.**

modern saying, from the German soldier and statesman Helmuth von Moltke (1800–91), ‘No plan of operations reaches with any certainty beyond the first encounter with the enemy’s main force.’

**Prayer to God, and service to the tsar, are never wasted.**

Russian proverb.

**To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail.**

modern saying.

## The Present

See also [THE FUTURE](#), [THE PAST](#)

*Although it may seem that what we want never arrives (Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today), we should not lose sight of the fact that the present is what we have: Yesterday has gone, tomorrow is yet to be. Today is the miracle.*

### **Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow.**

take advantage of what is available now, rather than waiting for possible advantages later; English proverb.

### **Enjoy the present moment and don't grieve for the future.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today.**

English proverb, late 19th century, from Lewis Carroll *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), 'The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday—but never jam today!'

### **Yesterday has gone, tomorrow is yet to be. Today is the miracle.**

modern saying.

### **Yesterday is ashes; tomorrow is wood. Only today does the fire burn brightly.**

emphasizing the importance of enjoying and valuing the present rather than dwelling in the past, which cannot be changed, or the future, which has not yet happened; Canadian saying, said to be of Inuit origin.

## Pride

See also [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#)

*Pride may shield us from distress (Pride feels no pain), but the shelter is not likely to last: Pride goes before a fall.*

**He that will not stoop for a pin [a penny] will never be worth a point [a pound].**

if pride prevents you from taking a small benefit, you will not make further gains; English proverb.

**Pride feels no pain.**

implying that inordinate self-esteem will not allow the admission that one might be suffering; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Pride goes before a fall.**

often with the implication that proud and haughty behaviour will contribute to its own downfall; English proverb, late 14th century, often with allusion to the Bible (Proverbs 16:18), 'Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.'

**Stupidity and pride grow on the same tree.**

pride is likely to blind us to a wise course of action; German proverb.

## Problems and Solutions

See also [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

*A particular situation or course of action is likely to affect what you then do:* If you lead your mule to the top of the minaret, then you must lead him down again.

**If you lead your mule to the top of the minaret, then you must lead him down again.**

if you get yourself into a difficult position, you will have to extricate yourself; Arab proverb.

**Never bid the Devil good morrow until you meet him.**

a warning against trying to deal with problems or difficulties before they have actually occurred; English proverb, late 19th century, said to be an old Irish saying.

**When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.**

often used to comment on the wholesale application of one solution or method to the solution of any problem; English proverb, late 20th century (chiefly North America).

### **Why did the chicken cross the road?**

traditional puzzle question, to which the answer is, ‘to get to the other side’; mid 19th century.

## **Punctuality**

See also [TIME](#)

*Punctuality shows a proper courtesy* (Punctuality is the politeness of princes), *and also has practical advantages*: First come, first served.

### **Better late than never.**

even if one has missed the first chance of doing something, it is better to attempt it than not to do it at all; English proverb, early 14th century.

### **First come, first served.**

English proverb, late 14th century.

### **Punctuality is the art of guessing correctly how late the other party is going to be.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Punctuality is the politeness of princes.**

English proverb, mid 19th century; the idea is found earlier in French, in a comment by Louis XVIII (1755–1824), ‘Punctuality is the politeness of kings.’

### **Punctuality is the soul of business.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

## **Punishment**

See [CRIME AND PUNISHMENT](#)

# Q

## Quantities and Qualities

*From Little fish are sweet to One spoonful of tar spoils a barrel of honey, there is a consensus that a small quantity of something can be potent.*

### **All that glitters is not gold.**

an attractive appearance is not necessarily evidence of intrinsic value; English proverb, early 13th century.

### **Drops that gather one by one finally become a sea.**

Persian proverb.

### **How long is a piece of string?**

traditional saying, used to indicate that something cannot be given a finite measurement.

### **Little fish are sweet.**

small gifts are always acceptable; English proverb, early 19th century.

### **Many a little makes a mickle.**

the proper form of the proverb **Many a mickle makes a muckle** below (*mickle* in Scottish usage means ‘a large quantity or amount’); English proverb, mid 13th century.

### **Many a mickle makes a muckle.**

an alteration of the proverb **Many a little makes a mickle** above; the result is actually nonsensical, since *muckle* is a variant of *mickle*, and both mean ‘a large quantity or amount’.

### **The more the merrier.**

English proverb, late 14th century.

**The nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat.**

the juiciest meat lies next to the bone, or the meat closest to the bone is particularly precious because it may represent one's last scrap of food; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Never mind the quality, feel the width.**

used as the title of a television comedy series (1967–9) about a tailoring business in the East End of London, ultimately probably an inversion of a cloth trade saying.

**One spoonful of tar spoils a barrel of honey.**

Russian proverb.

**Small is beautiful.**

title of a book by E. F. Schumacher, 1973.

**There is safety in numbers.**

now with the implication that a number of people will be unscathed where an individual might be in danger; English proverb, late 17th century.

**Where's the beef?**

advertising slogan for Wendy's Hamburgers in a campaign launched 9 January 1984, and subsequently taken up by the American politician Walter Mondale in a televised debate with Gary Hart during the campaign for the US presidential campaign, 11 March 1984: 'When I hear your new ideas I'm reminded of that ad, "Where's the beef?"'

**The whole is more than the sum of the parts.**

traditional saying, probably deriving from Aristotle *Metaphysica*, 'Whenever anything which has several parts is such that the whole is something over and above its parts, and not just the sum of them, like a heap, then it always has some cause.'

**You can count the apples on one tree, but not the trees in one apple.**

African proverb.



# R

## Rank

*The implicit acceptance of the desirability of social rank in It takes three generations to make a gentleman is questioned by the traditional rhyme from the time of the Peasants' Revolt: When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?*

### **Everybody loves a lord.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **If two ride on a horse, one must ride behind.**

of two people engaged on the same task, one must take a subordinate role; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **It takes three generations to make a gentleman.**

English proverb, early 19th century; the idea that it took three generations before the possession of wealth conferred the status of gentleman occurs from the late 16th century.

### **When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?**

traditional rhyme taken in this form by John Ball as the text of his revolutionary sermon on the outbreak of the Peasants' Revolt, 1381; it appears in the writings of Richard Rolle of Hampole (1290–1349) as, 'When Adam dalfe and Eve spane /Go spire if thou may spede, /Where was than the pride of man /That now merres his mede?'

### **Where Macgregor sits is the head of the table.**

sometimes attributed to ‘Rob Roy’ MacGregor (other names are used as well as Macgregor); English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **You may know a gentleman by his horse, his hawk, and his greyhound.**

traditional accoutrements of leisure for those of rank; Welsh proverb.

## Readiness

See [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#)

## Reading

See also [BOOKS](#)

*Reading is not only a valuable activity* (The man who reads is the man who leads), *it can provide a bond*: It is a tie between men to have read the same book.

### **He that runs may read.**

meaning very clear and readable; English proverb, late 16th century, originally with allusion to the Bible (Habakkuk 2:2), ‘Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it’, reinforced by John Keble’s ‘Septuagesima’ (1827), ‘There is a book, who runs may read.’

### **It is a tie between men to have read the same book.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

### **The man who reads is the man who leads.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

## Rebellion

See [REVOLUTION AND REBELLION](#)

## Relationships

See also [FEELINGS](#), [FRIENDSHIP](#), [LOVE](#)

*Proverbial wisdom reflects both on relationships between individuals (There is always one who kisses, and one who turns the cheek), and the wider link between the individual and society (I am because we are; we are because I am).*

**I am because we are; we are because I am.**

whatever affects the individual affects the whole community and whatever affects the whole community affects the individual; African proverb.

**It is easy to kindle a fire on a familiar hearth.**

a relationship which has once existed can be revived; Welsh proverb.

*L'amour est aveugle; l'amitié ferme les yeux.*

French proverb, meaning that love is blind, while friendship closes its eyes; compare **Love is blind** at [LOVE](#).

**There is always one who kisses, and one who turns (or offers) the cheek.**

traditional saying, said to be of French origin.

**Treat a man as he is, and that is what he remains. Treat a man as he can be, and that is what he becomes.**

modern saying, from Goethe *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–6), 'When we take people, thou wouldst say, merely as they are, we make them worse; when we treat them as if they were what they should be, we improve them as far as they can be improved.'

## Religion

See also [THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#), [THE CLERGY](#), [GOD](#)

*Religious practice is seen as a way of life: Laborare est orare [To work is to pray].*

**The family that prays together stays together.**

motto devised by Al Scalpone for the Roman Catholic Family Rosary Crusade, 1947.

### ***Laborare est orare.***

Latin, 'To work is to pray,' a traditional motto of the Benedictine order, also found in the form 'Ora, lege, et labora [Pray, read, and work].'

### **Man's extremity is God's opportunity.**

great distress or danger may prompt a person to turn to God for help; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **When you pray, move your feet.**

advocating works as well as faith; saying, said to be of Quaker origin.

## Reputation

See also [FAME](#)

*Not only is a good reputation a positive advantage (When a tiger dies it leaves its skin. When a man dies he leaves his name), to acquire a bad reputation can be dangerous, since there is ready belief in the idea that there is No smoke without fire.*

### ***De mortuis nil nisi bonum.***

Latin, literally the injunction 'Of the dead, speak kindly or not at all'; compare [Never speak ill of the dead](#) below.

### **The devil is not so black as he is painted.**

someone may not be as bad as their reputation; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **A good name is better than a golden girdle.**

French proverb.

### **A good reputation stands still; a bad one runs.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **He that has an ill name is half hanged.**

someone with a bad reputation is already half way to being condemned on any charge brought against them; English proverb, late 14th century;

compare **Give a dog a bad name and hang him** at GOSSIP.

**A man's best reputation for his future is his record of the past.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Never speak ill of the dead.**

English proverb, mid 16th century; see *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* above.

**No smoke without fire.**

rumour is generally founded on fact; English proverb, late 14th century, earlier in French and Latin.

**One may steal a horse, while another may not look over a hedge.**

while one person is endlessly indulged, another is treated with suspicion on the slightest evidence; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Speak as you find.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

**Throw dirt enough, and some will stick.**

persistent slander will in the end be believed; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**When a tiger dies it leaves its skin. When a man dies he leaves his name.**

a person leaves behind more than a body; Japanese proverb.

## Responsibility

*It is as well to be ready to take responsibility for ourselves, since Don't care was made to care; however, there is an awareness that there may be a price to be paid: Take what you want, and pay for it, says God.*

**Don't care was made to care.**

traditional rebuke to someone who has asserted their lack of concern; from the first words of a children's rhyme, 'Don't care was made to care, don't

care was hung’; English saying, mid 20th century.

**Everybody’s business is nobody’s business.**

when something is of some interest to everyone, no single person takes full responsibility for it; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Every herring must hang by its own gill.**

everyone is accountable for their own actions; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Take what you want, and pay for it, says God.**

traditional saying, sometimes said to be of Spanish origin.

**Those who eat salty fish will have to accept being thirsty.**

everyone is responsible for the consequences of their own actions; Chinese proverb.

## Revenge

*It is tempting to seek revenge (Revenge is sweet), but the unforgiving person may achieve more than they intend: An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.*

**Don’t cut off your nose to spite your face.**

warning against spiteful revenge which is likely to result in your own hurt or loss; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Don’t get mad, get even.**

late 20th-century saying.

**An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.**

modern saying, often attributed to Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948); often with allusion to the Bible (Exodus 21:23), ‘Life for life, /Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.’

**He laughs last who laughs best.**

the most successful person is the one who is finally triumphant; English proverb, early 17th century.

**He who laughs last, laughs longest.**

early 20th-century saying.

**If you want revenge, dig two graves.**

pursuit of revenge is likely to be destructive to the pursuer as well as to their object; saying, claimed to be of Chinese or Japanese origin.

**Living well is the best revenge.**

traditional saying.

**Revenge is a dish that can be eaten cold.**

vengeance need not be exacted immediately; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Revenge is sweet.**

English proverb, mid 16th century.

## Revolution and Rebellion

*A revolution may begin with an idea* (Every revolution was first a thought in one's man's mind), *but it will end in violence*: Revolutions are not made with rosewater.

**Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Revolutions are not made by men in spectacles.**

American proverb, late 19th century.

**Revolutions are not made with rosewater.**

revolutions involve violence and ruthless behaviour; English proverb, early 19th century.

**Whosoever draws his sword against the prince must throw away the scabbard.**

anyone who tries to assassinate or depose a monarch must remain constantly on the defence; English proverb, early 17th century.

## Rivers

*Rivers may have their own identity, but in the end they come to same place: All rivers run into the sea.*

**All rivers run into the sea.**

English proverb, early 16th century; originally with allusion to the Bible (Ecclesiastes 1:7), ‘All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.’

**Says Tweed to Till—‘What gars ye rin sae still?’ Says Till to Tweed—‘Though ye rin with speed And I rin slaw, For ae man that ye droon I droon twa.’**

traditional Scottish rhyme.

## Royalty

*The royalty of a sovereign confers a special quality (The king can do no wrong), but in lesser figures may not be greatly regarded: Camels, fleas, and princes exist everywhere.*

**Camels, fleas, and princes exist everywhere.**

referring to the large numbers of offspring of some rulers; Persian proverb.

**The king can do no wrong.**

something cannot be wrong if it is done by someone of sovereign power, who alone is not subject to the law of the land; translation of the Latin legal maxim *rex non potest peccare*; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**A king’s chaff is worth more than other men’s corn.**



even minor benefits available to those attending on a sovereign are more substantial than the best that can be offered by those of lesser status;  
English proverb, early 17th century.

# S

## Satisfaction and Discontent

*Satisfaction is most likely to be found by making the best of what is available:* Half a loaf is better than no bread.

### **Acorns were good till bread was found.**

until something better is found, what one has will be judged satisfactory; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **The answer is a lemon.**

a *lemon* as the type of something unsatisfactory, perhaps referring to the least valuable symbol in a fruit machine; English proverb, early 20th century.

### **Better are small fish than an empty dish.**

a little is preferable to nothing at all; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **Do not grieve that rose trees have thorns, rather rejoice that thorny bushes bear roses.**

advocating an emphasis on positive aspects; Arab proverb; compare **No rose without a thorn** at [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#), and **He who wants a rose must respect the thorn** at [PRACTICALITY](#).

### **Go further and fare worse.**

it is often wise to take what is on offer; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Half a loaf is better than no bread.**

to have part of something is better than having nothing at all; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Something is better than nothing.**

even a possession of intrinsically little value is preferable to being empty-handed; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **What you've never had you've never missed.**

English proverb, early 20th century.

## Sayings

See also [WORDS](#)

*Common wisdom is often enshrined in popular sayings:* Proverbs are the coins of the people.

### **The devil can quote Scripture for his own ends.**

it is possible for someone engaged in wrongdoing to quote selectively from the Bible in apparent support of their position, and alluding to the temptation of Christ by the Devil in the Bible (Matthew); English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Proverbs are the coins of the people.**

Russian proverb.

### **There is no proverb without a grain of truth.**

Russian proverb.

### **To understand the people acquaint yourself with their proverbs.**

Arab proverb.

### ***Traduttore traditore.***

Italian, meaning 'Translators, traitors.'

## Science

*A saying such as Science has no enemy but the ignorant will hold whether 'science' has its original meaning of 'knowledge', or the more specific*

*modern sense.*

### **Laws of Thermodynamics:**

**1) You cannot win, you can only break even.**

**2) You can only break even at absolute zero.**

**3) You cannot reach absolute zero.**

folklore among physicists.

### **Much science, much sorrow.**

suggesting that learning may increase one's awareness of difficult questions; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Science has no enemy but the ignorant.**

English proverb, mid 16th century, from Latin *Scientia non habet inimicum nisi ignorantem.*

## **The Sea**

*Recommendations about seamanship are alive to the dangers of the sea: He that would go to sea for pleasure would go to hell for a pastime.*

### **The good seaman is known in bad weather.**

American proverb, mid 18th century.

### **He that would go to sea for pleasure would go to hell for a pastime.**

with reference to the dangers involved in going to sea; English proverb, late 19th century.

### **If the Bermudas let you pass, you must beware of Hatteras.**

traditional saying on the dangers of sailing in the Atlantic, and especially of the waters around Cape Hatteras in North Carolina.

### **One hand for oneself and one for the ship.**

literally, hold on with one hand, and work the ship with the other; English proverb, late 18th century.

**The sea wants to be visited.**

referring to those who make their living from the sea; Scottish saying.

## Secrecy

*While it may be desirable to keep information confidential (Don't ask, don't tell, One does not wash one's dirty linen in public), it is likely to be difficult: Fields have eyes and woods have ears.*

**The day has eyes, the night has ears.**

there is always someone watching or listening; traditional saying.

**Dead men tell no tales.**

often used to imply that a person's knowledge of a secret will die with them; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Don't ask, don't tell.**

summary of the Clinton administration's compromise policy on homosexuals serving in the armed forces, as described by Sam Nunn (1938– ) in May 1993.

**Fields have eyes and woods have ears.**

one may always be spied on by unseen watchers or listeners; English proverb, early 13th century.

**Listeners never hear good of themselves.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Little pitchers have large ears.**

children overhear what is not meant for them (a pitcher's *ears* are its handles); English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Never tell tales out of school.**

a warning against indiscretion; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**No names, no pack drill.**

if nobody is named as being responsible, nobody can be blamed or punished (*pack drill* = a military punishment of walking up and down carrying full equipment); English proverb, early 20th century; the expression is now used generally to express an unwillingness to provide detailed information.

**One does not wash one's dirty linen in public.**

discreditable matters should be dealt with privately; English proverb, early 19th century.

**A secret is either too good to keep or too bad not to tell.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**See all your best work go unnoticed.**

advertisement for staff for MI5, 2005.

**Those who hide can find.**

those who have concealed something know where it is to be found; English proverb, early 15th century.

**Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead.**

the only way to keep a secret is to tell no one else; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Walls have ears.**

care should be taken for possible eavesdroppers; English proverb, late 16th century.

**What is done by night appears by day.**

secrets are likely to be revealed; English proverb.

**Will the real — please stand up?**

catchphrase from an American TV game show (1955–66) in which a panel was asked to identify the 'real' one of three candidates all claiming to be a particular person; after the guesses were made, the compère would request the 'real' candidate to stand up.

### **You can't hide an awl in a sack.**

some things are too conspicuous to hide; Russian proverb.

## **Self-Esteem and Self-Assertion**

See also [PRIDE](#)

*A saying such as **The bigger the hat, the smaller the property** suggests self-assertion, but more traditional sayings warn against boasting of one's attributes: **Clever hawks conceal their claws**.*

### **The bigger the hat, the smaller the property.**

Australian saying.

### **Clever hawks conceal their claws.**

it is not necessary to boast of one's abilities; Japanese proverb.

### **Deny self for self's sake.**

the result of self-denial is likely to be self-improvement; American proverb, mid 18th century.

### **A frog in a well knows nothing of the ocean.**

one should be aware of the limitations of one's own experience; Japanese proverb.

### **Here's tae us; wha's like us?**

### **Gey few, and they're a' deid.**

Scottish toast, probably of 19th century origin.

### **Know thyself.**

English proverb, late 14th century; inscribed in Greek on the temple of Apollo at Delphi; Plato, in *Protagoras*, ascribes the saying to the Seven Wise Men of the 6th century bc.

### **The kumara does not speak of its own sweetness.**

one should not praise oneself (a *kumara* is a sweet potato); Maori proverb.

**The peacock is always happy because it never looks at its ugly feet.**

a person does not see their own faults; Persian proverb.

**Self-praise is no recommendation.**

a person's own favourable account of themselves is of dubious worth; English proverb, early 19th century.

## Self-Interest

*Pragmatic advice on watching your own interests (Self-preservation is the first law of nature) may be set against reflections on fulfilling one's one responsibilities: If every man would sweep his own doorstep the city would soon be clean.*

**Every man for himself and God for us all.**

ultimately God is concerned for humankind while individuals are concerned only for themselves; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Every man for himself, and the Devil take the hindmost.**

each person must look out for their own interests, and the weakest is likely to come to disaster; English proverb, early 16th century.

**Every man is the architect of his own fortune.**

each person is ultimately responsible for what happens to them; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Hear all, see all, say nowt, tak' all, keep all, gie nowt, and if tha ever does owt for nowt do it for thysen.**

now associated with Yorkshire, and caricaturing supposedly traditional Yorkshire attributes, in the picture of someone who is shrewd, taciturn, grasping, and selfish; English proverb, early 15th century.

**If every man would sweep his own doorstep the city would soon be clean.**



if everyone fulfils their own responsibilities, what is necessary will be done; English proverb, early 17th century.

**If you want a thing done well, do it yourself.**

no one else has so much interest in your own welfare; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**If you would be well served, serve yourself.**

no one else has so much interest in your own welfare; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Near is my kirtle, but nearer my smock.**

used as a justification for putting one's own interests first (a *kirtle* is a woman's skirt or gown, and a *smock* is an undergarment); English proverb, mid 15th century.

**Near is my shirt, but nearer my skin.**

a justification of self-interest; English proverb, late 16th century.

**A satisfied person does not know the hungry person.**

African proverb.

**Self-interest is the rule, self-sacrifice the exception.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Self-preservation is the first law of nature.**

the instinct for self-preservation is inbuilt and instinctive; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## Selling

See [BUYING AND SELLING](#)

## Sex

See also [LOVE](#), [MARRIAGE](#)

*A question such as Did the earth move for you? suggests a less bleak view of sex than the dismissive view that Dirty water will quench fire.*

### **Did the earth move for you?**

supposedly said to one's partner after sexual intercourse, after Ernest Hemingway *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), 'But did thee feel the earth move.'

### **Dirty water will quench fire.**

mainly used to mean that a man's sexual needs can be satisfied by any woman, however ugly or immoral; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### ***Post coitum omne animal triste.***

Latin, 'After coition every animal is sad.'

### **Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap?**

putting forward an argument for choosing the least troublesome alternative; frequently used as an argument against marriage; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## **Sickness**

See also [HEALTH](#), [MEDICINE](#)

*While sickness should be avoided, ailments are not necessarily fatal: A creaking door hangs longest.*

### **Coughs and sneezes spread diseases. Trap the germs in your handkerchief.**

Second World War health slogan (1942).

### **A creaking door hangs longest.**

someone who is apparently in poor health may well outlive the ostensibly stronger; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **Diseases come on horseback but go away on foot.**

sickness may occur swiftly, but recovery is likely to be slow; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Feed a cold and starve a fever.**

probably intended as two separate admonitions, but sometimes interpreted to mean that if you feed a cold you will have to starve a fever later; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **From the bitterness of disease, man learns the sweetness of health.**

Catalan proverb.

### **An imaginary ailment is worse than a disease.**

Yiddish proverb.

## Silence

See also [SPEECH](#)

*Silence can be impressive in itself (Silence is a still noise) as well as a guard against idle talk: A shut mouth catches no flies.*

### **A shut mouth catches no flies.**

a warning against the dangers of idle talk; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Silence is a still noise.**

American proverb, late 19th century.

### **Silence means consent.**

English proverb, late 14th century; translation of a Latin tag, ‘*Qui tacet consentire videtur* [He who is silent seems to consent]’, said to have been spoken by Thomas More (1478–1535) when asked at his trial why he was silent on being asked to acknowledge the king’s supremacy over the Church. The principle is not accepted in modern English law.

### **Speech is silver, but silence is golden.**

discretion can be more valuable than the most eloquent words; English proverb, mid 19th century; compare [Who knows most, speaks least](#) at [SPEECH](#).

### **Speech sows, silence reaps.**

once an argument has been put, it is wise to give time for the words to have an effect; saying, said to be a Persian proverb.

### **A still tongue makes a wise head.**

a person who is not given to idle talk, and who listens to others, is likely to be wise; English proverb, mid 16th century.

## Similarity and Difference

*Similarity may be a bond* (Birds of a feather flock together), *or may promote rivalry*: Two swords cannot fit in one scabbard.

### **All cats are grey in the dark.**

darkness obscures inessential differences; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Birds of a feather flock together.**

people of the same (usually unscrupulous) character tend to associate; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Comparisons are odious.**

often used to suggest that to compare two different things or persons is unhelpful or misleading; English proverb, mid 15th century.

### **East is east, and west is west.**

an assertion of ineradicable racial and cultural differences; English proverb, late 19th century, from Kipling 'The Ballad of East and West' (1892), 'Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat; But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!'

### **Extremes meet.**

opposite extremes have much in common; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**From the sweetest wine, the tarest vinegar.**

the strongest hate comes from former love; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Like breeds like.**

a particular kind of event may well be the genesis of a similar occurrence; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Like will to like.**

those of similar nature and inclination are drawn together; English proverb, late 14th century.

**One nail drives out another.**

like will counter like; English proverb, mid 13th century.

**Two of a trade never agree.**

close association with someone makes disagreement over policy and principles more likely; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Two swords do not fit in one scabbard.**

Indian proverb.

**When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war.**

when two people of a similar kind are opposed, there is a struggle for supremacy; English proverb, late 17th century, from Nathaniel Lee *The Rival Queens* (1677), 'When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war!'

## Situation

See [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#)

## Sleep

See also [DREAMS](#)

*Sleep is a source of essential refreshment (One hour's sleep before midnight is worth two after), but overindulgence in it is a bad sign: Some sleep five*

hours; nature requires seven, laziness nine, and wickedness eleven.

**The beginning of health is sleep.**

Irish proverb.

**The morning knows more than the evening.**

the mind is clearer after sleep; Russian proverb.

**One hour's sleep before midnight is worth two after.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Six hours' sleep for a man, seven for a woman, and eight for a fool.**

implying that the more sleep a person needs, the less vigorous and effective they are likely to be; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Some sleep five hours; nature requires seven, laziness nine, and wickedness eleven.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**We never sleep.**

motto of the American detective agency founded by Allan Pinkerton (c.1855).

## Smoking

*Sayings about smoking trace a changing attitude to the habit, culminating in the warning Smoking can seriously damage your health.*

**Coffee without tobacco is like a Jew without a rabbi.**

Moroccan proverb.

**Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet.**

advertising slogan for Hamlet cigars, UK.

**More doctors recommend Camels than any other cigarette.**

advertising slogan for Camel cigarettes.

## **Smoking can seriously damage your health.**

government health warning now required by British law to be printed on cigarette packets; in the form 'Smoking can damage your health' from early 1970s.

## **You're never alone with a Strand.**

advertising slogan for Strand cigarettes, 1960; the image of loneliness was so strongly conveyed by the solitary smoker that sales were adversely affected.

## **Solitude**

*While you may be hampered by companionship* (He travels the fastest who travels alone), *there are risks in solitude*: The lone sheep is in danger of the wolf.

## **Better alone than in bad company.**

American proverb, late 17th century.

## **He travels the fastest who travels alone.**

implying that single-minded pursuit of an objective is more easily achieved by someone without family commitments; English proverb, late 19th century; from Kipling 'The Winners' (1890), 'Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne, He travels the fastest who travels alone.'

## **The lone sheep is in danger of the wolf.**

stressing the importance of mutual support; English proverb, late 16th century.

## **No man is an island.**

every person has some connection with and responsibility for others; saying from John Donne's 'Meditation XVII' from 'Devotions upon Emergent Occasions' (1624).

## **Solutions**

See [PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS](#)

## Sorrow

See also [MOURNING](#), [SUFFERING](#)

*Grief is inevitable, but we may find ways of dealing with it—perhaps by seeking the support of others: Misery loves company.*

### **He that conceals his grief, finds no remedy for it.**

trying to hide distress means that you do not recover from it; proverb, said to be of Turkish origin.

### **Misery loves company.**

English proverb, late 16th century, now predominantly current in the United States.

### **Wednesday's child is full of woe.**

traditional rhyme, mid 19th century (compare qualities associated with birth on other days at entries under [BEAUTY](#), [GIFTS](#), [TRAVEL](#), and [WORK](#)).

### **You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying overhead, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair.**

sorrow may be unavoidable, but one can respond to it in different ways; Chinese proverb.

## Speech

*While conversation is endorsed by the slogan It's good to talk, there is a traditional consensus that concision in speech is desirable: Length begets loathing.*

### **Brevity is the soul of wit.**

English proverb, early 17th century, from Shakespeare *Henry IV, Part 2* (1597).

### **If I listen, I have the advantage; if I speak, others have it.**

a warning against rushing into speech; Arabic proverb.

### **It's good to talk.**



advertising slogan for British Telecom from 1994.

**Length begets loathing.**

in reference to verbosity; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**Listen a thousand times, and speak once.**

warning against making a hasty response; Turkish proverb.

**Who knows most, speaks least.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

## Sports and Games

*The saying Nice guys finish last might be applied to the results of a number of games.*

**Chess is a sea where a gnat may drink and an elephant may bathe.**

the game may be played at many levels; modern saying, said to derive from an Indian proverb.

**Drive for show, and putt for dough.**

Golf saying meaning that matches are won in the final strokes on the green, and not by the opening drive from the tee.

**Nice guys finish last.**

modern saying, from a casual remark by the American coach Leo Durocher (1906–91), ‘I called off his players’ names as they came marching up the steps behind him . . . All nice guys. They’ll finish last. Nice guys. Finish last.’

## Spring

See also [AUTUMN](#), [SUMMER](#), [WINTER](#)

*Individual months have their own character (March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb), but spring as a season depends on progression: April showers bring forth May flowers.*

**April and May are the keys to the whole year.**

good weather in April and May lays an essential foundation for the rest of the year; German proverb.

**April showers bring forth May flowers.**

English proverb.

**A cold April the barn will fill.**

cold weather in April is likely to mean a good harvest later in the year; traditional saying.

**A cold May and windy, a full barn will find ye.**

Cold and windy weather in May is a predictor of a good harvest; traditional saying; in its original form, ‘a full barn and findy [an obsolete word meaning “weighty, plentiful”]’.

**March borrowed from April three days, and they were ill.**

English proverb.

**March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb.**

English proverb.

**May chickens come cheeping.**

English proverb.

**On the first of March, the crows begin to search.**

English proverb.

**A peck of March dust is worth a king’s ransom.**

English proverb.

**Rain in spring is as precious as oil.**

Chinese proverb.

**So many mists in March, so many frosts in May.**

English proverb.

**Spring is sooner recognized by plants than by men.**

Chinese proverb.

## Strength and Weakness

*Individuals may be specially gifted with strength (Only an elephant can bear an elephant's load), but there may be an interrelationship between the strong and the weak: The caribou feeds the wolf, but it is the wolf that keeps the caribou strong.*

**The caribou feeds the wolf, but it is the wolf that keeps the caribou strong.**

stressing the interrelationship between predator and prey; Inuit proverb.

**An elephant does not die of one broken rib.**

a strong person will not be brought down by a minor injury; African proverb.

**Every tub must stand on its own bottom.**

it is necessary to support oneself by one's own efforts; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**If you are afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest.**

Russian proverb.

**If you don't like the heat, get out of the kitchen.**

if you choose to work in a particular sphere you must also deal with its pressures; English proverb, mid 20th century, from a comment associated with the American statesman Harry S. Truman (though attributed by him to his 'military jester' Harry Vaughan, 1893–1981), 'If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.'

**It is the pace that kills.**

used as a warning against working under extreme pressure; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Only an elephant can bear an elephant's load.**

heavy responsibilities require significant strength; Indian proverb (Marathi).

**Only the eagle can gaze at the sun.**

only a strong person can undertake a demanding task; English proverb; late 16th century.

**A reed before the wind lives on, while mighty oaks fall.**

something which bends to the force of the wind is less likely to be broken than something which tries to withstand it; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Strength through joy.**

German Labour Front slogan from 1933, coined by Robert Ley (1890–1945).

**The weakest go to the wall.**

usually said to derive from the installation of seating (around the walls) in the churches of the late Middle Ages; English proverb, early 16th century.

**What does not kill you makes you stronger.**

an encouragement in difficult circumstances; modern saying.

**You are the weakest link . . . goodbye.**

catchphrase used by Anne Robinson on the television game show *The Weakest Link* (2000– ); compare **A chain is no stronger than its weakest link** at [COOPERATION](#).

## Success and Failure

See also [WINNING AND LOSING](#)

*Success and failure are both part of life (You win a few, you lose a few), and it is wise to remember that notable and sudden success is likely to be transient: Up like a rocket, down like a stick.*

**The bigger they are, the harder they fall.**

English proverb, early 20th century, commonly attributed in its current form to the boxer Robert Fitzsimmons, prior to a fight, c.1900.

**Do not laugh at the fallen; there may be slippery places ahead.**

it is wise to remember when seeing someone in trouble that you too may have difficulties; African proverb.

**From clogs to clogs is only three generations.**

the *clog*, a shoe with a thick wooden sole, was worn by manual workers in the north of England. The implication is that the energy and ability required to raise a person's material status from poverty is often not continued to the third generation, and that the success is therefore not sustained; English proverb, late 19th century, said to be a Lancashire proverb.

**From shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations.**

wealth gained in one generation will be lost by the third; English proverb, early 20th century. The saying is often attributed to the Scottish-born American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) but is not found in his writings.

**From the sublime to the ridiculous is only one step.**

English proverb, late 19th century; the idea is found earlier in the writings of Thomas Paine *The Age of Reason* pt 2 (1795), 'The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related, that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime, makes the ridiculous; and one step above the ridiculous, makes the sublime again.' A similar comment is found in a comment of Napoleon's after the 1812 retreat from Moscow, 'There is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.'

**He who fails to plan, plans to fail.**

modern saying.

**He who leaves succeeds.**

moving away from home territory leads to success; Italian proverb.

**Let them laugh that win.**

triumphant laughter should be withheld until success is assured; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Nothing succeeds like success.**

someone already regarded as successful is likely to attract more support; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**The only place where success comes before work is in a dictionary.**

modern saying.

**The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.**

the person with the most apparent advantages will not necessarily be successful; English proverb, mid 17th century; often with allusion to the Bible (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

**A rising tide lifts all boats.**

usually taken to mean that a prosperous society benefits everybody; in America the expression was particularly associated with John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917–63); English proverb, mid 20th century.

**Rooster today, feather duster tomorrow.**

one who is currently successful may subsequently find that circumstances change dramatically; Australian saying.

**Success has many fathers, while failure is an orphan.**

once something is seen to succeed many people will claim to have initiated it, while responsibility for failure is likely to be disclaimed; English proverb, mid 20th century; the idea is found in the diary (for 9 September 1942) of Mussolini's son-in-law Count Galeazzo Ciano (1903–44), 'Victory has a hundred fathers, but no one wants to recognise defeat as his own.'

**Up like a rocket, down like a stick.**

sudden marked success is likely to be followed by equally sudden failure; English proverb, late 19th century; the simile is found earlier in Thomas Paine's (1737–1809) comment on Edmund Burke's losing the parliamentary debate on the French Revolution to Charles James Fox, 'As he rose like a rocket, he fell like the stick.'

**When an elephant is in trouble, even a frog can kick him.**

the weak can attack the strong when they are in difficulty; Indian proverb.

## **You win a few, you lose a few.**

one has to accept failure as well as success, and used as an expression of consolation or resignation; English proverb, mid 20th century.

## Suffering

See also [MOURNING](#), [SORROW](#), [SYMPATHY](#)

*Suffering may ennoble* (Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven), *but the slogan Beauty without cruelty reminds us that we have no right to inflict it to satisfy our own wants.*

## **Beauty without cruelty.**

slogan for Animal Rights.

## **Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven.**

the way to heaven is through suffering; crosses refers either to the crucifix, or more generally to troubles or misfortunes; English proverb, early 17th century.

## **No cross, no crown.**

cross is here used punningly, as in [Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven](#) above; English proverb, early 17th century.

## Summer

See also [AUTUMN](#), [SPRING](#), [WINTER](#)

*Summer may see the longest days of the year* (Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright, the longest day and the shortest night), *but it does not necessarily imply good weather: A dripping June sets all in tune.*

## **Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright, the longest day and the shortest night.**

in the Old Style calendar St Barnabas' Day, 11 June, was reckoned the longest day of the year; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## **A cherry year, a merry year; a plum year, a dumb year.**

recording the tradition that a good crop of cherries is a promising sign for the year; English proverb, late 17th century.

**A dripping June sets all in tune.**

English proverb.

**One swallow does not make a summer.**

English proverb.

**Saint Swithin's day, if thou be fair, for forty days it will remain;  
Saint Swithin's day, if thou bring rain, for forty days it will remain.**

Saint Swithin's day is 15 July, and the tradition may have its origin in the heavy rain said to have occurred when his relics were to be transferred to a shrine in Winchester Cathedral; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Summer is the mother of the poor.**

for someone living in poverty, summer is easier than cold weather; Italian proverb.

**A swarm in May is worth a load of hay; a swarm in June is worth a silver spoon; but a swarm in July is not worth a fly.**

traditional beekeepers' saying, meaning that the later in the summer it is, the less time there will be for bees to collect pollen from flowers in blossom; English proverb, mid 17th century.

## Surprise

*A saying such as You could have knocked me down with a feather suggests a lack of awareness that The unexpected always happens.*

**The age of miracles is past.**

often used ironically, or as a comment on failure; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition.**



from the script of an episode of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (BBC TV programme, 1970), 'Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition! Our chief weapon is surprise—surprise and fear . . . fear and surprise . . . our two weapons are fear and surprise—and ruthless efficiency. . . .'

**The unexpected always happens.**

warning against an overconfident belief that something cannot occur; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Wonders will never cease.**

often used ironically to comment on an unusual circumstance; English proverb, late 18th century.

**You could have knocked me down with a feather.**

expressing great surprise; English saying, mid 19th century.

## Sympathy

*While we cannot necessarily depend on unstinting sympathy* (Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone), *to seek for it is natural*: One kind word warms three winter months.

**God makes the back to the burden.**

an assertion that nothing is truly insupportable used in resignation or consolation; English proverb, early 19th century.

**God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.**

God so arranges it that bad luck does not unduly plague the weak or unfortunate; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone.**

English proverb, late 19th century; in this form from the poem 'Solitude' by the American poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1855–1919), 'Laugh and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone'; ultimately echoing the Bible (Romans 16:15), 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with

them that weep’, and Horace (c.65–8) *Ars Poetica*, ‘Men’s faces laugh on those who laugh, and correspondingly weep on those who weep.’

**Nothing so bad but it might have been worse.**

used in resignation or consolation; English proverb, late 19th century.

**One kind word warms three winter months.**

Japanese proverb.

**Pity is akin to love.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

**The rock in the water does not know the pain of the rock in the sun.**

awareness of your own suffering prevents you from understanding the pain of those in different circumstances; Hawaiian proverb.

**Shared joy is double joy, and shared sorrow is double sorrow.**

proverb, said to be of German origin.

**The tears of the stranger are only water.**

sympathy for grief may be limited to those whom we already know; Russian proverb.

# T

## Teaching

See also [EDUCATION](#)

*Teaching is important* (Who teaches me for a day is my father for a lifetime), *but it may have its limitations*: Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I'll remember. Involve me and I'll be changed forever.

**He teaches ill who teaches all.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

**He that teaches himself has a fool for a master.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

**Nobody forgets a good teacher.**

Teacher Training Agency slogan, late 20th century.

**Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I'll remember. Involve me and I'll be changed forever.**

Japanese proverb.

**Who teaches me for a day is my father for a lifetime.**

Chinese proverb; compare [Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime](#) at [CHARITY](#).

## Technology

See also [CHANGE](#), [COMPUTING](#), [SCIENCE](#)

*Technology may provide us with solutions* (You press the button, we do the rest), *but it can also constrict us*: Science finds, industry applies, man

conforms.

**The camera never lies.**

20th-century saying.

**Let your fingers do the walking.**

1960s advertisement for the Bell System Telephone Directory Yellow Pages.

**Science finds, industry applies, man conforms.**

subtitle of guidebook to 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

***Vorsprung durch Technik.***

German, 'Progress through technology', advertising slogan for Audi motors, from 1986.

**You press the button, we do the rest.**

advertising slogan to launch the Kodak camera 1888, coined by George Eastman (1854–1932).

## Temptation

*What is forbidden is particularly attractive* (Naughty but nice); *however, the attraction is likely to conceal danger*: The only free cheese is in a mousetrap.

**The bleating of the lamb excites the tiger.**

of a prey staked out to attract a predator; Indian proverb; used by Kipling in *Stalky & Co.* (1899) in the form 'the bleating of the kid . . .'

**Fish follow the bait.**

English proverb, 17th century.

**The fish will soon be caught that nibbles at every bait.**

English proverb, 16th century.

**Naughty but nice.**

advertising slogan for cream cakes in the first half of the 1980s; earlier, the title of a 1939 film.

### **The only free cheese is in a mousetrap.**

Russian proverb; compare **It's the second mouse that gets the cheese** at [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#).

### **Stolen fruit are sweet.**

The knowledge that something is forbidden makes it more attractive; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Stolen waters are sweet.**

something which has been obtained secretly or illicitly seems particularly attractive; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **There's no such thing as a free lunch.**

colloquial axiom in American economics from the mid 20th century, much associated with the economist Milton Friedman (1912–2006), but not coined by him.

## **Thinking**

See also [HYPOTHESIS AND FACT](#), [OPINION](#)

*Thought may or may not be original (Great minds think alike), but we should exercise the faculty: To question and ask is a moment's shame, but to question and not ask is a lifetime's shame.*

### **Elementary, my dear Watson.**

remark attributed to Sherlock Holmes, but not found in this form in any book by Arthur Conan Doyle; first found in P. G. Wodehouse *Psmith Journalist* (1915).

### **Great minds think alike.**

English proverb, early 17th century, now often used ironically.

**To question and ask is a moment's shame, but to question and not ask is a lifetime's shame.**

Japanese proverb.

### **Two heads are better than one.**

it is advisable to discuss a problem with another person; English proverb, late 14th century.

## Thoroughness

See also [DETERMINATION](#)

*Even if you are putting yourself at risk, thoroughness is to be recommended:*  
Might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb.

### **Do not spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar.**

used generally to warn against risking loss or failure through unwillingness to allow relatively trivial expenditure; *ship* is a dialectal pronunciation of *sheep*, and the original literal sense was 'do not allow sheep to die for the lack of a trifling amount of tar', *tar* being used to protect sores and wounds on sheep from flies; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **In for a penny, in for a pound.**

If one is to be involved at all, it may as well be fully; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **Nothing venture, nothing gain.**

a later variant of **Nothing venture, nothing have** below; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Nothing venture, nothing have.**

one must be prepared to take some risks to gain a desired end; English proverb, late 14th century.

### **One might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.**

if one is going to incur a severe penalty it may as well be for something substantial; English proverb, late 17th century.

## Thrift and Extravagance

See also [DEBT AND BORROWING](#), [MONEY](#), [POVERTY](#), [WEALTH](#)

*Thrift is not only desirable itself, but is likely to be rewarded (A penny saved is a penny earned); however, it may be easier to admire than to practise it: Most people consider thrift a fine virtue in ancestors.*

### **Bang goes sixpence.**

ironic commentary on regretted expenditure, deriving from a cartoon in *Punch* of 5 December 1868, featuring a miserly Scotsman. The caption read, ‘a had na’ been the-erre abune Twa Hoours when—Bang—went Saxpence!’

### **Make do and mend.**

wartime slogan, 1940s.

### **Most people consider thrift a fine virtue in ancestors.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

### **A penny saved is a penny earned.**

used as an exhortation to thrift; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **Penny wise and pound foolish.**

too much concern with saving small sums may result in larger loss if necessary expenditure on maintenance and safety has been withheld; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Spare at the spigot, and let out the bunghole.**

referring to the practice of being overcareful on the one hand, and carelessly generous on the other. A *spigot* is a peg or pin used to regulate the flow of liquid through a tap on a cask, and a *bunghole* is a hole through which a cask is filled or emptied, and which is closed by a bung; English proverb, mid 17th century.

### **Spare well and have to spend.**

the person who is thrifty and careful with their resources can use them lavishly when the occasion offers; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Stretch your arm no further than your sleeve will reach.**

you should not spend more than you can afford; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves.**

thrift and small savings will grow to substantial wealth; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**Thrift is a great revenue.**

care with expenditure is one of the best ways of providing an income for oneself; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Wilful waste makes woeful want.**

deliberate misuse of resources is likely to lead to severe shortage; English proverb, early 18th century.

## Time

See also [TRANSCIENCE](#)

*Time is seen not only as a powerful force (Time works wonders), but as one which is beyond any control: An inch of gold cannot buy time.*

**Be the day weary or be the day long, at last it ringeth to evensong.**

even the most difficult time will come to an end; English proverb, early 16th century.

**Even a stopped clock is right twice a day.**

modern humorous saying.

**An inch of gold cannot buy time.**

time cannot be bought with money; Chinese proverb.

**Man fears Time, but Time fears the Pyramids.**

Egyptian proverb.



**The morning daylight appears plainer when you put out your candle.**

American proverb.

**Never is a long time.**

often used to indicate that circumstances may ultimately change; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Spring forward, fall back.**

a reminder that clocks are moved *forward* in the spring, and *back* in the fall (autumn).

**There is a time for everything.**

there is always a suitable time to do something; English proverb, late 14th century, from the Bible (Ecclesiastes 3:1), 'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.'

**Time is a great healer.**

initial pain is felt less keenly with the passage of time; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Time will tell.**

the true nature of something is likely to emerge over a period of time, and conversely it is only after time has passed that something can be regarded as settled; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Time works wonders.**

often used to suggest that with the passage of time something initially unknown and unwelcome will become familiar and acceptable; English proverb, late 16th century.

**You have the watches, but we have the time.**

early 21st-century saying, said to be an Afghan saying addressed to ISAF/NATO forces.

**Tolerance**

See [PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE](#)

## Town

See [THE COUNTRY AND THE TOWN](#)

## Towns and Cities

See also [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

*Individual cities may be seen as a spiritual as well as geographical centre:  
All roads lead to Rome.*

### **All roads lead to Rome.**

English proverb, late 14th century, earlier in Latin.

### **From Madrid to heaven, and in heaven a little window from which to look down on Madrid.**

Spanish saying.

### **Isfahan is half the world.**

Isfahan was the capital of Persia from 1598 until 1722; Persian proverb.

### **Next year in Jerusalem!**

traditionally the concluding words of the Jewish Passover service, expressing the hope of the Diaspora that Jews dispersed throughout the world would once more be reunited.

### **See Naples and die.**

implying that after seeing Naples, one could have nothing left on earth to wish for; Goethe noted it as an Italian proverb in his diary in 1787.

## Transience

See also [OPPORTUNITY](#), [TIME](#)

*Awareness of transience may be used as a comfort (And this, too, shall pass away) or as a warning: Sic transit gloria mundi.*

### **And this, too, shall pass away.**

traditional saying said to be true for all times and situations; the story is told by Edward Fitzgerald in *Polonius* (1852), ‘The Sultan asked for a signet motto, that should hold good for Adversity or Prosperity, Solomon gave him—“This also shall pass away.” ’

### ***Sic transit gloria mundi.***

Latin, ‘Thus passes the glory of the world’, said during the coronation of a new Pope, while flax is burned (used at the coronation of Alexander V in Pisa, 7 July 1409, but earlier in origin).

### **Time flies.**

English proverb, late 14th century, from Virgil (70–19 bc) *Georgics*, ‘*Sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus* [But meanwhile it is flying, irretrievable time is flying].’

## Travel

See also [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

*Travel may provide us with many different experiences* (Every two miles the water changes, every twelve miles the speech), *but we are also warned: Go abroad and you’ll hear news of home.*

### **Been there, done that, got the T-shirt.**

evoking a jaded tourist as the image of someone who is bored by too much sightseeing.

### **Clunk, click, every trip.**

road safety campaign promoting the use of seatbelts, 1971.

### **Every two miles the water changes, every twelve miles the speech.**

commenting on the changes experienced by travellers (the number of miles varies); Indian proverb.

### **Go abroad and you’ll hear news of home.**

information about one's immediate vicinity may have become more widely publicized; English proverb, late 17th century.

**Have gun, will travel.**

supposedly characteristic statement of a hired gunman in a western; popularized as the title of an American television series (1957–64).

**The heaviest baggage for the traveller is an empty purse.**

travelling is difficult without the money to pay for it; German proverb.

**If it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium.**

late 20th-century saying, from the title of a 1969 film written by David Shaw.

**If you don't know where you are going, any road will do.**

modern saying, originally with allusion to Lewis Carroll.

**Is your journey really necessary?**

1939 slogan, coined to discourage Civil Servants from going home for Christmas.

**Let the train take the strain.**

British Rail slogan, 1970 onwards.

**Roads are made by walking.**

Spanish proverb.

**Thursday's child has far to go.**

line from a traditional rhyme (compare qualities associated with birth on other days at entries under [BEAUTY](#), [GIFTS](#), [SORROW](#), and [WORK](#)).

**Travel broadens the mind.**

English proverb, early 20th century.

**The traveller discards his sense of shame.**

people will behave in a strange country as they will not behave in their own; Japanese proverb.

## **Travelling is learning.**

African proverb.

## **Travelling is one way of lengthening life, at least in appearance.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

## **A wise man will climb Mount Fuji once, but only a fool will climb it twice.**

Japanese proverb.

## Treachery

See [TRUST AND TREACHERY](#)

## Trees

*The oak, the ash, and the elm may have particular attributes, but any tree can link the past with the future:* Trees planted by the ancestors provide shade for their descendants.

## **The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best is now.**

even if you regret not having already planted a tree, it is still worth doing so; modern saying.

## **Beware of an oak, it draws the stroke; avoid an ash, it counts the flash; creep under the thorn, it can save you from harm.**

recording traditional beliefs on where to shelter from lightning during a thunderstorm; English proverb, late 19th century.

## **Every elm has its man.**

perhaps referring to the readiness of the tree to drop its branches on the unwary (elm wood was also traditionally used for coffins); English proverb, early 20th century.

## **In the woods it rains twice.**

after a rainstorm, water continues to drip from overhead branches; German proverb.

**One generation plants the trees; another sits in their shade.**

Chinese proverb.

**To plant a tree is to plant hope.**

modern saying.

**A seed hidden in the heart of an apple is an orchard invisible.**

Welsh proverb; compare **All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today** at [GARDENS](#).

**Trees planted by the ancestors provide shade for their descendants.**

Chinese proverb; a comparable idea is found in the western classical world, in the writings of Caecilius Statius (d. after 100 BC) *Synephebi*, 'He plants the trees to serve another age.'

**When the oak is before the ash, then you will only get a splash;  
When the ash is before the oak, then you will get a soak.**

a traditional way of predicting whether the summer will be wet or dry on the basis of whether the oak or the ash is first to come into leaf in the spring; English proverb, mid 19th century.

## Trust and Treachery

*The traditional warning Promises, like piecrust, are made to be broken, current since the 17th century, emphasizes the shrewdness of the Russian proverb, Test before you trust.*

**Confidence is a plant of slow growth.**

English proverb.

**Fear the Greeks bearing gifts.**

English proverb, late 19th century; originally from Virgil (70–19 BC) *Aeneid*, 'Equo ne credite, Teucri, Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona

*ferentes* [Do not trust the horse, Trojans. Whatever it is, I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts.]’

**Please to remember the Fifth of November, Gunpowder Treason and Plot.**

**We know no reason why gunpowder treason Should ever be forgot.**

traditional rhyme on the Gunpowder Plot (1605).

**Promises, like piecrust, are made to be broken.**

English proverb, late 17th century.

**Test before you trust.**

Russian proverb.

**Would you buy a used car from this man?**

campaign slogan directed against Richard Nixon.

**You cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.**

you must take one of two opposing sides; English proverb, mid 15th century.

## Truth

See also [HONESTY](#), [LIES](#)

*Telling the truth is an obligation* (Tell the truth and shame the devil), *but an admixture of tact may be advisable*: When you shoot an arrow of truth, dip its point in honey.

**Believe it or not.**

title of syndicated newspaper feature (from 1918), written by Robert L. Ripley.

**Fact is stranger than fiction.**

English proverb, mid 19th century; compare [Truth is stranger than fiction](#) below.

**Many a true word is spoken in jest.**

an apparent joke may often include a shrewd comment, or what is spoken of as unlikely or improbable may in the future turn out to be true; English proverb, late 14th century.

**An old error is always more popular than a new truth.**

German proverb.

***Se non è vero, è molto ben trovato.***

Italian, 'If it is not true, it is a happy invention'; common saying from the 16th century.

**Tell the truth and shame the devil.**

by telling the truth one is taking the right course however embarrassing or difficult it may be; English proverb, mid 16th century; compare **Truth makes the Devil blush** below.

**Truth is stranger than fiction.**

implying that no invention can be as remarkable as what may actually happen; English proverb, early 19th century, from Byron *Don Juan* (1819–24), 'Tis strange—but true; for truth is always strange; Stranger than fiction'; compare **Fact is stranger than fiction** above.

**Truth lies at the bottom of a well.**

sometimes used to imply that the truth of a situation can be hard to find; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Truth makes the Devil blush.**

English proverb, mid 20th century; compare **Tell the truth and shame the devil** above.

**Truth will out.**

in the end what has really happened will become apparent; English proverb, mid 15th century.

**What everybody says must be true.**



sometimes used ironically to assert that popular gossip is often inaccurate;  
English proverb, late 14th century.

**When you shoot an arrow of truth, dip its point in honey.**

advocating tact; Arab proverb.

# V

## Value

*A sense of values is worth having:* If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys, *and conversely* Gold may be bought too dear.

### **Everything has a price, but jade is priceless.**

modern saying said to derive from a Chinese proverb extolling the value of jade.

### **Gold may be bought too dear.**

wealth may be acquired at too great a price; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **I am not rich enough to buy cheap goods.**

a warning against practising false economies; modern saying.

### **If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys.**

a poor rate of pay will attract only poorly qualified and incompetent staff (*peanuts* here means ‘a small sum of money’); English proverb, mid 20th century.

### **It is a poor dog that’s not worth whistling for.**

a dog is of no value if the owner will not even go to the trouble of whistling for it; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Little things please little minds.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Nothing comes from nothing.**

English proverb, late 14th century.

**Nothing for nothing.**

summarizing the attitude that nothing will be offered unless a return is assured; English proverb, early 18th century.

**What can a monkey know of the taste of ginger?**

*ginger* as the type of a rare and expensive delicacy; Indian proverb.

**The worth of a thing is what it will bring.**

the real value of something can only be measured by what another person is willing to pay for it; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Virtue**

See also [GOOD AND EVIL](#)

*Virtue should be pursued for its own sake* (Virtue is its own reward), *although it will not necessarily evoke gratitude in others*: No good deed goes unpunished.

**The good die young.**

English proverb, late 17th century, often used ironically; compare [Whom the gods love die young](#) at [YOUTH](#).

**Good men are scarce.**

English proverb, early 17th century.

**He lives long who lives well.**

the reputation derived from living a good and moral life will mean that one's name will last; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**No good deed goes unpunished.**

modern humorous saying, sometimes attributed to Oscar Wilde but not traced in his writings.

**See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.**

conventionally represented by 'the three wise monkeys' covering their eyes, ears, and mouth respectively with their hands, and used particularly to imply a deliberate refusal to notice something that is wrong; English proverb, early 20th century.

**Virtue is its own reward.**

the satisfaction of knowing that one has observed appropriate moral standards should be all that is sought; English proverb, early 16th century.

# W

## Warfare

See also [THE ARMED FORCES](#), [PEACE](#)

*War is seen as likely to cause more than physical injury and death: When war is declared, Truth is the first casualty.*

### **A bayonet is a weapon with a worker at each end.**

British pacifist slogan, 1940.

### **A bigger bang for a bigger buck.**

Charles E. Wilson's defence policy, in *Newsweek* 22 March 1954.

### **Remember the Alamo!**

Texan battle-cry at the battle of San Jacinto, 1836, referring to the defence of a Franciscan mission in the Texan War of Independence, in which all of the defenders were killed.

### **War is God's way of teaching Americans geography.**

modern saying, widely attributed to the American writer Ambrose Bierce (1842–c.1914), but not found before the 1950s.

### **War will cease when men refuse to fight.**

pacifist slogan, from c.1936, often in the form 'Wars will cease when . . .'

### **When war is declared, Truth is the first casualty.**

epigraph to Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime* (1928), perhaps deriving from Samuel Johnson in *The Idler* 11 November 1758, 'Among the calamities of war may be jointly numbered the diminution of the love of truth, by the falsehoods which interest dictates and credulity encourages';

attributed also to Hiram Johnson, speaking in the US Senate, 1918, but not recorded in his speech.

## Ways and Means

*When choosing the right tool (Honey catches more flies than vinegar), it is as well to be aware of what is really essential: It hardly matters if it is a white cat or a black cat that catches the mice.*

### **Catching's before hanging.**

an essential step must be taken before the consequences can ensue; English proverb, early 19th century.

### **Eat the mangoes. Do not count the trees.**

concentrate on the task in hand; Indian proverb.

### **The end justifies the means.**

English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Even if the sky falls down, there is a hole to escape.**

there is often a way out of disaster; modern saying, said to be a Korean proverb.

### **Fight fire with fire.**

one should counter like with like; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Fire is a good servant, but a bad master.**

acknowledging that fire is both essential for living and potentially destructive; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **First catch your hare.**

referring to the first essential step that must be taken before a process can begin; English proverb, early 19th century, often attributed to the English cook Hannah Glasse (fl. 1747), but her directions for making hare soup are, 'Take your hare when it is cased' (*cased* here meaning 'skinned').

### **Give a man enough rope, and he will hang himself.**

often used to mean that someone given enough licence or freedom will defeat themselves through their own mistakes; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**The hammer shatters glass, but forges steel.**

modern saying, said to be of Russian origin.

**Honey catches more flies than vinegar.**

soft or ingratiating words achieve more than sharpness; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**If you can't beat them, join them.**

often used in consolation or resignation; English proverb, mid 20th century.

**It hardly matters if it is a white cat or a black cat that catches the mice.**

Chinese proverb.

**It is good to make a bridge of gold to a flying enemy.**

it is wiser to give passage to an enemy in flight, who may be desperate, than to bring them to bay; English proverb, late 16th century.

**An old poacher makes the best gamekeeper.**

someone who has formerly taken part in wrongdoing knows best how to counter it in others; English proverb, late 14th century.

**One size does not fit all.**

an assertion of individual requirements; earlier versions are based on the metaphor of different size shoes for different feet; English proverb, early 17th century.

**The paths are many, but the goal is the same.**

Indian proverb, deriving from Sanskrit.

**The pen is mightier than the sword.**

written words may often have more lasting force than military strength; English proverb, mid 17th century; compare [What is written with a pen](#)

**cannot be cut out with an axe** at [WRITING](#).

**Set a thief to catch a thief.**

used to imply that the person best placed to catch someone out in dishonest practices is one whose own nature tends that way; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**A short cut is often a wrong cut.**

a warning against trying to cut corners; Danish proverb.

**There are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream.**

there are more ways of achieving an end than giving an opponent a glut of what they most want; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**There are more ways of killing a dog than choking it with butter.**

there are more ways of achieving an end than giving an opponent a glut of what they most want; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**There are more ways of killing a dog than hanging it.**

there are more ways than one of achieving an end; English proverb, late 17th century.

**There is more than one way to skin a cat.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

**There is nothing like leather.**

referring to the toughness and durability of leather (the saying comes from one of Aesop's fables, in which a leatherworker contributed this opinion to a discussion on how to fortify a city); English proverb, late 17th century.

**What matters is what works.**

late 20th-century saying.

[Weakness](#)



See [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#)

## Wealth

See also [MONEY](#), [THRIFT](#)

*Possession of wealth confers status (Money makes a man), and may be self-renewing: Money makes money.*

### **A diamond is forever.**

advertising slogan for De Beers Consolidated Mines, 1940s onwards.

### **Few have too much, and fewer too little.**

too much wealth is not necessarily a good thing; Danish proverb.

### **If you really want to make a million, found a new religion.**

previously attributed to L. Ron Hubbard (1911–86) in B. Corydon and L. Ron Hubbard Jr. *L. Ron Hubbard* (1987), but attribution subsequently rejected by L. Ron Hubbard Jr., who also dissociated himself from this book.

### **Money makes a man.**

possession of wealth confers status; English proverb, early 16th century.

### **Money makes money.**

implying that those who are already wealthy are likely to become more so; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Never ask about the first million.**

modern saying, popularly associated with the very rich in former Soviet bloc countries.

### **The rich man gets his ice in the summer, and the poor man gets his in the winter.**

contrasting luxury with hardship through apparent equality; English proverb, early 20th century.

## The Weather

*Traditional sayings about weather are likely to be predictive (North wind doth blow, we shall have snow, Rain before seven, fine before eleven), but a more modern saying focuses on how to respond to such changes: There is no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes.*

### **As the day lengthens, so the cold strengthens.**

recording the tradition that the coldest weather arrives when days begin to grow lighter; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Clear moon, frost soon.**

a clear night sky in winter may be a precursor of frost; traditional rhyme recorded from the 19th century.

### **Green Christmas, white Easter.**

mild weather at Christmas may mean snow at Easter; German proverb.

### **Long foretold, long last; short notice, soon past.**

if there is a long gap between the signs that the weather will change and the change itself, then the predicted weather will last a long time. If the intervening period is a short one, then the predicted weather will be of correspondingly short duration; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Nine months of winter and three months of hell.**

on the long cold winters and hot summers supposedly typical of the Castilian climate; Spanish saying.

### **North wind doth blow, we shall have snow.**

traditional weather rhyme, deriving from a nursery rhyme of the early 19th century.

### **Rain before seven, fine before eleven.**

English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Rain, rain, go away, come again another day.**

traditional rhyme, mid 17th century.

**Red sky at night, shepherd's delight, Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning.**

good and bad weather respectively is presaged by a red sky at sunset and dawn; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Robin Hood could brave all weathers but a thaw wind.**

a *thaw wind* is a cold wind which accompanies the breaking up of frost; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**So much sun as shines on Shrove Tuesday, so it shines all Lent.**

traditional prediction.

**There is no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes.**

late 20th-century saying.

**A warm January, a cold May.**

mild weather in January means there will be cold weather in May; Welsh proverb.

**When the stars begin to huddle, the earth will soon become a puddle.**

when cloud cover begins to thicken (threatening rain), groups of stars still visible appear to huddle together; traditional rhyme recorded from the 19th century.

**When the wind is in the east, 'tis good for neither man nor beast.**

referring to the traditional bitterness of the east wind; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Winter thunder, summer hunger.**

thunderstorms in winter are taken as presage of a poor harvest; English proverb.

## Weddings

See also [MARRIAGE](#)

*The day chosen for one's wedding may turn out to be important: Marry in May, rue for aye, but Happy is the bride the sun shines on.*

**Always a bridesmaid, never a bride.**

recording the belief that to be a bridesmaid too often is unlucky for one's own chances of marriage; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Happy is the bride the sun shines on.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

**Marry in May, rue for aye.**

English proverb, late 17th century.

**Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth for the other.**

from the saying known as the 'Apache Blessing'.

**One wedding brings another.**

English proverb, mid 17th century.

## [Winning and Losing](#)

See also [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

*There is a consensus that winning and losing are both a part of the pattern of life: What you lose on the swings, you gain on the roundabouts.*

**Heads I win, tails you lose.**

I win in any event; *heads* and *tails* the obverse and reverse images on a coin; English proverb, late 17th century.

**What you lose on the swings, you gain on the roundabouts.**

One's losses and gains tend to cancel one another out; English proverb, early 20th century.

**A winner never quits, and a quitter never wins.**

American proverb, early 20th century.

**You can't win them all.**

used as an expression of consolation or resignation; English proverb, mid 20th century.

## Winter

See also [AUTUMN](#), [SPRING](#), [SUMMER](#), [THE WEATHER](#)

*Sayings about winter reflect both weather lore (February fill dyke, be it black or white), and traditional activities for the season: On Saint Thomas the Divine, kill all turkeys, geese and swine.*

**Candlemas day, put beans in the clay, put candles and candlesticks away.**

recording the tradition that the feast of Candlemas, on 2 February, was the time for planting beans; English proverb, late 17th century.

**February fill dyke, be it black or white.**

February is a month likely to bring rain (black) or snow (white); English proverb, mid 16th century.

**The fire is winter's fruit.**

Arabic proverb.

**If Candlemas day be sunny and bright, winter will have another flight; if Candlemas day be cloudy with rain, winter is gone and won't come again.**

English proverb, late 17th century.

**If in February there be no rain, 'tis neither good for hay nor grain.**

a drought in February will be damaging to crops later in the year; English proverb, early 18th century.

**If Saint Paul's day be fair and clear, it will betide a happy year.**

the feast of the conversion of St Paul is 25 January; English proverb, late 16th century.

**On Saint Thomas the Divine kill all turkeys, geese and swine.**

21 December, the traditional feast-day in the Western Church of St Thomas the Apostle, taken as marking the season at which domestic animals not kept through the winter were to be slaughtered; English proverb, mid 18th century.

**The winter does not go without looking backward.**

there is likely to be bad weather towards the end of winter; Finnish proverb.

**Winter either bites with its teeth or lashes with its tail.**

bad weather is expected at either the beginning or the end of winter; Montenegrin proverb.

**Winter is summer's heir.**

the warmth of summer naturally gives way to the cold of winter; English proverb.

**Winter never rots in the sky.**

the arrival of winter is not delayed; English proverb, early 17th century.

## Wisdom

*Wisdom may be found in unexpected places.*

**Fools ask questions that wise men cannot answer.**

a foolish person may put a question to which there is no simple or easily given answer; English proverb, mid 17th century.

**A little nonsense now and then, is relished by the wisest men.**

American proverb, early 20th century.

**Out of the mouths of babes —.**

young children may sometimes speak with disconcerting wisdom; English proverb, late 19th century, with allusion to the Bible (Psalms), 'Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies.'

## Women

See also [MEN AND WOMEN](#)

*Traditional views on what is appropriate for women (A whistling woman and a crowing hen, is good for neither God nor men) contrast with more radical assessments of a woman's place in the world: Women hold up half the sky.*

### **Burn your bra.**

feminist slogan, 1970s.

### **Far-fetched and dear-bought is good for ladies.**

expensive or exotic articles are suitable for women; English proverb, mid 14th century.

### **The female of the species is more deadly than the male.**

English proverb, early 20th century, from the title of a poem (1919) by Rudyard Kipling.

### **The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.**

referring to the strength of a woman's indirect influence on the male world; English proverb, mid 19th century.

### **Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.**

a woman whose love has turned to hate is the most savage of creatures; a fury here may be either one of the avenging deities of classical mythology, or more generally someone in a state of frenzied rage; English proverb, late 17th century.

### **Long and lazy, little and loud; fat and fulsome, pretty and proud.**

categorizing supposed physical and temperamental characteristics in women; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Silence is a woman's best garment.**

often used as recommending a traditionally submissive and discreet role for women; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**Votes for women.**

slogan of the women's suffrage movement, adopted when it proved impossible to use a banner with the longer slogan 'Will the Liberal Party Give Votes for Women?' made by Emmeline Pankhurst, Christabel Pankhurst, and Annie Kenney.

**A whistling woman and a crowing hen are neither fit for God nor men.**

both the woman and the hen are considered unnatural, and therefore unlucky; English proverb, early 18th century.

**A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be.**

the walnut tree was beaten firstly to bring down the fruit, and then to break down long shoots and encourage short fruit-bearing ones; English proverb, late 16th century.

**A woman and a ship ever want mending.**

both women and ships require constant attention and expenditure; English proverb, late 16th century.

**A woman's place is in the home.**

reflecting the traditional view of a woman's role; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Women hold up half the sky.**

women should be considered equal in status to men; Chinese proverb.

**Words**



See also [NAMES](#), [SAYINGS](#), [SPEECH](#), [WORDS AND DEEDS](#), [WRITING](#)

*There are contrasting views on the power of a word: we are told that The swiftest horse cannot overtake the word once spoken, but on the other hand, Hard words break no bones.*

**All words are pegs to hang ideas on.**

American proverb, late 19th century.

**Elephants are contagious.**

Surrealist ‘proverb’.

**Hard words break no bones.**

the damage done by verbal attack is limited; English proverb, late 17th century.

**I before e, except after c.**

traditional spelling rule, 19th century.

**If you take hyphens seriously you will go mad.**

said to be from a style book in use with Oxford University Press, New York; perhaps apocryphal.

**The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.**

traditional sentence used by keyboarders to ensure that all letters of the alphabet are functioning.

**Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.**

verbal attack does no real injury; English proverb, late 19th century.

**The swiftest horse cannot overtake the word once spoken.**

Chinese proverb; compare Horace (65–8) *Epistles*, ‘And once sent out, a word takes wing beyond recall.’

## Words and Deeds

See also [ACTION AND INACTION](#), [WORDS](#)

*There is a consensus in favour of action (Example is better than precept), but we are warned that it is also wise to keep a guard on the tongue: Don't add insult to injury.*

**Actions speak louder than words.**

real feeling is expressed not by what someone says but by what they do; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is better.**

perseverance is a better quality than ostentation; English proverb, early 18th century.

**Don't add insult to injury.**

recommendation not to treat a person one has hurt with contempt as well; American proverb, mid 18th century.

**Example is better than precept.**

English proverb, early 15th century.

**Fine words butter no parsnips.**

nothing is ever achieved by fine words alone (*butter* was the traditional garnish for parsnips); English proverb, mid 17th century.

**It is not the same thing to talk of bulls as to be in the bullring.**

Spanish saying.

**One picture is worth ten thousand words.**

English proverb, early 20th century.

**An ounce of practice is worth a pound of precept.**

a small amount of practical assistance is worth more than a great deal of advice; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Philosophy bakes no bread.**

traditional criticism of philosophy as lacking practical application, recorded from the 19th century.

**Practise what you preach.**

you should follow the advice you give to others; English proverb, late 14th century.

**Stabs heal, but bad words never.**

words can inflict more lasting wounds than any physical hurt; Spanish proverb.

**Talk is cheap.**

it is easier to say than to do something; English proverb, mid 19th century.

**Talk will not cook rice.**

modern saying, said to be a Chinese proverb.

**Threatened men live long.**

threats are often not put into effect, and those who express resentment are actually much less dangerous than those who conceal animosity; English proverb, mid 16th century.

**The tongue is like a sharp knife, it can kill without drawing blood.**

Chinese saying.

**Vision without action is a daydream, Action without vision is a nightmare.**

recommending a balance between idealism and reality; modern saying, said to derive from a Japanese proverb.

**Words are sweet, but they never take the place of food.**

African proverb.

**Work**

See also [EMPLOYMENT](#), [IDLENESS](#), [LEISURE](#)

*Industry is traditionally commended (Practice makes perfect), but it should be properly rewarded: The labourer is worthy of his hire.*

***Arbeit macht frei.***

German, 'Work liberates', words inscribed on the gates of Dachau concentration camp, 1933, and subsequently on those of Auschwitz.

**The better the day, the better the deed.**

frequently used to justify working on a Sunday or Holy Day; English proverb, early 17th century.

**Every man to his trade.**

one should operate within one's own area of expertise; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Fools and bairns should never see half-done work.**

the unwise and the inexperienced may judge the quality of a finished article from its rough unfinished state; English proverb, early 18th century.

**From beavers, bees should learn to mend their ways. A bee works; a beaver works and plays.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**The labourer is worthy of his hire.**

someone should be properly recompensed for effort; English proverb, late 14th century, from the Bible (Luke 10:7).

**Like master, like man.**

English proverb, mid 16th century; *man* here means 'servant'.

**One volunteer is worth two pressed men.**

a *pressed man* was someone forcibly enlisted by the press gang, a body of men which in the 18th and 19th centuries was employed to enlist men forcibly into service in the army or navy; English proverb, early 18th century.

**Practice makes perfect.**

often used as an encouragement; English proverb, mid 16th century.

### **Root, hog, or die.**

advocating hard work and independence; *root* (of an animal), turn up the ground with its snout in search of food; American proverb, early 19th century.

### **Saturday's child works hard for a living.**

first line of a traditional rhyme, mid 19th century (compare qualities associated with birth on other days at entries under [BEAUTY](#), [GIFTS](#), [SORROW](#), and [TRAVEL](#)).

### **A short horse is soon curried.**

a slight task is soon completed (literally, that it does not take long to rub down a short horse with a curry-comb); English proverb, mid 14th century.

### **Too many cooks spoil the broth.**

the involvement of too many people is likely to mean that something is done badly; English proverb, late 16th century.

### **Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle.**

American proverb, mid 20th century, from a comment attributed to the painter Michelangelo (1475–1564).

### **Two boys are half a boy, and three boys are no boy at all.**

the more boys there are present, the less work will be done; English proverb, mid 20th century.

### **Where bees are, there is honey.**

industrious work is necessary to create riches; English proverb, early 17th century.

### **Work expands so as to fill the time available.**

English proverb, mid 20th century, from C. Northcote Parkinson *Parkinson's Law* (1958), 'Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.'

[Worry](#)

*Worry is not only exhausting (Care killed the cat, It is not work that kills, but worry), but ultimately pointless: Worry is like a rocking chair: both give you something to do, but neither get you anywhere.*

**Care killed the cat.**

the meaning of *care* has shifted somewhat from ‘worry, grief’ to ‘care, caution’; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Do not meet troubles half way.**

warning against anxiety about something that has not yet happened; English proverb, late 19th century.

**It is not work that kills, but worry.**

direct effort is less stressful than constant concern; English proverb, late 19th century.

**Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.**

dealing with unpleasant matters should be left until it becomes necessary; English proverb, mid 18th century, with allusion to the Bible (Matthew 6:34).

**Worry is interest paid on trouble before it falls due.**

American proverb, early 20th century.

**Worry is like a rocking chair: both give you something to do, but neither gets you anywhere.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.**

Swedish proverb.

## Writing

See also [BOOKS](#), [WORDS](#)

*Not only is writing powerful (What is written with a pen cannot be cut out with an axe), it is likely to reveal the essential nature of the writer: Writing is a picture of the writer’s heart.*

**The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair.**

American proverb, mid 20th century.

**For most of history, Anonymous was a woman.**

modern saying, mid 20th century, often associated with the English writer Virginia Woolf (1882–1941).

**He who would write and can't write can surely review.**

American proverb, mid 19th century.

**Paper bleeds little.**

Spanish proverb.

**Paper is patient.**

paper allows the writer to put down what they choose; German proverb.

**What is written with a pen cannot be cut out with an axe.**

words are more powerful than violence; Russian proverb; compare **The pen is mightier than the sword** at [WAYS AND MEANS](#).

**Writing is a picture of the writer's heart.**

Chinese proverb.

# Y

## Youth

See also [AGE](#), [CHILDREN](#)

*To be young is often to overestimate one's powers (Young folks think old folks to be fools, but old folks know young folks to be fools), but even the irresponsible young may grow up to more serious ways: Wanton kittens make sober cats.*

### **All dancing girls are nineteen years old.**

Japanese proverb.

### **Never send a boy to do a man's job.**

someone who is young and inexperienced should not be given too much responsibility; English proverb, mid 20th century.

### **The old net is cast aside while the new net goes fishing.**

the future belongs to the young; Maori proverb.

### **Soon ripe, soon rotten.**

a warning against precocity, meaning that notably early achievement is unlikely to be long-lasting; English proverb, late 14th century (earlier in Latin).

### **Wanton kittens make sober cats.**

someone who in youth is light-minded and lascivious may be soberly behaved in later life; English proverb, early 18th century.

### **Whom the gods love die young.**



the happiest fate is to die before health and strength are lost; English proverb, mid 16th century; the idea is found in the classical world in Menander (342–c.292 bc) *Dis Exapaton*, ‘Whom the gods love dies young’; compare also **The good die young** at VIRTUE.

**Young folks think old folks to be fools, but old folks know young folks to be fools.**

asserting the value of the experience of life which comes with age over youth and inexperience; English proverb, late 16th century.

**Youth must be served.**

Some indulgence should be given to the wishes and enthusiasms of youth; English proverb, early 19th century.

# Keyword Index

Each context line represents the opening words of a proverb (initial 'a' and 'the' being omitted). The proverb will be found in alphabetical sequence in the given section.

**Aberdeen** Take away Aberdeen and twelve [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**abhors** Nature abhors a vacuum [NATURE](#)

**abide** He that cannot abide a bad market [BUSINESS](#)

**able** Behind an able man [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**abomination** abomination unto the Lord, but [LIES](#)

**abroad** Go abroad and you'll hear news of home [TRAVEL](#)

**absence** Absence is the mother of disillusion [ABSENCE](#) Absence makes the heart grow fonder

[ABSENCE](#) Absence of evidence [ABSENCE](#) little absence does much [ABSENCE](#)

**absent** absent get farther away [ABSENCE](#) He who is absent [ABSENCE](#)

**accidents** Accidents will happen [CHANCE AND LUCK](#)

**accounting** There is no accounting for tastes [LIKES AND DISLIKES](#)

**accuser** guilty conscience needs no accuser [CONSCIENCE](#)

**accuses** He who excuses himself, accuses [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#)

**achieving** Still achieving, still pursuing [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**acorns** Acorns were good till bread was found [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#) Great oaks from

little acorns [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#)

**acres** Three acres and a cow [POLITICS](#)

**act** Sow an act, and reap [CUSTOM AND HABIT](#) Think globally, act locally [ENVIRONMENT](#)

**action** Action is worry's worst enemy [ACTION AND INACTION](#) Action this day [ACTION AND](#)

[INACTION](#) Action without thought [ACTION AND INACTION](#) Common danger causes common

action [DANGER](#) Vision without action is a daydream [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

**actions** Actions speak louder than words [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

**Adam** When Adam delved and Eve span [RANK](#)

**addled** As good be an addled egg **IDLENESS**

**advance** Advance Australia **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**advantage** If I listen, I have the advantage **SPEECH**

**adventures** Adventures are to the adventurous **DANGER**

**adventurous** Adventures are to the adventurous **DANGER**

**adversity** Adversity introduces a man **ADVERSITY** Adversity is the foundation of virtue  
**ADVERSITY** Adversity makes strange **ADVERSITY** dose of adversity is often **ADVERSITY**

**advertise** Don't advertise what you can't **ADVERTISING** It pays to advertise **ADVERTISING**

**advice** Ask advice, but use **ADVICE** Never give advice **ADVICE**

**Africa** Always something new out of Africa **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES**

**after** After dinner rest a while **EATING** After meat, mustard **EATING** And they all lived happily ever  
after **ENDING**

**afternoon** afternoon knows what the morning never suspected **FORESIGHT**

**again** Not guilty, but don't do it again **GUILT**

**Agamemnon** Brave men lived before Agamemnon **FAME**

**age** Age is just a number **AGE** age of miracles is past **SURPRISE** For the unlearned, old age is winter  
**AGE** gets better with age **AGE**

**agree** Birds in their little nests agree **ARGUMENT** Two of a trade never agree **SIMILARITY AND  
DIFFERENCE**

**ahead** He who can see three days ahead **FORESIGHT** If you want to get ahead **DRESS** past is always  
ahead of us **PAST**

**ailment** imaginary ailment is worse than a disease **SICKNESS**

**Alamo** Remember the Alamo **WARFARE**

**alcohol** Alcohol will preserve anything **DRINK**

**alibis** Corruption will find a dozen alibis **CORRUPTION**

**alike** Great minds think alike **THINKING**

**all** All cats are grey in the dark **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** All is fish that comes to the net  
**OPPORTUNITY** All roads lead to Rome **TOWNS AND CITIES** All's for the best **OPTIMISM AND  
PESSIMISM** All that glitters is not gold **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES** All things are possible  
with God **GOD** All things come to those who wait **PATIENCE** Hear all, see all, say nowt **SELF-  
INTEREST** He teaches ill who teaches all **TEACHING** Light for all **NEWS AND JOURNALISM**  
Moderation in all things **MODERATION** One size does not fit all **WAYS AND MEANS** There is  
measure in all things **MODERATION**

**Allah** Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel **CAUTION**

**alone** Better alone than in bad company **SOLITUDE** He travels the fastest who travels alone  
**SOLITUDE** He who travels fast, travels alone **COOPERATION** live by bread alone **LIFE** You're  
never alone with a Strand **SMOKING**

**always** always a priest **CLERGY** Always in a hurry, always behind **HASTE AND DELAY** Once a —,  
always a — **CHARACTER**

**am** I am because we are **RELATIONSHIPS**

**America** America is a tune **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**Americans** Good Americans when they die **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** War is God's way of  
teaching Americans geography **WARFARE**

**amour** *L'amour est aveugle* **RELATIONSHIPS**

**ancestors** Trees planted by the ancestors **TREES**

**angels** How many angels can dance on **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**anger** Anger improves nothing **ANGER**

**angry** He that will be angry **ANGER** hungry man is an angry man **FOOD** When angry count a  
hundred **ANGER**

**animal** *Cet animal est très méchant* **CHARACTER** politician is an animal who can sit **POLITICS**

**animals** It takes forty dumb animals **DRESS**

**anonymous** For most of history, Anonymous was a woman **WRITING**

**another** Another day, another dollar **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** One wedding brings another  
**WEDDINGS** Tomorrow is another day **FUTURE**

**answer** answer is a lemon **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** answer lies in the soil **GARDENS**  
civil question deserves a civil answer **MANNERS** soft answer turneth away wrath **ANGER**

**anvil** church is an anvil **CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

**ape** ape's an ape, a varlet's a varlet **CHARACTER**

**apology** Apology is only egoism **APOLOGY AND EXCUSES**

**appearance** Merit in appearance **APPEARANCE**

**appearances** Appearances are deceptive **APPEARANCE**

**appetite** Appetite comes with eating **EXPERIENCE**

**apple** apple a day keeps the doctor away **HEALTH** apple never falls far from the tree **FAMILY** apple  
pie without some cheese **FOOD** rotten apple injures its neighbour **CORRUPTION** seed hidden in  
the heart of an apple **TREES**

**apples** Small choice in rotten apples [CHOICE](#) You can count the apples on one tree [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#)

**apricots** You can have apricots tomorrow [FUTURE](#)

**April** April and May are keys to the whole year [SPRING](#) April showers bring forth May flowers [SPRING](#) cold April the barn will fill [SPRING](#) cuckoo comes in April [BIRDS](#) March borrowed from April three days [SPRING](#)

**Arbeit** *Arbeit macht frei* [WORK](#)

**Arcadia** *Et in Arcadia ego* [DEATH](#)

**arch** arch never sleeps [ARCHITECTURE](#)

**architect** Every man is the architect of his own [SELF-INTEREST](#)

**ardua** *Per ardua ad astra* [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**are** Are you now or have you ever been [POLITICS](#) I am because we are [RELATIONSHIPS](#)

**argue** Do not argue against the sun [ARGUMENT](#)

**argument** only thing a heated argument ever [ARGUMENT](#)

**arguments** more arguments you win, the less [ARGUMENT](#)

**arm** Stretch your arm no further than [THRIFT](#)

**arms** Kings have long arms [POWER](#)

**army** army knows how to gain a victory [ARMED FORCES](#) army of stags led by a lion [ARMED FORCES](#) singing army and a [ARMED FORCES](#)

**around** What goes around comes around [JUSTICE](#)

**arrow** single arrow is easily broken [COOPERATION](#) When you shoot an arrow of truth [TRUTH](#)

**art** Art is long and life is short [LIFE](#) art of being a parent [CHILDREN](#) art of writing is the art of applying [WRITING](#)

**arts** All arts are brothers [COOPERATION](#)

**ash** When the oak is before the ash [TREES](#)

**ashes** Yesterday is ashes; tomorrow is wood [PRESENT](#)

**ask** Ask advice, but use [ADVICE](#) Ask a silly question and you get [FOOLS](#) Don't ask, don't tell [SECRECY](#) Never ask about the first million [WEALTH](#) To question and ask is a moment's shame [THINKING](#)

**asked** Never give advice unless asked [ADVICE](#)

**asleep** shrimp that falls asleep [ACTION AND INACTION](#)

**assistant** Assistant heads must roll [BROADCASTING](#)

**attack** Attack is the best form of defence **COURAGE**

**aunt** Vodka is an aunt of wine **DRINK**

**Australia** Advance Australia **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**Australians** Australians wouldn't give **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**autumn** Chickens are counted in the autumn **AUTUMN**

**autumns** All autumns do not fill granaries **AUTUMN**

**away** Rain, rain, go away **WEATHER**

**awl** You can't hide an awl in a sack **SECRECY**

**axe** When the axe came into the forest **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**B** Who says A must say B **NECESSITY**

**babes** Out of the mouths of babes — **WISDOM**

**baby** Burn, baby, burn **DEFIANCE**

**back** God makes the back to the burden **SYMPATHY** Spring forward, fall back **TIME** What is got under the Devil's back **GOOD AND EVIL**

**bad** bad custom is like a good cake **CUSTOM AND HABIT** bad excuse is better than **APOLOGY AND EXCUSES** Bad money drives out good **MONEY** Bad news travels fast **NEWS AND JOURNALISM** bad penny always turns up **CHARACTER** Bad things come in threes **MISFORTUNES** bad workman blames his tools **APOLOGY AND EXCUSES** Better alone than in bad company **SOLITUDE** Give a dog a bad name and hang **GOSSIP** good seaman is known in bad weather **SEA** Hard cases make bad law **LAW** He that cannot abide a bad market **BUSINESS** Nothing so bad but it might have been **SYMPATHY** Stabs heal, but bad words never **WORDS AND DEEDS** Striking manners are bad manners **MANNERS** There is no such thing as bad weather **WEATHER**

**baggage** heaviest baggage for the traveller **TRAVEL**

**bairns** Fools and bairns should never see **WORK**

**bait** big fish is caught with a big bait **PRACTICALITY** Fish follow the bait **TEMPTATION**

**bake** As you bake, so shall you brew **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**ban** Ban the bomb **PEACE**

**bandits** more laws, the more thieves and bandits **LAW**

**bang** Bang goes sixpence **THRIFT** bigger bang for a bigger buck **WARFARE**

**banker** father is a banker provided by nature **PARENTS**

**bargain** Don't bargain for fish that are still **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** It takes two to make a bargain **COOPERATION**

**bark** Dogs bark, but the caravan goes **FUTILITY** Do not judge a tree by its bark **APPEARANCE** Why keep a dog and bark yourself **MANAGEMENT**

**barking** barking dog never bites **ACTION AND INACTION**

**barn** cold April the barn will fill **SPRING**

**Barnaby** Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright **SUMMER**

**barrel** One spoonful of tar spoils a barrel **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**basket** Don't put all your eggs in one basket **CAUTION** Each of us at a handle of the basket **COOPERATION** with your food basket **COOPERATION**

**battle** Be kind. Everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle **GENEROSITY** race is not to the swift, nor the battle **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**battles** Pick your battles **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**bayonet** bayonet is a weapon with a worker **WARFARE**

**be** Be what you would seem **BEHAVIOUR** What must be, must be **FATE**

**beans** Candlemas day, put beans in the clay **WINTER**

**bear** Bear and forbear **PATIENCE** When you ask a bear to dance **DANGER**

**beards** It is merry in hall when beards wag all **HOSPITALITY**

**bears** bulls make money, the bears make **BUYING AND SELLING**

**beat** If you can't beat them, join them **WAYS AND MEANS**

**beats** It beats as it sweeps as it cleans **HOUSEWORK**

**beautiful** Black is beautiful **BEAUTY** It is the beautiful bird **BEAUTY** Small is beautiful **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**beauty** Beauty draws with a single hair **BEAUTY** Beauty is a good letter **BEAUTY** Beauty is in the eye of the beholder **BEAUTY** Beauty is only skin deep **BEAUTY** Beauty is power **BEAUTY** Beauty without cruelty **SUFFERING**

**beavers** From beavers, bees should learn **WORK**

**bed** As you make your bed **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** Early to bed and early to rise **HEALTH**

**bedfellows** Adversity makes strange bedfellows **ADVERSITY** Politics makes strange bedfellows **POLITICS**

**bee** bee sucks honey where the spider **CHARACTER**

**beef** Where's the beef **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**been** Been there, done that, got the T-shirt **TRAVEL**

**beer** He that drinks beer, thinks beer **DRUNKENNESS** I'm only here for the beer **DRINK** Life isn't all beer and skittles **LIFE** Turkeys, heresy, hops, and beer **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES**

**bees** From beavers, bees should learn **WORK** Where bees are, there is honey **WORK**

**before** Dig the well before you are thirsty **PREPARATION AND READINESS** Have an umbrella ready before it rains **PREPARATION AND READINESS** I before e, except after c **WORDS**

**beforehand** Pay beforehand was never well **BUSINESS**

**begets** Love begets love **LOVE**

**beggar** Set a beggar on horseback **POWER** Sue a beggar and catch a louse **FUTILITY**

**beggars** Beggars can't be choosers **NECESSITY** If wishes were horses, beggars **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**beginning** Beginning is easy **BEGINNING** beginning of health is sleep **SLEEP** beginning of wisdom is to call things **NAMES** good beginning makes a good **BEGINNING** In my end is my beginning **ENDING**

**begins** longest journey begins with a single **BEGINNING**

**begun** sooner begun, the sooner done **BEGINNING** Well begun is half done **BEGINNING**

**behaviour** Good behaviour is the last **BEHAVIOUR**

**behind** Always in a hurry, always behind **HASTE AND DELAY** Behind an able man **ACHIEVEMENT**

**beholder** Beauty is in the eye of the beholder **BEAUTY**

**Belgium** If it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium **TRAVEL**

**believe** Believe it or not **TRUTH** Believe nothing of what you hear **BELIEF** eyes believe themselves **CERTAINTY AND DOUBT**

**believer** believer is a songless bird **BELIEF**

**believing** Believing has a core of unbelieving **BELIEF** Seeing is believing **BELIEF**

**bellowing** bellowing cow soon forgets her calf **MOURNING**

**belong** I belong by blood relationship **FAMILY**

**ben** *Se non e vero, e molto ben trovato* **TRUTH**

**bent** As the twig is bent **EDUCATION**

**Bermudas** If the Bermudas let you pass **SEA**

**best** All's for the best **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** best doctors are Dr Quiet, Dr Diet **MEDICINE** best fish swim near the bottom **DETERMINATION** best of friends must part **MEETING AND**



**PARTING** best of men are but men at best **HUMAN RACE** best place for criticism **CRITICISM** best things in life are free **MONEY** best time to plant a tree was **TREES** corruption of the best **EXCELLENCE** East, west, home's best **HOME** Experience is the best teacher **EXPERIENCE** Good to forgive, best to forget **FORGIVENESS** Honesty is the best policy **HONESTY** Hope for the best and prepare for **PREPARATION AND READINESS** Laughter is the best medicine **MEDICINE** Life is the best gift **LIFE** Of soup and love, the first is best **FOOD** See all your best work go unnoticed **SECRECY** Why should the devil have all the best **MUSIC**

**better** Be sure you can better your condition **CHANGE** Better a dinner of herbs **FEELINGS** Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow **PRESENT** Better an end with terror **ENDING** Better be an old man's darling **MARRIAGE** Better be envied than pitied **ENVY** Better be idle than ill doing **IDLENESS** Better be safe than sorry **CAUTION** Better be the head of a dog **POWER** Better late than never **PUNCTUALITY** Better one house spoiled than two **MARRIAGE** better the day, the better the deed **WORK** Better the devil you know **FAMILIARITY** Better to go to bed supperless **DEBT AND BORROWING** Better to light one candle **ACTION AND INACTION** Better to wear out than to rust **IDLENESS** Better wed over the mixen **FAMILIARITY** Democracy is better than tyranny **POLITICS** Example is better than precept **WORDS AND DEEDS** Half a loaf is better than no bread **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** half is better than the whole **MODERATION** It is better to give than to receive **GENEROSITY** It is better to travel hopefully **HOPE** less you know, the better you sleep **IGNORANCE** past always looks better **PAST** Prevention is better than cure **FORESIGHT** Something is better than nothing **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** 'Tis better to have loved and lost **LOVE** To change, and change for the better **CHANGE** Two heads are better than one **THINKING**

**between** Between two stools one falls **INDECISION** hedge between keeps friendship green **NEIGHBOURS** wall between both best preserves **NEIGHBOURS**

**beware** Beware of an oak, it draws the stroke **TREES** Beware of the man of one book **BOOKS**

**beyond** Beyond mountains there are more **DETERMINATION**

**big** Big fish eat little fish **POWER** big fish is caught with a big bait **PRACTICALITY** No fist is big enough to hide the sky **GOVERNMENT**

**bigger** bigger bang for a bigger buck **WARFARE** bigger the hat **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION** bigger they are, the harder they fall **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** Fear makes the wolf bigger **FEAR**

**bill** swan brings snow on its bill **BIRDS**

**bind** Safe bind, safe find **CAUTION**

**bird** believer is a songless bird **BELIEF** bird in the hand is worth two **CAUTION** bird never flew on one wing **GENEROSITY** early bird catches the worm **PREPARATION AND READINESS** However

high a bird may soar **ENVIRONMENT** It is the beautiful bird that **BEAUTY** It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest **LOYALTY**

**birds** Birds in their little nests **ARGUMENT** Birds of a feather flock together **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** Birds of prey do not sing **BIRDS** Fine feathers make fine birds **DRESS** Inside the forest there are many birds **ABILITY** Little birds that can sing **COOPERATION** There are no birds in last year's nest **CHANGE** You cannot catch old birds **EXPERIENCE** You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow **SORROW**

**bishops** bishops are made men **CLERGY**

**bitch** Life's a bitch, and then you die **LIFE**

**bite** bleating sheep loses a bite **OPPORTUNITY** Dead men don't bite **ENEMIES**

**bites** barking dog never bites **ACTION AND INACTION**

**bitten** Once bitten by a snake **CAUTION** Once bitten, twice shy **EXPERIENCE**

**bitter** Good medicine always has a bitter taste **MEDICINE** Sour, sweet, bitter, pungent **FATE**

**black** Black is beautiful **BEAUTY** devil is not so black as he is painted **REPUTATION** February fill dyke, be it black or white **WINTER** You have to be in the black to be in the green **ENVIRONMENT**

**blacks** Two blacks don't make a white **GOOD AND EVIL**

**blame** Common fame is seldom to blame **FAME**

**blames** One who cannot dance blames **DANCE**

**bleating** bleating of the lamb excites the tiger **TEMPTATION** bleating sheep loses a bite **OPPORTUNITY**

**bleeds** Paper bleeds little **WRITING**

**blessed** Blessed are the dead that the rain **DEATH** Blessed is he who expects nothing **HOPE**

**blessing** Poverty is a blessing hated by all **POVERTY**

**blessings** Blessings brighten as they take **HAPPINESS**

**blind** Blind chance sweeps **CHANCE AND LUCK** blind man's wife needs no paint **APPEARANCE** deaf husband and a blind wife **MARRIAGE** Love is blind **LOVE** Nothing so bold as a blind mare **IGNORANCE** There's none so blind as those **PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE** When the blind lead the blind **IGNORANCE**

**blood** Blood is thicker than water **FAMILY** blood of the martyrs is the seed **CHRISTIAN CHURCH** Blood will have blood **MURDER** Blood will tell **FAMILY** I belong by blood relationship **FAMILY** You cannot get blood from a stone **FUTILITY**

**bloody** bloody war and a sickly season **ARMED FORCES**

**bloom** When the furze is in bloom **LOVE** When the gorse is out of bloom **LOVE**

**blow** Blow your own horn, even if [ADVERTISING](#) North wind doth blow [WEATHER](#)

**blows** It's an ill wind that blows nobody [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#) Straws tell which way the wind blows [KNOWLEDGE](#)

**blue** Blue and green should never be [DRESS](#) Blue are the hills that are far [FAMILIARITY](#) Light the blue touch paper [DANGER](#)

**blush** Truth makes the Devil blush [TRUTH](#)

**boat** widow is a rudderless boat [MARRIAGE](#)

**boats** rising tide lifts all boats [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

**body** Christ has no body now on earth [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#) larger the body, the bigger the heart [BODY](#)

**boils** pot boils, friendship lives [HOSPITALITY](#) watched pot never boils [PATIENCE](#)

**bold** Nothing so bold as a blind mare [IGNORANCE](#)

**bomb** Ban the bomb [PEACE](#)

**bond** Englishman's word is his bond [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

**bone** Charity is not a bone [CHARITY](#) dog that will fetch a bone [GOSSIP](#) nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) What's bred in the bone [CHARACTER](#) While two dogs are fighting for a bone [ARGUMENT](#)

**bones** Hard words break no bones [WORDS](#) Sticks and stones may break my bones [WORDS](#)

**bonum** *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* [REPUTATION](#)

**book** Beware of the man of one book [BOOKS](#) book is like a garden [BOOKS](#) great book is a great evil [BOOKS](#) You can't tell a book by its cover [APPEARANCE](#)

**boots** You can put your boots in the oven [FUTILITY](#)

**born** child that is born on the Sabbath [CHILDREN](#) Every Turk is born a soldier [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#) If you're born to be hanged [FATE](#) It is better to be born lucky [CHANCE AND LUCK](#) man who is born in a stable [CHARACTER](#) Nobody is born learned [CLERGY](#) Yorkshire born and Yorkshire bred [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**borrowed** borrowed cloak does not keep you warm [DEBT AND BORROWING](#) March borrowed from April three days [SPRING](#)

**borrower** Neither a borrower, nor a lender be [DEBT AND BORROWING](#)

**borrowing** He that goes a-borrowing [DEBT AND BORROWING](#)

**borrows** early man never borrows from the late [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#)

**bottles** You can't put new wine in old bottles [CHANGE](#)

**bottom** best fish swim near the bottom **DETERMINATION** Every tub must stand on its own bottom  
**STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** Truth lies at the bottom of a well **TRUTH**

**bough** If I keep a green bough in my heart **HAPPINESS**

**bought** Gold may be bought too dear **VALUE**

**bow** More than one yew bow in Chester **DANGER**

**bowls** Those who play at bowls **CAUTION**

**boy** Never send a boy to do a man's job **YOUTH** You can take the boy out of the country **COUNTRY  
AND THE TOWN**

**boys** Boys will be boys **MEN** Two boys are half a boy **WORK**

**bra** Burn your bra **WOMEN**

**bracelet** single bracelet does not jingle **COOPERATION**

**brae** Put a stout heart to a stey brae **DETERMINATION**

**brag** Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**brain** idle brain is the devil's workshop **IDLENESS**

**branch** Although the branch is broken off **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**brass** Where there's muck there's brass **MONEY**

**brave** Brave men lived before Agamemnon **FAME** Fortune favours the brave **COURAGE** None but  
the brave deserve the fair **COURAGE** Robin Hood could brave all weathers **WEATHER**

**bread** Acorns were good till bread was found **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** bread never falls  
but on its buttered side **MISFORTUNES** Half a loaf is better than no bread **SATISFACTION AND  
DISCONTENT** No dinner without bread **FOOD** Philosophy bakes no bread **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**break** Hard words break no bones **WORDS** If it were not for hope, the heart **HOPE** Sticks and stones  
may break my bones **WORDS**

**breakfast** Breakfast like a king, lunch like **EATING** Hope is a good breakfast **HOPE** Sing before  
breakfast, cry **FEELINGS**

**bred** What's bred in the bone **CHARACTER** Yorkshire born and Yorkshire bred **BRITISH TOWNS  
AND REGIONS**

**breeds** Like breeds like **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**brevity** Brevity is the soul of wit **SPEECH**

**brew** As you brew, so shall you bake **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**bricks** You cannot make bricks without straw **FUTILITY**

**bride** Always a bridesmaid, never a bride [WEDDINGS](#) Happy is the bride the sun shines on  
[WEDDINGS](#)

**bridesmaid** Always a bridesmaid, never a bride [WEDDINGS](#)

**bridge** Don't cross the bridge till you come to it [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) Everyone speaks  
well of the bridge [MANNERS](#) He who would lead must be a bridge [LEADERSHIP](#) It is good to  
make a bridge of gold [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**bridges** September dries up wells and breaks down bridges [AUTUMN](#)

**bright** Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright [SUMMER](#)

**brighten** Blessings brighten as they take [HAPPINESS](#)

**bring** worth of a thing is what it will bring [VALUE](#)

**broadens** Travel broadens the mind [TRAVEL](#)

**broke** If it ain't broke [ACTION AND INACTION](#)

**broken** Although the branch is broken off [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#) elephant does not die  
of one broken rib [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#) Rules are made to be broken [LAW](#) single arrow  
is easily broken [COOPERATION](#)

**brooms** New brooms sweep clean [CHANGE](#)

**broth** Too many cooks spoil the broth [WORK](#)

**brother** Am I not a man and a brother [HUMAN RACE](#) My brother and I against my cousin [FAMILY](#)

**brothers** All arts are brothers [COOPERATION](#)

**brown** quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog [WORDS](#)

**buck** bigger bang for a bigger buck [WARFARE](#)

**bucket** Don't throw away the old bucket [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#)

**bug** It's not a bug, it's a feature [COMPUTING](#)

**build** Fools build houses and wise men [FOOLS](#) It is easier to build two [ARCHITECTURE](#)

**building** Building and marrying of children [ARCHITECTURE](#) In settling an island, the first building  
[ARCHITECTURE](#) No good building without [ARCHITECTURE](#)

**built** Rome was not built in a day [PATIENCE](#)

**bull** Bull markets climb a wall of worry [BUSINESS](#)

**bullring** It is not the same thing to talk of bulls, as to be in the bullring [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

**bulls** bulls make money, the bears make [BUYING AND SELLING](#) It is not the same thing to talk of  
bulls, as to be in the bullring [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

**bully** bully is always a coward [COURAGE](#)

**bumping** Education doesn't come by bumping [EDUCATION](#)

**burden** Anyone can carry his burden, however heavy, until nightfall [LIFESTYLES](#) God makes the back to the burden [SYMPATHY](#)

**burn** Burn, baby, burn [DEFIANCE](#) Burn your bra [WOMEN](#) Hot water does not burn down [FUTILITY](#)

**burnt** burnt child dreads the fire [EXPERIENCE](#) If you play with fire you get burnt [DANGER](#)

**bury** Let the dead bury their dead [MOURNING](#)

**bush** Good wine needs no bush [ADVERTISING](#) Poke a bush, a snake comes [CAUTION](#)

**busiest** busiest men have the most leisure [LEISURE](#) Tomorrow is often the busiest day [FUTURE](#)

**business** Business before pleasure [BUSINESS](#) Business goes where it is invited [BUSINESS](#) Business is like a car [BUSINESS](#) Business is war [BUSINESS](#) Business neglected [BUSINESS](#) Everybody's business is nobody's [RESPONSIBILITY](#) Punctuality is the soul of business [PUNCTUALITY](#)

**busy** Who is more busy than he who has least to do? [IDLENESS](#)

**butter** Fine words butter no parsnips [WORDS AND DEEDS](#) more butter, the worse cheese [FOOD](#)

**battered** bread never falls but on its battered side [MISFORTUNES](#)

**button** You press the button, we do the rest [TECHNOLOGY](#)

**buy** Buy in the cheapest market [BUYING AND SELLING](#) inch of gold cannot buy time [TIME](#) One white foot, buy him [HORSES](#) Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap [SEX](#) Would you buy a used car from this man? [TRUST AND TREACHERY](#) You buy land, you buy stones [BUYING AND SELLING](#)

**buyer** buyer has need of a hundred eyes [BUYING AND SELLING](#) Let the buyer beware [BUYING AND SELLING](#)

**cabbage** Twice-cooked cabbage is death [FOOD](#)

**Caesar** *Aut Caesar, aut nihil* [AMBITION](#)

**cake** bad custom is like a good cake [CUSTOM AND HABIT](#) You cannot have your cake [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**calf** bellowing cow soon forgets her calf [MOURNING](#)

**call** beginning of wisdom is to call things [NAMES](#) Call on God, but row away [CAUTION](#) Do not call a wolf to help you [ENEMIES](#) It is not what you call me [NAMES](#)

**calls** He who pays the piper calls the tune [POWER](#)

**calm** After a storm comes a calm [PEACE](#) In a calm sea every man [ACHIEVEMENT](#) It is the calm and silent water [DANGER](#) Keep calm and carry on [CRISES](#)

**camel** He who steals an egg will steal a camel **HONESTY** Only the camel knows the hundredth **NAMES** Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel **CAUTION**

**camels** Camels, fleas, and princes **ROYALTY** More doctors recommend Camels **SMOKING**

**camera** camera never lies **TECHNOLOGY**

**candle** Better to light one candle **ACTION AND INACTION** liar's candle lasts till evening **LIES**

**Candlemas** Candlemas day, beans in the clay **WINTER** If Candlemas day be sunny and bright **WINTER**

*canem* Cave canem **DOGS**

**cap** If the cap fits, wear it **NAMES**

**car** Business is like a car **BUSINESS** Would you buy a used car from this man **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**caravan** Dogs bark, but the caravan goes **FUTILITY**

*carborundum* Nil carborundum illegitimi **DETERMINATION**

**carcase** Where the carcase is **GREED**

**cards** Lucky at cards, unlucky in love **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**care** Care, and not fine stables **HORSES** Care killed the cat **WORRY** Don't care was made to care **RESPONSIBILITY** Take care of the pence and the pounds **THRIFT**

**careful** Be careful what you wish for **CAUTION** If you can't be good, be careful **CAUTION**

**careless** Careless talk costs lives **GOSSIP**

**cares** Children are certain cares **FAMILY**

**caribou** caribou feeds the wolf **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**carpenter** carpenter is known by his chips **APPEARANCE**

**carry** Anyone can carry his burden, however heavy, until nightfall **LIFESTYLES** You cannot carry two watermelons **FUTILITY**

**cart** Don't put the cart before the horse **PATIENCE**

**cases** Circumstances alter cases **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** Hard cases make bad law **LAW**

**cash** Cash is king **MONEY**

**castle** Englishman's home is his castle **HOME**

**cat** Care killed the cat **WORRY** cat always lands on its feet **CATS** cat has nine lives **CATS** cat in gloves catches no mice **CAUTION** cat may look at a king **CATS** cat would eat fish **INDECISION** cat, the rat, and Lovell the dog **GOVERNMENT** It hardly matters if it is a white cat or **WAYS AND MEANS** It is better to feed one cat **CATS** There are more ways of killing a cat **WAYS AND MEANS**

There is more than one way to skin a cat **WAYS AND MEANS** Touch not the cat but a glove **CATS**  
When the cat's away, the mice will **OPPORTUNITY**

**catch** First catch your hare **WAYS AND MEANS** Never try to catch a falling knife **BUSINESS** Set a thief to catch a thief **WAYS AND MEANS** Sue a beggar and catch a louse **FUTILITY**

**catchee** Softlee, softlee, catchee monkey **PATIENCE**

**catches** Honey catches more flies than vinegar **WAYS AND MEANS**

**catching** Catching's before hanging **WAYS AND MEANS**

**cats** All cats are grey in the dark **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** Keep no more cats than will catch mice **MODERATION** Wanton kittens make sober cats **YOUTH**

**cattle** Hurry no man's cattle **PATIENCE**

**caught** fish will soon be caught that nibbles **TEMPTATION**

**cause** need, not the cause **CHARITY**

**caution** Caution is the parent of safety **CAUTION**

**cave** *Cave canem* **DOGS**

**cease** War will cease when men refuse to fight **WARFARE**

**certain** Nothing is certain but death **CERTAINTY AND DOUBT** Nothing is certain but the unforeseen **FORESIGHT**

**chaff** king's chaff is worth more **ROYALTY**

**chain** chain is no stronger than its weakest **COOPERATION**

**chance** Blind chance sweeps **CHANCE AND LUCK** Moses took a chance **CHANCE AND LUCK** person who misses his chance **OPPORTUNITY** wise man turns chance into good fortune **OPPORTUNITY**

**chances** You have two chances **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**change** change is as good as a rest **CHANGE** Change the name and not the letter **MARRIAGE** leopard does not change his spots **CHANGE** Times change and we with time **CHANGE** To change, and change for the better **CHANGE**

**changes** Every two miles the water changes **TRAVEL** When the music changes **CHANGE** wise man changes his mind **FOOLS**

**channel** Where water flows, a channel **PATIENCE**

**character** Character is what we are **CHARACTER** Like a fence, character cannot **CHARACTER**

**charity** Charity begins at home **CHARITY** Charity covers a multitude of sins **FORGIVENESS** Charity is not a bone **CHARITY** Charity sees the need **CHARITY** roots of charity are always green **CHARITY**



**charm** third time is the charm [CHANCE AND LUCK](#)

**chase** stern chase is a long chase [DETERMINATION](#)

**cheap** It is as cheap sitting [ACTION AND INACTION](#) Pile it high, sell it cheap [BUSINESS](#) Talk is cheap [WORDS AND DEEDS](#) Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap [SEX](#)

**cheapest** Buy in the cheapest market [BUYING AND SELLING](#)

**cheats** Cheats never prosper [DECEPTION](#)

**cheeping** May chickens come cheeping [SPRING](#)

**cheese** apple pie without some cheese [FOOD](#) more butter, the worse cheese [FOOD](#) only free cheese is in a mousetrap [TEMPTATION](#)

**cherries** He who likes cherries [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**cherry** cherry year, a merry year [SUMMER](#)

**chess** Chess is a sea where a gnat may drink [SPORTS AND GAMES](#)

**Chester** More than one yew bow in Chester [DANGER](#)

**chicken** Kill the chicken to scare [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#) Why did the chicken cross the road [PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS](#)

**chickens** Chickens are counted in the autumn [AUTUMN](#) Curses, like chickens, come home [FEELINGS](#) Don't count your chickens before [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#) howlin' coyote ain't stealin' no chickens [HONESTY](#) May chickens come cheeping [SPRING](#)

**child** burnt child dreads the fire [EXPERIENCE](#) child is the father of the man [CHARACTER](#) child of a frog is a frog [FAMILY](#) child that is born on the Sabbath [CHILDREN](#) Friday's child is loving and giving [GENEROSITY](#) Give me a child for the first seven [EDUCATION](#) He who takes the child by the hand [PARENTS](#) It is a wise child that knows [PARENTS](#) It takes a village to raise a child [CHILDREN](#) Monday's child is fair of face [BEAUTY](#) mother understands what the child [PARENTS](#) Praise the child, and you make love to [PARENTS](#) Saturday's child works hard for a living [WORK](#) Send the beloved child on a journey [PARENTS](#) Thursday's child has far to go [TRAVEL](#) Wednesday's child is full of woe [SORROW](#)

**children** Building and marrying of children [ARCHITECTURE](#) Children and fools tell the truth [HONESTY](#) Children are certain cares [FAMILY](#) Children: one is one [CHILDREN](#) Children should be seen and not [CHILDREN](#) Heaven protects children, sailors [DANGER](#) Little children, little sorrows [CHILDREN](#) Parents want their children to become [PARENTS](#) Women and children first [DANGER](#)

**chimneys** It is easier to build two chimneys [ARCHITECTURE](#)

**chips** carpenter is known by his chips [APPEARANCE](#)

**choice** He that has a choice [CHOICE](#) obvious choice is usually [CHOICE](#)

**choose** Never choose your women or linen [APPEARANCE](#) Of two evils choose the less [CHOICE](#)

**choosers** Beggars can't be choosers [NECESSITY](#)

**chop** Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water [LIFESTYLES](#)

**Christ** Christ has no body now on earth [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#)

**Christian** good Christian should beware [KNOWLEDGE](#)

**Christians** Christians to the lions [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#)

**Christmas** Christmas comes but once a year [CHRISTMAS](#) Christmas is coming, and the goose  
[CHRISTMAS](#) Christmas with the family [CHRISTMAS](#) devil makes his Christmas pies [LAW](#) dog is  
for life, not just for Christmas [DOGS](#) Green Christmas, white Easter [WEATHER](#) Only — shopping  
days to Christmas [CHRISTMAS](#)

**church** church is an anvil [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#) church is God between four walls [CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH](#) He is a good dog who goes to church [BEHAVIOUR](#) nearer the church [CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH](#) Where God builds a church [GOOD AND EVIL](#) You can't build a church with  
[CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#)

**churchyard** green Yule makes a fat churchyard [CHRISTMAS](#)

**cigar** Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet [SMOKING](#)

**circle** nature of God is a circle [GOD](#) wheel has come full circle [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#)

**circumspice** *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice* [ARCHITECTURE](#)

**circumstances** Circumstances alter cases [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#) New circumstances,  
new controls [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#)

**civil** civil question deserves a civil answer [MANNERS](#)

**civility** Civility costs nothing [MANNERS](#) There is nothing lost by civility [MANNERS](#)

**claws** conceal their claws [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#)

**clay** Candlemas day, put beans in the clay [WINTER](#) Sow corn in clay [GARDENS](#)

**clean** clean conscience is a good pillow [CONSCIENCE](#) New brooms sweep clean [CHANGE](#)

**cleanliness** Cleanliness is next to godliness [BEHAVIOUR](#)

**cleans** It beats as it sweeps as it cleans [HOUSEWORK](#)

**clear** Clear moon, frost soon [WEATHER](#)

**clergymen** Clergymen's sons always [CLERGY](#)

**clever** Clever hawks conceal their claws [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#)

**click** Clunk, click, every trip [TRAVEL](#)

**climbers** Hasty climbers have sudden falls [AMBITION](#)

**climbs** higher the monkey climbs **AMBITION**

**cloak** borrowed cloak does not keep you warm **DEBT AND BORROWING**

**clock** Even a stopped clock is right twice a day **TIME**

**clogs** From clogs to clogs is only three **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**close** Do not close a letter without reading it **LETTERS**

**closest** Even your closest friends won't **HEALTH**

**cloth** Cut your coat according to your cloth **PRACTICALITY**

**clothes** Clothes make the man **DRESS**

**cloud** Every cloud has a silver lining **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**clout** Ne'er cast a clout till May be out **DRESS**

**clunk** Clunk, click, every trip **TRAVEL**

**clutch** drowning man will clutch at a straw **HOPE**

**coat** Cut your coat according to your cloth **PRACTICALITY**

**cobbler** cobbler to his last and the gunner **KNOWLEDGE** Let the cobbler stick to his last  
**KNOWLEDGE** There will be trouble if the cobbler **KNOWLEDGE**

**cobwebs** Habits are cobwebs at first **CUSTOM AND HABIT**

**cock** Every cock will crow upon his own **HOME** There's many a good cock **CHARACTER**

**coconuts** If you had teeth of steel, you could eat iron coconuts **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**coffee** Coffee without tobacco **SMOKING**

**coincidence** It is a striking coincidence that **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**coins** If you have two coins **LIFESTYLES** Proverbs are the coins of the people **SAYINGS**

**coitum** *Post coitum omne animal triste* **SEX**

**cold** As the day lengthens, so the cold **WEATHER** cold April the barn will fill **SPRING** Cold hands,  
warm heart **BODY** cold May and windy **SPRING** Eat till you're cold **HEALTH** Feed a cold and  
starve a fever **SICKNESS** If you are cold, tea will warm you **DRINK** warm January, a cold May  
**WEATHER**

**colour** good horse cannot be of a bad colour **APPEARANCE**

**comb** Experience is the comb **EXPERIENCE**

**come** Easy come, easy go **EFFORT** Light come, light go **POSSESSIONS** Quickly come, quickly go  
**LOYALTY**

**comes** Tomorrow never comes **FUTURE** What goes around comes around **JUSTICE**

**coming** Coming events cast their shadow **FUTURE**

**command** He that cannot obey cannot command **LEADERSHIP**

**committee** committee is a group of the unwilling **MANAGEMENT**

**common** common danger causes common action **DANGER** Common fame is seldom to blame **FAME**

**communications** Evil communications corrupt **BEHAVIOUR**

**company** Better alone than in bad company **SOLITUDE** company makes the feast **HOSPITALITY**  
man is known by the company he **FAMILIARITY** Misery loves company **SORROW** Two is company, but three is none **FRIENDSHIP**

**comparisons** Comparisons are odious **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**complies** He that complies against his will **OPINION**

**concealed** Crime must be concealed **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**conceals** He that conceals his grief **SORROW**

**condition** Be sure you can better your condition **CHANGE**

**conduct** Courage without conduct **COURAGE**

**confess** Confess and be hanged **GUILT**

**confessed** fault confessed is half redressed **FORGIVENESS**

**confession** Confession is good for the soul **HONESTY**

**confidence** Confidence is a plant of slowth growth **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**conscience** clean conscience is a good pillow **CONSCIENCE** Conscience gets a lot of credit  
**CONSCIENCE** guilty conscience needs no accuser **CONSCIENCE** Let your conscience be your  
guide **CONSCIENCE** quiet conscience sleeps in thunder **CONSCIENCE**

**consent** Silence means consent **SILENCE**

**conservative** conservative is a liberal who's **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**constant** Constant dropping wears away **DETERMINATION**

**contact** No plan survives first contact **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**contagious** Elephants are contagious **WORDS**

**contempt** Familiarity breeds contempt **FAMILIARITY**

**contraries** Dreams go by contraries **DREAMS**

**control** You cannot control the winds **MANAGEMENT**

**controls** New circumstances, new controls **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**cook** cook is no better than her stove **COOKING** It is a poor cook that cannot lick **COOKING** Talk will not cook rice **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**cooks** All are not cooks who **COOKING** Too many cooks spoil the broth **WORK**

**cooperation** If you don't believe in cooperation **COOPERATION** If you think cooperation is **COOPERATION**

**core** Believing has a core of unbelieving **BELIEF**

**corn** Sow corn in clay **GARDENS**

**Cornwall** There are more saints in Cornwall **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**corrupt** Evil communications corrupt **BEHAVIOUR**

**corruption** Corruption of the best **EXCELLENCE** Corruption will find a dozen alibis **CORRUPTION**

**corrupts** Power corrupts **POWER**

**costs** Careless talk costs lives **GOSSIP** Civility costs nothing **MANNERS** love letter sometimes costs more **LETTERS**

**cough** Love and a cough **LOVE**

**coughs** Coughs and sneezes spread diseases **SICKNESS**

**councils** Councils of war never fight **INDECISION**

**counsel** fool may give a wise man counsel **ADVICE** Night brings counsel **ADVICE**

**count** Don't count your chickens before **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** Eat the mangoes. Do not count the trees **WAYS AND MEANS** When angry count a hundred **ANGER** You can count the apples on one tree **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**counted** Chickens are counted in the autumn **AUTUMN**

**country** everyday story of country folk **COUNTRY AND THE TOWN** God made the country **COUNTRY AND THE TOWN** Happy is the country **HISTORY** If you have not lived in the country **COUNTRY AND THE TOWN** You can take the boy out of the country **COUNTRY AND THE TOWN** Your King and country need you **ARMED FORCES**

**courage** Courage is fear that **COURAGE** Courage without conduct **COURAGE**

**course** course of true love never did run smooth **LOVE**

**courses** Horses for courses **ABILITY**

**cousin** My brother and I against my cousin **FAMILY**

**cover** Duck and cover **CAUTION** You can't tell a book by its cover **APPEARANCE**

**cow** bellowing cow soon forgets her calf **MOURNING** Better a good cow **CHARACTER** It is idle to swallow the cow **DETERMINATION** Three acres and a cow **POLITICS** Why buy a cow when milk

is so cheap [SEX](#)

**coward** bully is always a coward [COURAGE](#)

**cowards** Cowards may die many times [FEAR](#)

**cowl** cowl does not make the monk [APPEARANCE](#)

**coyote** howlin' coyote ain't stealin' no chickens [HONESTY](#)

**cradle** hand that rocks the cradle rules [WOMEN](#)

**creaking** creaking door hangs longest [SICKNESS](#)

**credit** Conscience gets a lot of credit [CONSCIENCE](#) Give credit where credit is due [PRAISE AND FLATTERY](#)

**Crediton** Kirton was a borough town [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**cried** I cried because I had no shoes [MISFORTUNES](#)

**crime** Crime doesn't pay [CRIME AND PUNISHMENT](#) Crime leaves a trail like [CRIME AND PUNISHMENT](#) Crime must be concealed [CRIME AND PUNISHMENT](#) Poverty is not a crime [POVERTY](#)

**crisis** Every crisis provides an opportunity [OPPORTUNITY](#) Never waste a good crisis [CRISES](#)

**criticism** best place for criticism [CRITICISM](#) Criticism is something [CRITICISM](#)

**crooked** God writes straight with crooked lines [GOD](#)

**crop** Good seed makes a bad crop [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#)

**cross** Cross the river by feeling [CAUTION](#) Cross the river in a crowd [COOPERATION](#) Don't cross the bridge till you come to it [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) No cross, no crown [SUFFERING](#) Why did the chicken cross the road [PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS](#)

**crosses** Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven [SUFFERING](#)

**crossing** Life is harder than crossing a field [LIFE](#)

**crow** Every cock will crow upon his own [HOME](#) One for the mouse, one for the crow [NATURE](#)

**crowd** Cross the river in a crowd [COOPERATION](#)

**crowing** whistling woman and a crowing hen [WOMEN](#)

**crown** No cross, no crown [SUFFERING](#)

**crowns** end crowns the work [ENDING](#)

**crow** On the first of March, crows begin [SPRING](#)

**cruelty** Beauty without cruelty [SUFFERING](#)

**cry** Don't cry before you're hurt [COURAGE](#) Much cry and little wool [EFFORT](#) Sing before breakfast, cry [FEELINGS](#)

**crying** It is no use crying over spilt milk **MISFORTUNES**

**cuckoo** cuckoo comes in April **BIRDS** cuckoo praises the rooster **PRAISE AND FLATTERY**

**culture** man without culture is like **APPEARANCE**

**cup** Full cup, steady hand **CAUTION** last drop makes the cup run over **EXCESS** There's many a slip  
'twixt cup and lip **MISTAKES**

**Cupar** He that will to Cupar **DETERMINATION**

**curantur** *Similia similibus curantur* **MEDICINE**

**cure** drunkard's cure is drink again **DRUNKENNESS** No cure, no pay **BUSINESS** Prevention is better  
than cure **FORESIGHT**

**cured** What can't be cured must be endured **PATIENCE**

**curried** short horse is soon curried **WORK**

**curses** Curses, like chickens, come home **FEELINGS**

**custom** bad custom is like a good cake **CUSTOM AND HABIT** Custom is mummified by habit  
**CUSTOM AND HABIT**

**customer** customer is always right **BUSINESS**

**cut** Cut your coat according to your cloth **PRACTICALITY** Don't cut off your nose to spite  
**REVENGE** Measure seven times, cut once **PREPARATION AND READINESS** short cut is often a  
wrong cut **WAYS AND MEANS** slice off a cut loaf isn't missed **IGNORANCE**

**dance** Money makes the dog dance **MONEY** One who cannot dance blames **DANCE** They that dance  
must pay the fiddler **POWER** We're fools whether we dance or **DANCE** When you ask a bear to  
dance **DANGER** When you go to dance, take heed **DANCE**

**dances** He that lives in hope dances to an ill tune **HOPE**

**dancing** All dancing girls are nineteen **YOUTH** You need more than dancing shoes **DANCE**

**danger** common danger causes common action **DANGER** lone sheep is in danger from the wolf  
**SOLITUDE** Out of debt, out of danger **DEBT AND BORROWING** post of honour is the post of  
danger **DANGER**

**dangerous** Delays are dangerous **HASTE AND DELAY** little knowledge is a dangerous thing  
**KNOWLEDGE**

**dares** Who dares wins **DANGER**

**dark** All cats are grey in the dark **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** It is dark at the foot of the  
lighthouse **IGNORANCE**

**darkest** darkest hour is just before dawn **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**darkness** An inch ahead is darkness **FUTURE**

**darling** Better be an old man's darling **MARRIAGE**

**daughter** Like mother, like daughter **FAMILY**

**dawn** darkest hour is just before dawn **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**day** Action this day **ACTION AND INACTION** Another day, another dollar **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** apple a day keeps the doctor away **HEALTH** As the day lengthens, so the cold **WEATHER** Be the day weary or be the day long **TIME** better the day, the better the deed **WORK** day has eyes, the night has ears **SECRECY** day without work is a day without food **IDLENESS** Every dog has his day **OPPORTUNITY** Not a day without a line **ART** Rome was not built in a day **PATIENCE** Sufficient unto the day is the evil **WORRY** Tomorrow is another day **FUTURE** Tomorrow is often the busiest day **FUTURE** What is done by night appears by day **SECRECY** Who teaches me for a day is my father **TEACHING**

**daydream** Vision without action is a daydream **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**daylight** morning daylight appears plainer **TIME**

**days** He who can see three days ahead **FORESIGHT** March borrowed from April three days **SPRING** Treat your guest as a guest for two days **HOSPITALITY**

**dead** Better red than dead **CHOICE** Blessed are the dead that the rain **DEATH** Dead men don't bite **ENEMIES** Dead men tell no tales **SECRECY** It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes **AMBITION** Let the dead bury their dead **MOURNING** live dog is better than a dead lion **LIFE** Never speak ill of the dead **REPUTATION** Stone-dead hath no fellow **DEATH** To dream of the dead is a sign of rain **DREAMS**

**deadly** female of the species is more deadly **WOMEN**

**deaf** deaf husband and a blind wife **MARRIAGE** There's none so deaf as those **PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE**

**dear** Experience keeps a dear school **EXPERIENCE** Far-fetched and dear-bought **WOMEN** Gold may be bought too dear **VALUE**

**death** Death is nature's way **DEATH** Death is the great leveller **DEATH** Death pays all debts **DEATH** Life without a friend, is death **FRIENDSHIP** Nothing is certain but death **CERTAINTY AND DOUBT** They offered death **CHOICE** Twice-cooked cabbage is death **FOOD**

**debt** man in debt is caught in a net **DEBT AND BORROWING** national debt, if it is not excessive **DEBT AND BORROWING** Out of debt, out of danger **DEBT AND BORROWING**

**debts** Death pays all debts **DEATH**

**deceit** Deceit is a lie **DECEPTION**

**deceptive** Appearances are deceptive **APPEARANCE**



**declared** When war is declared, Truth is the first **WARFARE**

**deed** better the day, the better the deed **WORK** No good deed goes unpunished **VIRTUE**

**deep** Still waters run deep **CHARACTER**

**deepest** Where the river is deepest **CHARACTER**

**defence** Attack is the best form of defence **COURAGE**

**deferred** Hope deferred makes the heart sick **HOPE**

**defiled** He that touches pitch shall be defiled **GOOD AND EVIL**

**delayed** Justice delayed is justice denied **JUSTICE**

**delays** Delays are dangerous **HASTE AND DELAY**

**Delhi** Delhi is far away **CAUTION**

**delight** Red sky at night, shepherd's delight **WEATHER**

**delved** When Adam delved and Eve span **RANK**

**democracy** Democracy is better than tyranny **POLITICS**

**denied** Justice delayed is justice denied **JUSTICE**

**deny** Deny self for self's sake **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**deserve** None but the brave deserve the fair **COURAGE**

**desperate** Desperate diseases must have **NECESSITY**

**destroy** Whom the gods would destroy **MIND**

**determined** determined fellow can do more with **DETERMINATION**

**Devil** Better the Devil you know **FAMILIARITY** Devil can quote Scripture **SAYINGS** Devil finds work for idle hands **IDLENESS** Devil is not so black as he is painted **REPUTATION** Devil looks after his own **CHANCE AND LUCK** Devil makes his Christmas pies **LAW** Devil's children have the Devil's luck **CHANCE AND LUCK** Devil was sick, the Devil a saint **GRATITUDE** Every man for himself, and the Devil **SELF-INTEREST** Give the Devil his due **JUSTICE** God sends meat, but the Devil **COOKING** good painter can draw a devil **ART** Haste is from the Devil **HASTE AND DELAY** He who sups with the Devil **CAUTION** Home is home, as the Devil said **LAW** idle brain is the Devil's workshop **IDLENESS** It is easier to raise the Devil **BEGINNING** Needs must when the devil drives **NECESSITY** Never bid the Devil good morrow **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS** Talk of the Devil **MEETING AND PARTING** Tell the truth and shame the Devil **TRUTH** Truth makes the Devil blush **TRUTH** What is got under the Devil's back **GOOD AND EVIL** Why should the Devil have all the best **MUSIC** Young saint, old devil **HUMAN RACE**

**dew** guest is like the morning dew **HOSPITALITY**

**diamond** Diamond cuts diamond **EQUALITY** diamond is forever **WEALTH**

**die** Cowards may die many times **FEAR** Don't die of ignorance **HEALTH** Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die **LIFESTYLES** elephant does not die of one broken rib **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** Good Americans when they die **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** good die young **VIRTUE** Life's a bitch, and then you die **LIFE** More die of food than famine **HEALTH** Old habits die hard **CUSTOM AND HABIT** Old soldiers never die **ARMED FORCES** Root, hog, or die **WORK** See Naples and die **TOWNS AND CITIES** Whom the gods love die young **YOUTH** You can only die once **DEATH** You'll die facing the monument **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** Young men may die, but old men **DEATH**

**dies** Call no man happy till he dies **HAPPINESS** When an elder dies, it is as if **AGE** When a tiger dies it leaves its skin **REPUTATION**

**diet** best doctors are Dr Quiet, Dr Diet **MEDICINE**

**differ** Tastes differ **LIKES AND DISLIKES**

**different** Different strokes for different folks **CHOICE**

**difficult** difficult is done at once **ACHIEVEMENT** Equality is difficult, but superiority **LEADERSHIP**

**difficulty** England's difficulty is Ireland's **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**dig** Dig for victory **GARDENS** Dig the well before you are thirsty **PREPARATION AND READINESS**  
If you want revenge, dig two graves **REVENGE**

**digging** When you are in a hole, stop digging **APOLOGY AND EXCUSES**

**diligence** Diligence is the mother of **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**dinner** After dinner rest a while **EATING** better the salad, the worse the dinner **COOKING** No dinner without bread **FOOD**

**dirt** Throw dirt enough, and some will stick **REPUTATION** We must eat a peck of dirt **EATING**

**dirty** Dirty water will quench fire **SEX** One does not wash one's dirty linen **SECRECY**

**disaster** When disaster strikes **CRISES**

**discretion** Discretion is the better part **CAUTION**

**disease** From the bitterness of disease, man learns the sweetness of health **SICKNESS** imaginary ailment is worse than a disease **SICKNESS** Life is a sexually transmitted disease **LIFE**

**diseases** Coughs and sneezes spread diseases **SICKNESS** Desperate diseases must have **NECESSITY**  
Diseases come on horseback but go away on foot **SICKNESS**

**disgrace** Poverty is no disgrace **POVERTY**

**dish** Better are small fish than an empty dish **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** Revenge is a dish that can be eaten **REVENGE**

**disillusion** Absence is the mother of disillusion **ABSENCE**

**disposes** Man proposes, God disposes **FATE**

**distance** Distance lends enchantment **APPEARANCE**

**ditch** fall into a ditch makes you wiser **EXPERIENCE**

**divide** Divide and rule **GOVERNMENT**

**divided** United we stand, divided we **COOPERATION**

**divine** To err is human (to forgive divine) **MISTAKES**

**do** Do as I say, not as I do **BEHAVIOUR** Do as you would be done by **LIFESTYLES** Do unto others as you would they **LIFESTYLES** Make do and mend **THRIFT** Not guilty, but don't do it again **GUILT** You never know what you can do **COURAGE**

**doctor** apple a day keeps the doctor away **HEALTH**

**doctors** best doctors are Dr Quiet, Dr Diet **MEDICINE** More doctors recommend Camels **SMOKING**

**doers** Evil doers are evil dreaders **CONSCIENCE**

**dog** barking dog never bites **ACTION AND INACTION** Better be the head of a dog **POWER** Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast **WORDS AND DEEDS** cat, the rat, and Lovell the dog **GOVERNMENT** Dog does not eat dog **COOPERATION** dog is a lion in his own house **DOGS** dog is for life, not just for Christmas **DOGS** dog that will fetch a bone **GOSSIP** Every dog has his day **OPPORTUNITY** Feed a dog for three days **CATS** Give a dog a bad name and hang **GOSSIP** He is a good dog who goes to church **BEHAVIOUR** If you are not the lead dog **LEADERSHIP** It is a poor dog that's not worth **VALUE** It is easy to find a stick to beat a dog **APOLOGY AND EXCUSES** live dog is better than a dead lion **LIFE** Love me, love my dog **DOGS** Money makes the dog dance **MONEY** quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog **WORDS** There are more ways of killing a dog **WAYS AND MEANS** Why keep a dog and bark yourself **MANAGEMENT** woman, a dog, and a walnut tree **WOMEN** You can't teach an old dog new tricks **CUSTOM AND HABIT**

**dogged** It's dogged as does it **DETERMINATION**

**dogs** Dogs bark, but the caravan goes **FUTILITY** If you lie down with dogs **FAMILIARITY** Let sleeping dogs lie **CAUTION** While two dogs are fighting **ARGUMENT**

**dollar** Another day, another dollar **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**done** Do as you would be done by **LIFESTYLES** If you want a thing done well **SELF-INTEREST** If you want something done **ACTION AND INACTION** Whatever man has done **ACHIEVEMENT** What's done cannot be undone **PAST**

**don't** Don't ask, don't tell **SECRECY** Don't care was made to care **RESPONSIBILITY**

**door** creaking door hangs longest **SICKNESS** door must be either shut or open **CHOICE** golden key can open any door **CORRUPTION** postern door makes a thief **OPPORTUNITY** Teachers open the

door **EDUCATION** When one door shuts, another opens **OPPORTUNITY** When poverty comes in at the door **POVERTY**

**dose** dose of adversity is often **ADVERSITY**

**double** Shared joy is double joy **SYMPATHY**

**doubt** When in doubt, do nowt **ACTION AND INACTION**

**dough** Drive for show, and putt for dough **SPORTS AND GAMES**

**down** Up like a rocket, down like a stick **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** What goes up must come down **FATE**

**dragons** Dragons beget dragons **FAMILY** Here be dragons **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES**

**drama** We won't make a drama out of **CAUTION**

**draw** good painter can draw a devil **ART**

**draws** Whosoever draws his sword against **REVOLUTION AND REBELLION**

**dreaders** Evil doers are evil dreaders **CONSCIENCE**

**dream** Dream of a funeral **DREAMS** peace is the dream of the wise **PEACE** To dream of the dead is a sign of rain **DREAMS** You cannot dream yourself into **CHARACTER**

**dreaming** Those who lose dreaming **DREAMS**

**dreams** Dreams go by contraries **DREAMS** Dreams retain the infirmities of **DREAMS** God sleeps in the stone, dreams **HUMAN RACE** Morning dreams come true **DREAMS**

**dress** Dress for the job you want **DRESS**

**drink** Don't ask a man to drink and drive **DRINK** drunkard's cure is drink again **DRUNKENNESS**  
Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow **LIFESTYLES** When you drink water, remember **GRATITUDE**

**drinking** When drinking water, remember the **PARENTS**

**drinks** He that drinks beer, thinks beer **DRUNKENNESS**

**dripping** dripping June sets all in tune **SUMMER**

**drive** Don't ask a man to drink and drive **DRINK** Drive for show, and putt for dough **SPORTS AND GAMES**

**drives** Needs must when the devil drives **NECESSITY** One nail drives out another **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**drop** last drop makes the cup run over **EXCESS**

**dropping** Constant dropping wears away **DETERMINATION**

**drops** Drops that gather one by one **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**drowning** drowning man will clutch at a straw [HOPE](#)

**drunk** You have drunk from wells you did not [PAST](#)

**drunkard** drunkard's cure is drink again [DRUNKENNESS](#)

**druv** Sussex won't be druv [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**dry** Sow dry and set wet [GARDENS](#)

**duck** Duck and cover [CAUTION](#) son of a duck floats [FAMILY](#)

**due** Give credit where credit is due [PRAISE AND FLATTERY](#) Give the Devil his due [JUSTICE](#)

**dumb** It takes forty dumb animals [DRESS](#)

**duster** Rooster today, feather duster tomorrow [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

**Dutch** God made the world, but the Dutch made Holland [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

**duty** first duty of a soldier [ARMED FORCES](#)

**dyke** February fill dyke, be it black or white [WINTER](#)

**eagle** Only the eagle can gaze at the sun [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#)

**eagles** Eagles don't catch flies [CHARACTER](#)

**early** Don't hurry—start early [HASTE AND DELAY](#) early bird catches the worm [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) early man never borrows from the late [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) Early to bed and early to rise [HEALTH](#) Vote early and vote often [POLITICS](#)

**earned** penny saved is a penny earned [THRIFT](#)

**ears** day has eyes, the night has ears [SECRECY](#) Fields have eyes and woods have ears [SECRECY](#) Little pitchers have large ears [SECRECY](#) Walls have ears [SECRECY](#)

**earth** Did the earth move for you [SEX](#) earth is man's only friend [ENVIRONMENT](#) earth laughs at him who [ENVIRONMENT](#) Touch the earth lightly [ENVIRONMENT](#) We do not inherit the earth [ENVIRONMENT](#)

**easier** It is easier to build two chimneys [ARCHITECTURE](#) It is easier to raise the Devil [BEGINNING](#)

**east** East is east, and west is west [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#) East, west, home's best [HOME](#) When the wind is in the east [WEATHER](#)

**Easter** Christmas with the family, Easter with whomever [CHRISTMAS](#) Green Christmas, white Easter [WEATHER](#)

**easy** Beginning is easy [BEGINNING](#) Easy come, easy go [EFFORT](#) It is easy to be generous with [GENEROSITY](#) It is easy to be wise after the event [FORESIGHT](#) It is easy to find a stick to beat a dog [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#)

**eat** Dog does not eat dog [COOPERATION](#) Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow [LIFESTYLES](#) Eat leeks in March and ramsons in May [HEALTH](#) Eat the mangoes. Do not count the trees [WAYS AND MEANS](#) Eat till you're cold [HEALTH](#) Eat to live, not live to eat [EATING](#) Fear less, hope more; Eat less [LIFESTYLES](#) If you won't work you shan't eat [IDLENESS](#) We must eat a peck of dirt [EATING](#) You are what you eat [EATING](#)

**eaten** Revenge is a dish that can be eaten [REVENGE](#)

**eating** Appetite comes with eating [EXPERIENCE](#) proof of the pudding is in the eating [HYPOTHESIS AND FACT](#)

**eats** way one eats is the way one works [EATING](#)

**educate** inform, educate, and entertain [BROADCASTING](#)

**education** Education doesn't come by bumping [EDUCATION](#) Genius without education [EDUCATION](#) Never let your education [EDUCATION](#)

**egg** As good be an addled egg [IDLENESS](#) Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow [PRESENT](#) Go to work on an egg [EATING](#) He who steals an egg will steal a camel [HONESTY](#) Power is like an egg [POWER](#) same fire that hardens the egg [CHARACTER](#)

**eggs** Don't put all your eggs in one basket [CAUTION](#) There is reason in the roasting of eggs [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#) You can't unscramble scrambled eggs [FUTILITY](#)

**egoism** Apology is only egoism [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#)

**elder** When an elder dies, it is as if [AGE](#)

**elementary** Elementary, my dear Watson [THINKING](#)

**elephant** elephant does not die of one broken rib [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#) When an elephant is in trouble [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

**elephants** Elephants are contagious [WORDS](#) When elephants fight, it is the grass [POWER](#)

**eleven** Rain before seven, fine before eleven [WEATHER](#)

**elm** Every elm has its man [TREES](#)

**emperor** mountains are high, and the emperor [GOVERNMENT](#)

**empty** Better are small fish than an empty dish [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#) Empty sacks will never stand upright [POVERTY](#) Empty vessels make the most sound [FOOLS](#)

**enchantment** Distance lends enchantment [APPEARANCE](#)

**end** All good things must come to an end [ENDING](#) Better an end with terror [ENDING](#) end crowns the work [ENDING](#) End good, all good [ENDING](#) end justifies the means [WAYS AND MEANS](#) Everything has an end [ENDING](#) He who wills the end [DETERMINATION](#) In my end is my beginning [ENDING](#) sea of learning has no end [KNOWLEDGE](#)

**endured** What can't be cured must be endured **PATIENCE**

**enemy** Action is worry's worst enemy **ACTION AND INACTION** enemy of my enemy is my friend  
**ENEMIES** Love your enemy **ENEMIES** Man is the enemy of **IGNORANCE** Science has no enemy  
but the ignorant **SCIENCE** There is no little enemy **ENEMIES**

**England** England is the paradise of women **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** England's difficulty is  
Ireland's **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**Englishman** Englishman's home is his castle **HOME** Englishman's word is his bond **COUNTRIES  
AND PEOPLES**

**enjoy** Enjoy the present moment **PRESENT**

**enjoyable** Idleness is never enjoyable **IDLENESS**

**enlightened** mind enlightened is like heaven **MIND**

**enlightenment** Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water **LIFESTYLES**

**enough** Enough is as good as a feast **MODERATION** Enough is enough **MODERATION**

**entertain** inform, educate, and entertain **BROADCASTING**

**envied** Better be envied than pitied **ENVY**

**envy** Envy eats nothing but its own heart **ENVY** Envy feeds on the living **ENVY** If envy were a fever  
**ENVY**

**equality** Equality is difficult, but superiority **LEADERSHIP**

**err** To err is human but to really **COMPUTING** To err is human (to forgive divine) **MISTAKES**

**error** old error is always more popular **TRUTH** Essex

**Essex** Essex stiles, Kentish miles **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**eternal** Hope springs eternal **HOPE**

**ethics** Good ethics start with good facts **MEDICINE**

**Eve** When Adam delved and Eve span **RANK**

**even** Don't get mad, get even **REVENGE**

**evening** liar's candle lasts till evening **LIES** morning knows no more than the evening **SLEEP**

**event** It is easy to be wise after the event **FORESIGHT**

**events** Coming events cast their shadow **FUTURE**

**ever** Are you now or have you ever been **POLITICS** Nothing is for ever **CHANGE**

**every** Every man to his taste **LIKES AND DISLIKES** Every painter paints himself **ART**

**everybody** Everybody's business is nobody's **RESPONSIBILITY** What everybody says must be true  
**TRUTH**

**everyday** everyday story of country folk [COUNTRY AND THE TOWN](#)

**everything** Everything has an end [ENDING](#) Money isn't everything [MONEY](#) There is a time for everything [TIME](#)

**evidence** Absence of evidence [ABSENCE](#) What the soldier said isn't evidence [GOSSIP](#)

**evil** Evil communications corrupt [BEHAVIOUR](#) Evil doers are evil dreaders [CONSCIENCE](#) great book is a great evil [BOOKS](#) Money is the root of all evil [MONEY](#) Never do evil that good may come [BEHAVIOUR](#) See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil [VIRTUE](#) Sufficient unto the day is the evil [WORRY](#)

**evils** Of two evils choose the less [CHOICE](#)

**example** Example is better than precept [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

**exception** exception proves the rule [HYPOTHESIS AND FACT](#) There is an exception to every rule [HYPOTHESIS AND FACT](#)

**exceptional** Exceptional times require [NECESSITY](#)

**excessive** national debt, if it is not excessive [DEBT AND BORROWING](#)

**exchange** fair exchange is no robbery [JUSTICE](#)

**excuse** bad excuse is better than [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#) Ignorance of the law is no excuse [LAW](#)

**excuses** Don't make excuses [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#) He who excuses himself, accuses [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#)

**exercise** Those who do not find time for exercise [HEALTH](#)

**expands** Work expands so as to fill the time [WORK](#)

**expect** What can you expect from a pig [CHARACTER](#)

**expects** Blessed is he who expects nothing [HOPE](#)

**experience** Experience is the best teacher [EXPERIENCE](#) Experience is the comb [EXPERIENCE](#)

Experience is the father [EXPERIENCE](#) Experience keeps a dear school [EXPERIENCE](#) Some folks speak from experience [EXPERIENCE](#)

**extremes** Extremes meet [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#)

**extremity** Man's extremity is God's opportunity [RELIGION](#)

**eye** Beauty is in the eye of the beholder [BEAUTY](#) eye for an eye makes [REVENGE](#) eye of a master does more work [EMPLOYMENT](#) Keep one eye on the frying-pan [COOKING](#) Please your eye and plague [BEAUTY](#) quickness of the hand deceives the eye [DECEPTION](#) What the eye doesn't see, the heart [IGNORANCE](#)

**eyes** buyer has need of a hundred eyes [BUYING AND SELLING](#) day has eyes, the night has ears [SECRECY](#) eyes are the window of the soul [BODY](#) eyes believe themselves [CERTAINTY AND](#)



**DOUBT** Fields have eyes and woods have ears **SECRECY** Four eyes see more than two  
**COOPERATION** Hawks will not pick out hawks' eyes **COOPERATION**

**fable** History is a fable **HISTORY**

**face** He who slaps his own face **MISTAKES** Monday's child is fair of face **BEAUTY** Turn your face  
to the sun **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**fact** Fact is stranger than fiction **TRUTH**

**facts** Facts are stubborn things **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT** Good ethics start with good facts  
**MEDICINE**

**fail** He who fails to plan, plans to fail **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** To fail to prepare is to prepare to  
fail **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**fails** He who fails to plan, plans to fail **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** When all fruit fails, welcome haws  
**NECESSITY**

**failure** Success has many fathers, while failure **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**faint** Faint heart never won fair lady **COURAGE**

**fair** All's fair in love and war **JUSTICE** Faint heart never won fair lady **COURAGE** Fair exchange is  
no robbery **JUSTICE** Fair play's a jewel **JUSTICE** fair skin hides seven defects **APPEARANCE**  
Give and take is fair play **JUSTICE** Monday's child is fair of face **BEAUTY** None but the brave  
deserve the fair **COURAGE** Saint Swithin's day, if thou be fair **SUMMER** Turn about is fair play  
**JUSTICE**

**faith** Faith will move mountains **BELIEF**

**fake** Fake it 'til you make it **BEHAVIOUR**

**fall** bigger they are, the harder they fall **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** Even monkeys sometimes fall off  
a tree **MISTAKES** fall into a ditch makes you wiser **EXPERIENCE** Fall seven times, stand up eight  
**DETERMINATION** Pride goes before a fall **PRIDE** Spring forward, fall back **TIME**

**fallen** Do not laugh at the fallen **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**falling** Falling leaves have to return **HOME** Never try to catch a falling knife **BUSINESS**

**falls** apple never falls far from the tree **FAMILY** As a tree falls, so shall it lie **DEATH** Between two  
stools one falls **INDECISION** Hasty climbers have sudden falls **AMBITION** If the sky falls we shall  
catch larks **EFFORT**

**falsehood** To tell a falsehood is like the cut of **LIES**

**fame** Common fame is seldom to blame **FAME**

**familiarity** Familiarity breeds contempt **FAMILIARITY**

**family** Christmas with the family **CHRISTMAS** family that prays together stays **RELIGION** large family, quick help **FAMILY**

**famine** More die of food than famine **HEALTH**

**far** Delhi is far away **CAUTION** Far-fetched and dear-bought **WOMEN** God is high above, and the tsar **GOVERNMENT** Thursday's child has far to go **TRAVEL**

**fast** Bad news travels fast **NEWS AND JOURNALISM** He who travels fast, travels alone **COOPERATION** moneyless man goes fast through **POVERTY**

**fastest** He travels the fastest who travels alone **SOLITUDE**

**fat** green Yule makes a fat churchyard **CHRISTMAS** opera isn't over till the fat lady sings **ENDING** Pigs get fat, but hogs get **GREED**

**fatal** Indecision is fatal **INDECISION**

**fate** Fate can be taken by the horns **FATE**

**father** child is the father of the man **CHARACTER** father is a banker provided by nature **PARENTS** Like father, like son **FAMILY** Who teaches me for a day is my father **TEACHING** wish is father to the thought **OPINION**

**fathers** Success has many fathers, while failure **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**fault** fault confessed is half redressed **FORGIVENESS** Our memory is always at fault **MIND**

**faults** Wink at sma' faults, ye hae great anes **MISTAKES**

**favour** Kissing goes by favour **LOVE**

**fear** Courage is fear that **COURAGE** Do right and fear no man **CONSCIENCE** Fear less, hope more; Eat less **LIFESTYLES** Fear makes the wolf bigger **FEAR** Fear the Greeks bearing gifts **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**feast** After the feast, comes the reckoning **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** company makes the feast **HOSPITALITY** Enough is as good as a feast **MODERATION**

**feather** Birds of a feather flock together **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** Rooster today, feather duster tomorrow **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**feathers** Fine feathers make fine birds **DRESS**

**feature** It's not a bug, it's a feature **COMPUTING**

**February** February fill dyke, be it black or white **WINTER**

**fed** wolves are well fed and the sheep **DANGER**

**feed** Feed a cold and starve a fever **SICKNESS** Feed a dog for three days **CATS** Give a man fish, and you feed **CHARITY**

**feeding** Feeding a snake with milk **CHARACTER**

**feeds** Envy feeds on the living [ENVY](#)

**feel** Never mind the quality, feel the width [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#)

**feet** cat always lands on its feet [CATS](#) When you pray, move your feet [RELIGION](#)

**fellow** Stone-dead hath no fellow [DEATH](#)

**female** female of the species is more deadly [WOMEN](#)

**fence** fence between makes love more [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#) Like a fence, character cannot [CHARACTER](#)

**fencepost** see a turtle on a fencepost [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#)

**fences** Good fences make good neighbours [NEIGHBOURS](#)

**fern** As one fern frond dies, another [LEADERSHIP](#)

**fever** Feed a cold and starve a fever [SICKNESS](#) If envy were a fever [ENVY](#)

**few** Few have too much, and fewer too little [WEALTH](#) You win a few, you lose a few [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

**fiction** Fact is stranger than fiction [TRUTH](#) History is fiction [HISTORY](#) Truth is stranger than fiction [TRUTH](#)

**fiddler** They that dance must pay the fiddler [POWER](#)

**field** Life is harder than crossing a field [LIFE](#)

**fields** Fields have eyes and woods have ears [SECRECY](#)

**fifth** Please to remember the Fifth [TRUST AND TREACHERY](#)

**fight** Councils of war never fight [INDECISION](#) Fight fire with fire [WAYS AND MEANS](#) war will cease when men refuse to fight [WARFARE](#) When elephants fight [POWER](#)

**fighting** While two dogs are fighting [ARGUMENT](#)

**fight** He who fights and runs away [CAUTION](#)

**fill** Work expands so as to fill the time [WORK](#)

**find** Safe bind, safe find [CAUTION](#) Seek and ye shall find [ACTION AND INACTION](#) Speak as you find [REPUTATION](#) Those who hide can find [SECRECY](#)

**finders** Finders keepers (losers weepers) [POSSESSIONS](#) Seekers are finders [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**findings** Findings keepings [POSSESSIONS](#)

**fine** Fine feathers make fine birds [DRESS](#) Fine words butter no parsnips [WORDS AND DEEDS](#) Rain before seven, fine before eleven [WEATHER](#)

**fingers** Fingers were made before forks [EATING](#) Let your fingers do the walking [TECHNOLOGY](#)

**fire** burnt child dreads the fire **EXPERIENCE** Dirty water will quench fire **SEX** Fight fire with fire **WAYS AND MEANS** Fire is a good servant, but a bad master **WAYS AND MEANS** fire is winter's fruit **WINTER** Hire slow, fire fast **MANAGEMENT** If you play with fire you get burnt **DANGER** It is easy to kindle a fire **RELATIONSHIPS** No smoke without fire **REPUTATION** same fire that hardens **CHARACTER**

**fired** No manager ever got fired **COMPUTING**

**first** First catch your hare **WAYS AND MEANS** first day a guest, the second day **HOSPITALITY** First impressions are **BEGINNING** First things first **PATIENCE** First thoughts are best **INDECISION** Give me a child for the first seven **EDUCATION** If at first you don't succeed **DETERMINATION** In settling an island, the first building **ARC HITECTURE** It is the first step **BEGINNING** No plan survives first contact **PREPARATION AND READINESS** On the first of March, crows begin **SPRING** There is always a first time **BEGINNING** Women and children first **DANGER**

**fish** All is fish that comes to the net **OPPORTUNITY** best fish swim near the bottom **DETERMINATION** Better are small fish than an empty dish **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** Big fish eat little fish **POWER** big fish is caught with a big bait **PRACTICALITY** cat would eat fish **INDECISION** Don't bargain for fish that are still **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** fish always stinks from the head **LEADERSHIP** Fish and guests stink after three days **HOSPITALITY** Fish follow the bait **TEMPTATION** fish will soon be caught that nibbles **TEMPTATION** Fish, to taste good, must swim **COOKING** Give a man a fish, and you feed **CHARITY** Keep your own fish-guts **CHARITY** Little fish are sweet **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES** There are as good fish in the sea **LOVE** Those who eat salty fish **RESPONSIBILITY**

**fishing** It is good fishing in troubled waters **OPPORTUNITY**

**fist** No fist is big enough to hide the sky **GOVERNMENT**

**fit** One size does not fit all **WAYS AND MEANS**

**fits** If the cap fits, wear it **NAMES** If the shoe fits, wear it **NAMES**

**fix** If it ain't broke, don't fix it **ACTION AND INACTION**

**flag** Trade follows the flag **BUSINESS**

**flagpole** Let's run it up the flagpole **ADVERTISING**

**flattery** Flattery is soft soap **PRAISE AND FLATTERY** Flattery, like perfume **PRAISE AND FLATTERY** Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery **PRAISE AND FLATTERY**

**fleas** fleas, and princes **ROYALTY**

**flee** guilty flee when no man pursueth **GUILT**

**flew** bird never flew on one wing **GENEROSITY**

**flies** Eagles don't catch flies **CHARACTER** Honey catches more flies than vinegar **WAYS AND MEANS** shut mouth catches no flies **SILENCE** Time flies **TRANSCIENCE** Time flies when you're having fun **HAPPINESS**

**flight** While heron is a bird of a single flight **BIRDS**

**floats** No matter how long a log floats **CHANGE** son of a duck floats **FAMILY**

**flock** Birds of a feather flock together **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** There is no good flock without **DOGS**

**flow** Do not push the river, it will flow **FUTILITY**

**flowers** All the flowers of tomorrow **FLOWERS** April showers bring forth May flowers **SPRING** No flowers by request **MOURNING** Say it with flowers **FLOWERS**

**flows** Where water flows, a channel **PATIENCE**

**fly** Pigs may fly **BELIEF**

**foe** willing foe and sea room **ARMED FORCES**

**fold** Do not fold, spindle or **COMPUTING**

**folk** everyday story of country folk **COUNTRY AND THE TOWN** There's nowt so queer as folk **HUMAN RACE**

**folks** Different strokes for different folks **CHOICE** Young folks think old folks to be fools **YOUTH**

**follow** Do not follow where the path may lead **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES** Fish follow the bait **TEMPTATION**

**follower** good leader is also a good follower **LEADERSHIP**

**follows** He that follows freits **FUTURE** Learning is a treasure that follows **KNOWLEDGE**

**fonder** Absence makes the heart grow fonder **ABSENCE**

**food** day without work is a day without food **IDLENESS** Food without hospitality is medicine **HOSPITALITY** More die of food than famine **HEALTH** with your food basket **COOPERATION** Your food is your medicine **HEALTH**

**fool** fool and his money are soon parted **FOOLS** fool at forty is a fool indeed **AGE** fool may give a wise man **ADVICE** Fool me once, shame on you **DECEPTION** He that teaches himself has a fool for **TEACHING** man who is his own lawyer has a fool **LAW** There's no fool like an old fool **AGE**

**foolish** Penny wise and pound foolish **THRIFT**

**fools** Children and fools tell the truth **HONESTY** Fools and bairns should never see **WORK** Fools ask questions that wise men **KNOWLEDGE** Fools build houses and wise men **FOOLS** Fools for luck **CHANCE AND LUCK** Fortune favours fools **FOOLS** We're fools whether we dance or **DANCE** Young folks think old folks to be fools **YOUTH**

**foot** Diseases come on horseback but go away on foot **SICKNESS** It is dark at the foot of the lighthouse **IGNORANCE** No foot, no horse **HORSES** One white foot, buy him **HORSES**

**footprints** Take only photos, leave only footprints **ENVIRONMENT**

**forbear** Bear and forbear **PATIENCE**

**forearmed** Forewarned is forearmed **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**foresight** If a man's foresight were as good **FORESIGHT**

**forest** If you are afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** Inside the forest there are many birds **ABILITY** When a pine needle falls in the forest **KNOWLEDGE** When the axe came into the forest **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**foretold** Long foretold, long last **WEATHER**

**forever** diamond is forever **WEALTH**

**forewarned** Forewarned is forearmed **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**forget** Good to forgive, best to forget **FORGIVENESS** Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and **TEACHING**

**forgets** bellowing cow soon forgets her calf **MOURNING** Nobody forgets a good teacher **TEACHING** river that forgets its source **GRATITUDE**

**forgive** Good to forgive, best to forget **FORGIVENESS** To err is human (to forgive divine) **MISTAKES** To know all is to forgive all **FORGIVENESS**

**forgiving** Forgiving the unrepentant **FORGIVENESS**

**forks** Fingers were made before forks **EATING**

**Fortran** If you can't do it in Fortran **COMPUTING**

**fortune** Fortune favours fools **FOOLS** Fortune favours the brave **COURAGE** great fortune depends on luck **CHANCE AND LUCK** wise man turns chance into good fortune **OPPORTUNITY**

**forty** fool at forty is a fool indeed **AGE** It takes forty dumb animals **DRESS** Life begins at forty **AGE**

**forward** Spring forward, fall back **TIME**

**fouls** It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest **LOYALTY**

**foundation** Adversity is the foundation **ADVERSITY**

**four** Four eyes see more than two **COOPERATION**

**fox** fox may grow grey, but never **AGE** fox should not be on the jury **JUSTICE** quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog **WORDS** sleeping fox counts hens **CHARACTER**

**free** best things in life are free **MONEY** only free cheese is in a mousetrap **TEMPTATION** There's no such thing as a free lunch **TEMPTATION** Thought is free **OPINION**

**freedom** passion for freedom never dies [POLITICS](#)

**freits** He that follows freits [FUTURE](#)

**Friday** Friday's child is loving and giving [GENEROSITY](#)

**friend** earth is man's only friend [ENVIRONMENT](#) enemy of my enemy is my friend [ENEMIES](#) friend in need is a friend indeed [FRIENDSHIP](#) friend to all is a friend to none [FRIENDSHIP](#) Hold a true friend with both your hands [FRIENDSHIP](#) Lend your money, and lose your friend [DEBT AND BORROWING](#) Life without a friend, is death [FRIENDSHIP](#) road to a friend's house is never long [FRIENDSHIP](#)

**friends** Be kind to your friends [FRIENDSHIP](#) best of friends must part [MEETING AND PARTING](#) Even your closest friends won't [HEALTH](#) Save us from our friends [FRIENDSHIP](#) Short reckonings make long friends [DEBT AND BORROWING](#) We have no friends but the mountains [DANGER](#)

**friendship** hedge between keeps friendship green [NEIGHBOURS](#) pot boils, friendship lives [HOSPITALITY](#)

**frog** child of a frog is a frog [FAMILY](#) frog in a well knows nothing of [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#)

**frond** As one fern frond dies, another [LEADERSHIP](#)

**frost** Clear moon, frost soon [WEATHER](#)

**frosts** So many mists in March, so many frosts [SPRING](#)

**fruit** fire is winter's fruit [WINTER](#) He that would eat fruit [EFFORT](#) September blow soft till the fruit's [AUTUMN](#) stolen fruit are sweet [TEMPTATION](#) tree is known by its fruit [CHARACTER](#) When all fruit fails, welcome haws [NECESSITY](#)

**frying** Keep one eye on the frying-pan [COOKING](#)

**Fuji** wise man will climb Mount Fuji once [TRAVEL](#)

**full** Full cup, steady hand [CAUTION](#) It's ill speaking between a full man [FOOD](#)

**fullness** Out of the fullness of the heart [FEELINGS](#)

**fun** Time flies when you're having fun [HAPPINESS](#)

**funeral** Dream of a funeral [DREAMS](#) One funeral makes many [DEATH](#)

**furrow** old horse does not spoil the furrow [AGE](#)

**further** Go further and fare worse [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#)

**fury** Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned [WOMEN](#)

**furze** When the furze is in bloom [LOVE](#)

**future** man's best reputation for his future [REPUTATION](#) There's no future like the present [FUTURE](#)

**gain** No pain, no gain **EFFORT** Nothing venture, nothing gain **THOROUGHNESS** One man's loss is another man's gain **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** There's no great loss without some gain **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**game** After the game, the king and the pawn **EQUALITY** Lookers-on see most of the game **ACTION AND INACTION**

**gamekeeper** old poacher makes the best gamekeeper **WAYS AND MEANS**

**garbage** Garbage in, garbage out **COMPUTING**

**garden** book is like a garden **BOOKS** garden is never finished **GARDENS** More things grow in the garden **GARDENS** Select a proper site for your garden **GARDENS**

**gardener** It is not enough for a gardener **FLOWERS**

**garment** Silence is a woman's best garment **WOMEN**

**gather** Drops that gather one by one **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**gaze** Only the eagle can gaze at the sun **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**generation** One generation plants the trees **TREES**

**generations** It takes three generations to make **RANK**

**generous** Be just before you're generous **JUSTICE** It is easy to be generous with **GENEROSITY**

**genius** Genius is an infinite capacity **ABILITY**

**gentleman** You may know a gentleman by **RANK**

**geography** War is God's way of teaching Americans geography **WARFARE**

**get** more you get the more you want **GREED**

**gift** Life is the best gift **LIFE** Never look a gift horse in the mouth **GRATITUDE**

**gifts** Fear the Greeks bearing gifts **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**gill** Every herring must hang by its own gill **RESPONSIBILITY**

**ginger** Every good quality is contained in ginger **HEALTH** Local ginger is not hot **FAMILIARITY** older the ginger, the more pungent **AGE**

**girdle** good name is better than a golden girdle **REPUTATION**

**girl** prettiest girl in the world **BEAUTY**

**girls** All dancing girls are nineteen **YOUTH**

**give** Give a man a fish, and you feed **CHARITY** Give and take is fair play **JUSTICE** Give a thing, and take a thing **GENEROSITY** He gives twice who gives quickly **GENEROSITY**

**giving** Friday's child is loving and giving **GENEROSITY**

**Glasgow** Glasgow's miles better **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**



**glass** hammer shatters glass, but forges steel **WAYS AND MEANS** Those who live in glass houses  
**GOSSIP**

**glitters** All that glitters is not gold **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**globally** Think globally, act locally **ENVIRONMENT**

**gloria** *Sic transit gloria mundi* **TRANSCIENCE**

**glove** Touch not the cat but a glove **CATS**

**gloves** cat in gloves catches no mice **CAUTION**

**gnat** Chess is a sea where a gnat may drink **SPORTS AND GAMES** Don't strain at a gnat, and  
swallow **BELIEF**

**go** Go further and fare worse **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** Light come, light go  
**POSSESSIONS** Quickly come, quickly go **LOYALTY**

**goal** paths are many, but the goal is the same **WAYS AND MEANS**

**God** All things are possible with God **GOD** Call on God, but row away **CAUTION** church is God  
between four walls **CHRISTIAN CHURCH** Every man for himself and God for us all **SELF-  
INTEREST** God helps them that help themselves **GOD** God is high above, and the tsar  
**GOVERNMENT** God made the country **COUNTRY AND THE TOWN** God made the world, but  
the Dutch made Holland **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** God makes the back to the burden  
**SYMPATHY** God never sends mouths **FOOD** God sends meat, but the Devil **COOKING** God's in  
his heaven; all's right **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** God sleeps in the stone, dreams **HUMAN  
RACE** God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb **SYMPATHY** God writes straight with crooked lines  
**GOD** Man proposes, God disposes **FATE** Man's extremity is God's opportunity **RELIGION** May  
God in his mercy look down **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS** mills of God grind slowly **FATE**  
nature of God is a circle **GOD** nearer the church, the farther from God **CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
Poverty comes from God **POVERTY** prayer to God, and service to the tsar **PREPARATION AND  
READINESS** Put your trust in God, and keep **PRACTICALITY** robin and the wren are God's  
**BIRDS** There's probably no God **GOD** voice of the people is the voice of God **POLITICS** War is  
God's way of teaching Americans geography **WARFARE** Where God builds a church **GOOD AND  
EVIL** You cannot serve God and Mammon **MONEY** Your soul may belong to God **ARMED  
FORCES**

**godliness** Cleanliness is next to godliness **BEHAVIOUR**

**gods** gods do not subtract **LEISURE** gods send nuts to those **AGE** Take the goods the gods provide  
**OPPORTUNITY** Whom the gods love die young **YOUTH** Whom the gods would destroy **MIND**

**goes** As Maine goes, so goes the nation **POLITICS** Steady as she goes **CAUTION** What goes around  
comes around **JUSTICE**

**going** If you don't know where you are going **TRAVEL** When the going gets tough **CHARACTER**

**gold** All that glitters is not gold **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES** Gold may be bought too dear  
**VALUE** If gold rusts, what will iron do **CORRUPTION** inch of gold cannot buy time **TIME** It is  
good to make a bridge of gold **WAYS AND MEANS**

**golden** golden key can open any door **CORRUPTION** golden rule of life is **BEGINNING** good name is  
better than a golden girdle **REPUTATION** Speech is silver, but silence is golden **SILENCE**

**good** All good things must come to an end **ENDING** Any publicity is good **ADVERTISING** Bad  
money drives out good **MONEY** Better a good cow **CHARACTER** change is as good as a rest  
**CHANGE** confession is good for the soul **HONESTY** End good, all good **ENDING** Every good  
quality is contained in ginger **HEALTH** good beginning makes a good **BEGINNING** Good  
behaviour is the last **BEHAVIOUR** good die young **VIRTUE** Good ethics start with good facts  
**MEDICINE** Good fences make good neighbours **NEIGHBOURS** good horse cannot be of a bad  
colour **APPEARANCE** good leader is also a good follower **LEADERSHIP** Good medicine always  
has a bitter taste **MEDICINE** Good men are scarce **VIRTUE** good name is better than a golden  
girdle **REPUTATION** good reputation stands still **REPUTATION** good seaman is known in bad  
weather **SEA** Good seed makes a bad crop **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** Good soup is made  
in an old pot **EXPERIENCE** good time was had by all **HAPPINESS** Good to forgive, best to forget  
**FORGIVENESS** Good wine needs no bush **ADVERTISING** Guinness is good for you **DRINK** He is  
a good dog who goes to church **BEHAVIOUR** Hope is a good breakfast **HOPE** If something sounds  
too good to be true **EXCELLENCE** If you can't be good, be careful **CAUTION** It is good fishing in  
troubled waters **OPPORTUNITY** It's good to talk **SPEECH** liar ought to have a good memory **LIES**  
Never bid the Devil good morrow **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS** Never do evil that good may  
come **BEHAVIOUR** No good deed goes unpunished **VIRTUE** No news is good news **NEWS AND**  
**JOURNALISM** One good turn deserves another **COOPERATION** One who sees something good  
**NEWS AND JOURNALISM** secret is either too good to keep **SECRECY** test of good manners is  
**MANNERS** There are as good fish in the sea **LOVE** There is no good flock without **DOGS** There is  
nothing so good for the inside **HORSES** You can have too much of a good thing **EXCESS**

**goods** Ill gotten goods never thrive **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** Take the goods the gods provide  
**OPPORTUNITY**

**goose** Christmas is coming, and the goose **CHRISTMAS** What's sauce for the goose **JUSTICE**

**gorse** When the gorse is out of bloom **LOVE**

**gossip** Gossip is the lifeblood of society **GOSSIP** Gossip is vice **GOSSIP**

**gossips** Whoever gossips to you **GOSSIP**

**grain** There is no proverb without a grain **SAYINGS**

**granaries** All autumns do not fill granaries **AUTUMN**

**grandmother** Don't teach your grandmother [ADVICE](#)

**grass** grass is always greener [ENVY](#) When elephants fight, it is the grass [POWER](#) While the grass grows, the steed [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**gratitude** Don't overload gratitude [GRATITUDE](#)

**graves** If you want revenge, dig two graves [REVENGE](#)

**Gray** Gray's Inn for walks [LAW](#)

**great** Death is the great leveller [DEATH](#) great book is a great evil [BOOKS](#) Great minds think alike [THINKING](#) Great oaks from little acorns [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#) soldier of the Great War, known unto [ARMED FORCES](#) Wink at sma' faults, ye hae great anes [MISTAKES](#)

**greater** greater the sinner, the greater the saint [GOOD AND EVIL](#) greater the truth, the greater the libel [GOSSIP](#)

**greatness** If any man seek for greatness [FAME](#)

**greed** Need makes greed [GREED](#)

**Greek** When Greek meets Greek [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#)

**Greeks** Fear the Greeks bearing gifts [TRUST AND TREACHERY](#)

**green** Blue and green should never be [DRESS](#) Green Christmas, white Easter [WEATHER](#) green Yule makes a fat churchyard [CHRISTMAS](#) hedge between keeps friendship green [NEIGHBOURS](#) If I keep a green bough in my heart [HAPPINESS](#) roots of charity are always green [CHARITY](#) You have to be in the black to be in the green [ENVIRONMENT](#)

**greener** grass is always greener [ENVY](#)

**grey** All cats are grey in the dark [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#) fox may grow grey [AGE](#) grey mare is the better horse [MARRIAGE](#)

**grief** Grief is the price we pay for love [MOURNING](#) He that conceals his grief [SORROW](#)

**grieve** Do not grieve that rose trees have thorns [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#)

**grind** mill cannot grind with the water that [OPPORTUNITY](#) mills of God grind slowly fate

**grist** All is grist that comes to the mill [OPPORTUNITY](#)

**Groucho** I am a Marxist—of the Groucho [POLITICS](#)

**grow** Ill weeds grow apace [GOOD AND EVIL](#) More things grow in the garden [GARDENS](#)

**guessing** Punctuality is the art of guessing [PUNCTUALITY](#)

**guest** first day a guest, the second day [HOSPITALITY](#) guest is like the morning dew [HOSPITALITY](#)  
Treat your guest as a guest for two days [HOSPITALITY](#)

**guests** Fish and guests stink after three days [HOSPITALITY](#)

**guide** Let your conscience be your guide [CONSCIENCE](#)

**guilty** guilty conscience needs no accuser [CONSCIENCE](#) guilty flee when no man pursueth [GUILT](#)  
guilty one always runs [GUILT](#) Not guilty, but don't do it again [GUILT](#) We are all guilty [GUILT](#) We  
name the guilty men [GUILT](#)

**Guinness** Guinness is good for you [DRINK](#)

**gun** Have gun, will travel [TRAVEL](#)

**gunner** cobbler to his last and the gunner [KNOWLEDGE](#)

**guns** Guns don't kill people [MURDER](#)

**guy** No more Mr Nice Guy [CHANGE](#)

**guys** Nice guys finish last [SPORTS AND GAMES](#)

**habit** Custom is mummified by habit [CUSTOM AND HABIT](#)

**habits** Habits are cobwebs at first [CUSTOM AND HABIT](#) Old habits die hard [CUSTOM AND  
HABIT](#)

**had** What you've never had [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#) You cannot lose what you never  
had [POSSESSIONS](#)

**hair** Beauty draws with a single hair [BEAUTY](#)

**half** Do not meet troubles half way [WORRY](#) Half a loaf is better than no bread [SATISFACTION AND  
DISCONTENT](#) half is better than the whole [MODERATION](#) Half the truth is often a whole lie [LIES](#)  
One half of the world does not know [KNOWLEDGE](#) Two boys are half a boy [WORK](#) Well begun is  
half done [BEGINNING](#)

**Halifax** From Hell, Hull, and Halifax [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**hall** It is merry in hall when beards wag all [HOSPITALITY](#)

**halloo** Don't halloo till you are out of the wood [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#)

**halved** trouble shared is a trouble halved [COOPERATION](#)

**Hamlet** Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet [SMOKING](#)

**hammer** hammer shatters glass, but forges steel [WAYS AND MEANS](#) When all you have is a  
hammer [PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS](#)

**hand** bird in the hand is worth two [CAUTION](#) Full cup, steady hand [CAUTION](#) hand that rocks the  
cradle rules [WOMEN](#) hand will not reach what the heart [ACHIEVEMENT](#) He who takes the child  
by the hand [PARENTS](#) One hand for oneself and one for the ship [SEA](#) One hand washes the other  
[COOPERATION](#) quickness of the hand deceives the eye [DECEPTION](#)

**handle** Each of us at a handle [COOPERATION](#)

**hands** Cold hands, warm heart **BODY** devil finds work for idle hands **IDLENESS** Hold a true friend with both your hands **FRIENDSHIP** Many hands make light work **COOPERATION** no hands but yours **CHRISTIAN CHURCH** Nothing is stolen without hands **HONESTY**

**handsome** Handsome is as handsome **BEHAVIOUR**

**hang** Every herring must hang by its own gill **RESPONSIBILITY** Give a dog a bad name and hang **GOSSIP** Hang a thief when he's young **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**hanged** Confess and be hanged **GUILT** If you're born to be hanged **FATE** Little thieves are hanged **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** One might as well be hanged for a sheep **THOROUGHNESS**

**hanging** Catching's before hanging **WAYS AND MEANS** Hanging and wiving go by destiny **FATE**

**hangs** creaking door hangs longest **SICKNESS**

**happens** unexpected always happens **SURPRISE**

**happily** all lived happily ever after **ENDING**

**happiness** Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet **SMOKING** Happiness is the only thing **HAPPINESS** Happiness is what you make **HAPPINESS** Money can't buy happiness **MONEY**

**happy** Be happy while y'er leevin **LIFE** Call no man happy till he dies **HAPPINESS** Happy is the bride the sun shines on **WEDDINGS** Happy is the country **HISTORY** If you would be happy for a week **GARDENS** peacock is always happy because **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**hard** Hard cases make bad law **LAW** Hard words break no bones **WORDS**

**harder** bigger they are, the harder they fall **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** harder I work, the luckier **CHANCE AND LUCK** Life is harder than crossing a field **LIFE** We're number two. We try harder **EFFORT**

**hardship** After hardship comes relief **ADVERSITY**

**hare** First catch your hare **WAYS AND MEANS** You cannot run with the hare **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**hares** If you run after two hares **INDECISION**

**haste** Haste is from the Devil **HASTE AND DELAY** Haste makes waste **HASTE AND DELAY** Make haste slowly **HASTE AND DELAY** Marry in haste and repent at leisure **MARRIAGE** More haste, less speed **HASTE AND DELAY** Nothing should be done in haste **PATIENCE**

**hat** bigger the hat **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**hated** Poverty is a blessing hated by all **POVERTY**

**have** Nothing venture, nothing have **THOROUGHNESS** What you have, hold **POSSESSIONS** What you spend, you have **POSSESSIONS** You cannot have your cake **ACHIEVEMENT**

**hawks** Clever hawks conceal their claws **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION** Hawks will not pick out hawks' eyes **COOPERATION**

**haws** When all fruit fails, welcome haws **NECESSITY**

**hay** Make hay while the sun shines **OPPORTUNITY** swarm in May is worth a load of hay **SUMMER**

**head** Better be the head of a dog **POWER** fish always stinks from the head **LEADERSHIP** Strike the serpent's head **ENEMIES** Where Macgregor sits is the head **RANK** You cannot put an old head **EXPERIENCE**

**heads** Assistant heads must roll **BROADCASTING** Heads I win, tails you lose **WINNING AND LOSING** Two heads are better than one **THINKING**

**heal** Stabs heal, but bad words never **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**healer** Time is a great healer **TIME**

**health** beginning of health is sleep **SLEEP** From the bitterness of disease, man learns the sweetness of health **SICKNESS** He who has health has hope **HEALTH**

**hear** Believe nothing of what you hear **BELIEF** Hear all, see all, say nowt **SELF-INTEREST** Listeners never hear good **SECRECY** See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil **VIRTUE**

**heart** Absence makes the heart grow fonder **ABSENCE** Cold hands, warm heart **BODY** Envy eats nothing but its own heart **ENVY** Faint heart never won fair lady **COURAGE** hand will not reach what the heart **ACHIEVEMENT** Home is where the heart is **HOME** Hope deferred makes the heart sick **HOPE** If it were not for hope, the heart **HOPE** It is a poor heart that never rejoices **HAPPINESS** larger the body, the bigger the heart **BODY** Out of the fullness of the heart **FEELINGS** Put a stout heart to a stey brae **DETERMINATION** way to a man's heart is through **MEN** What the eye doesn't see, the heart **IGNORANCE** Writing is a picture of the writer's heart **WRITING**

**heat** If you don't like the heat, get out **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**heated** only thing a heated argument ever **ARGUMENT**

**heaven** Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven **SUFFERING** From Madrid to heaven **TOWNS AND CITIES** God's in his heaven; all's right **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** Heaven protects children, sailors **DANGER** Hell is where heaven is not **HAPPINESS** If you want to see heaven **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** Marriages are made in heaven **MARRIAGE** mind enlightened is like heaven **MIND** wind of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears **HORSES**

**heaviest** heaviest baggage for the traveller **TRAVEL**

**hedge** hedge between keeps friendship green **NEIGHBOURS**

**Heineken** Heineken refreshes the parts **DRINK**

**heir** Winter is summer's heir **WINTER**

**hell** From Hell, Hull, and Halifax [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#) Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned [WOMEN](#) Hell is where heaven is not [HAPPINESS](#) road to hell is paved with [ACTION AND INACTION](#)

**help** Do not call a wolf to help you [ENEMIES](#) God helps them that help themselves [GOD](#) Help you to salt, help you to sorrow [MISFORTUNES](#) large family, quick help [FAMILY](#) mouse may help a lion [POWER](#)

**helps** Every little helps [COOPERATION](#) God helps them that help themselves [GOD](#)

**hen** Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow [PRESENT](#) whistling woman and a crowing hen [WOMEN](#)

**hens** sleeping fox counts hens [CHARACTER](#)

**herbs** Better a dinner of herbs [FEELINGS](#)

**here** Here be dragons [INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES](#) Here's tae us; wha's like us [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#)

**heresy** Turkeys, heresy, hops, and beer [INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES](#)

**hero** No man is a hero to his valet [FAMILIARITY](#)

**heron** white heron is a bird of [BIRDS](#)

**herring** Every herring must hang by its own gill [RESPONSIBILITY](#)

**hesitates** He who hesitates is lost [INDECISION](#)

**hide** No fist is big enough to hide the sky [GOVERNMENT](#) Those who hide can find [SECRECY](#) You can't hide an awl in a sack [SECRECY](#)

**high** God is high above, and the tsar [GOVERNMENT](#) mountains are high, and the emperor [GOVERNMENT](#)

**higher** higher the monkey climbs [AMBITION](#)

**hills** Blue are the hills that are far [FAMILIARITY](#)

**himself** Every man for himself and God for us all [SELF-INTEREST](#) Every man for himself, and the Devil [SELF-INTEREST](#)

**hire** Hire slow, fire fast [MANAGEMENT](#) labourer is worthy of his hire [WORK](#)

**history** History is a fable [HISTORY](#) History is fiction [HISTORY](#) History is written by the victors [HISTORY](#) History repeats itself [HISTORY](#) Make poverty history [POVERTY](#) What's hit is history [KNOWLEDGE](#)

**hit** What's hit is history [KNOWLEDGE](#)

**hog** Every hog has his Martinmas [FATE](#) Root, hog, or die [WORK](#)

**hogs** Pigs get fat, but hogs get [GREED](#)

**hold** Hold a true friend with both your hands [FRIENDSHIP](#) What you have, hold [POSSESSIONS](#)

**Holdfast** Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

**hole** When you are in a hole, stop digging [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#)

**Holland** God made the world, but the Dutch made Holland [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

**home** Charity begins at home [CHARITY](#) East, west, home's best [HOME](#) Englishman's home is his castle [HOME](#) Go abroad and you'll hear news of home [TRAVEL](#) Home is home [HOME](#) Home is home, as the Devil said [LAW](#) Home is where the heart is [HOME](#) Home is where the mortgage is [HOME](#) There's no place like home [HOME](#) Who goes home? [POLITICS](#) woman's place is in the home [WOMEN](#)

**Homer** Homer sometimes nods [MISTAKES](#)

**honestly** Get the money honestly if you can [MONEY](#) Sell honestly, but not honesty [HONESTY](#)

**honesty** Honesty is more praised than practiced [HONESTY](#) Honesty is the best policy [HONESTY](#) Sell honestly, but not honesty [HONESTY](#)

**honey** bee sucks honey where the spider [CHARACTER](#) Honey catches more flies than vinegar [WAYS AND MEANS](#) One day honey, one day onions [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#) Where bees are, there is honey [WORK](#)

**honi** *Honi soit qui mal y pense* [GOOD AND EVIL](#)

**honour** post of honour is the post of danger [DANGER](#) prophet is not without honour [FAMILIARITY](#) There is honour among thieves [COOPERATION](#)

**hope** Fear less, hope more; Eat less [LIFESTYLES](#) He that lives in hope dances to an ill tune [HOPE](#) He who has health has hope [HEALTH](#) Hope deferred makes the heart sick [HOPE](#) Hope for the best and prepare for [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) Hope is a good breakfast [HOPE](#) Hope is the pillar of the world [HOPE](#) Hope springs eternal [HOPE](#) If it were not for hope, the heart [HOPE](#) In the kingdom of hope [HOPE](#) To plant a tree is to plant hope [TREES](#) While there's life there's hope [HOPE](#)

**hopefully** It is better to travel hopefully [HOPE](#)

**hopes** smaller the lizard, the greater its hopes [AMBITION](#)

**hops** Turkeys, heresy, hops, and beer [INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES](#)

**horn** Blow your own horn, even if [ADVERTISING](#)

**horns** Fate can be taken by the horns [FATE](#)

**horse** Don't put the cart before the horse [PATIENCE](#) good horse cannot be of a bad colour [APPEARANCE](#) grey mare is the better horse [MARRIAGE](#) If two ride on a horse [RANK](#) If you have a horse of your own [DEBT AND BORROWING](#) Never look a gift horse in the mouth [GRATITUDE](#)



No foot, no horse **HORSES** old horse does not spoil the furrow **AGE** One may steal a horse **REPUTATION** short horse is soon curried **WORK** swiftest horse cannot overtake the word **WORDS** wind of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears **HORSES** You can take a horse to the water **DEFIANCE**

**horseback** Diseases come on horseback but go away on foot **SICKNESS** Set a beggar on horseback **POWER**

**horses** Horses for courses **ABILITY** If wishes were horses, beggars **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**hospitality** Food without hospitality is medicine **HOSPITALITY** Hospitality and medicine must be **HOSPITALITY**

**hot** Hot water does not burn down **FUTILITY** little pot is soon hot **ANGER** Local ginger is not hot **FAMILIARITY** Strike while the iron is hot **OPPORTUNITY**

**hour** darkest hour is just before dawn **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** One hour's sleep before midnight **SLEEP**

**hours** Six hours' sleep for a man **SLEEP** Some sleep five hours; nature requires **SLEEP**

**house** Better one house spoiled than two **MARRIAGE** dog is a lion in his own house **DOGS** Learning is better than house and land **KNOWLEDGE** When house and land are gone **KNOWLEDGE**

**houses** Fools build houses and wise men **FOOLS**

**howling** howlin' coyote ain't stealin' no chickens **HONESTY**

**Hubert** Praise from Sir Hubert **PRAISE AND FLATTERY**

**huddle** When the stars begin to huddle, the earth will soon become a puddle **WEATHER**

**Hull** From Hell, Hull, and Halifax **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**human** To err is human but to really **COMPUTING** To err is human (to forgive divine) **MISTAKES**

**hundred** buyer has need of a hundred eyes **BUYING AND SELLING** When angry count a hundred **ANGER**

**hundredth** Only the camel knows the hundredth **NAMES**

**hunger** Hunger drives the wolf out of the wood **NECESSITY** Hunger is the best sauce **EATING** Winter thunder, summer hunger **WEATHER**

**hungry** hungry man is an angry man **FOOD** satisfied person does not know the hungry **SELF-INTEREST**

**hurry** Always in a hurry, always behind **HASTE AND DELAY** Don't hurry—start early **HASTE AND DELAY** Hurry no man's cattle **PATIENCE**

**hurt** Don't cry before you're hurt **COURAGE** What you don't know can't hurt you **IGNORANCE**

**husband** husband is always the last to know **IGNORANCE** I married my husband for life **MEN**

**hyphens** If you take hyphens seriously **WORDS**

**I** I before e, except after c **WORDS**

**ice** rich man gets his ice in summer **WEALTH**

**ideas** All words are pegs to hang ideas on **WORDS**

**idle** Better be idle than ill doing **IDLENESS** devil finds work for idle hands **IDLENESS** idle brain is the devil's workshop **IDLENESS** Idle people have the least leisure **IDLENESS**

**idleness** Idleness is the root of all evil **IDLENESS**

**ifs** If ifs and ans were pots and pans **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**ignorance** Ignorance is bliss **IGNORANCE** Ignorance is voluntary misfortune **IGNORANCE**  
Ignorance of the law is no excuse **LAW**

**ignorant** Science has no enemy but the ignorant **SCIENCE**

**ill** Better be idle than ill doing **IDLENESS** Doing nothing is ill **IDLENESS** He that has an ill name **REPUTATION** He that lives in hope dances to an ill tune **HOPE** Ill gotten goods never thrive **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** Ill weeds grow apace **GOOD AND EVIL** It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest **LOYALTY** It's an ill wind that blows nobody **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** It's ill speaking between a full man **FOOD** It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes **AMBITION** Never speak ill of the dead **REPUTATION**

**imaginary** imaginary ailment is worse than a disease **SICKNESS**

**imitation** Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery **PRAISE AND FLATTERY**

**important** What is the most important thing **HUMAN RACE**

**impressions** First impressions are **BEGINNING**

**impune** *Nemo me impune lacessit* **DEFIANCE**

**inch** inch ahead is darkness **FUTURE** inch of gold cannot buy time **TIME**

**indecision** Indecision is fatal **INDECISION**

**indeed** friend in need is a friend indeed **FRIENDSHIP**

**industry** Necessity sharpens industry **NECESSITY** Science finds, industry applies **TECHNOLOGY**

**infinite** Genius is an infinite capacity **ABILITY**

**infirmities** Dreams retain the infirmities of **DREAMS**

**inform** inform, educate, and entertain **BROADCASTING**

**inherit** We do not inherit the earth **ENVIRONMENT**

**injury** Don't add insult to injury **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**ink** ink of a scholar is holier than **EDUCATION**

**inn** Gray's Inn for walks [LAW](#)

**inquisition** Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition [SURPRISE](#)

**inside** There is nothing so good for the inside [HORSES](#)

**insult** Don't add insult to injury [WORDS AND DEEDS](#)

**interest** Worry is interest paid on trouble [WORRY](#)

**interesting** May you live in interesting times [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#)

**introduces** Adversity introduces a man [ADVERSITY](#)

**invention** Necessity is the mother of invention [NECESSITY](#)

**invited** Business goes where it is invited [BUSINESS](#)

**Ireland** England's difficulty is Ireland's [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

**iron** If gold rusts, what will iron do [CORRUPTION](#) If you had teeth of steel, you could eat iron  
coconuts [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#) Iron sharpens iron [CHARACTER](#) Strike while the iron is  
hot [OPPORTUNITY](#)

**Isfahan** Isfahan is half the world [TOWNS AND CITIES](#)

**island** No man is an island [SOLITUDE](#)

**Jack** All work and no play makes Jack [LEISURE](#) Every Jack has his Jill [MEN AND WOMEN](#) good  
Jack makes a good Jill [MEN AND WOMEN](#) Jack is as good as his master [EQUALITY](#) Jack of all  
trades and master of none [EMPLOYMENT](#)

**jade** Everything has a price, but jade is [VALUE](#)

**jam** Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday [PRESENT](#)

**January** warm January, a cold May [WEATHER](#)

**Jerusalem** Next year in Jerusalem [TOWNS AND CITIES](#)

**jest** Many a true word is spoken in jest [TRUTH](#)

**jewel** Fair play's a jewel [JUSTICE](#)

**Jews** Where there are two Jews, there are three opinions [OPINION](#)

**Jill** Every Jack has his Jill [MEN AND WOMEN](#) good Jack makes a good Jill [MEN AND WOMEN](#)

**jingle** single bracelet does not jingle [COOPERATION](#)

**job** Dress for the job you want [DRESS](#) Never send a boy to do a man's job [YOUTH](#)

**join** If you can't beat them, join them [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**journey** Is your journey really necessary [TRAVEL](#) longest journey begins with a single [BEGINNING](#)  
Send the beloved child on a journey [PARENTS](#)

**Jove** Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury [LOVE](#)

**joy** Shared joy is double joy [SYMPATHY](#) Strength through joy [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#)

**judge** Do not judge a tree by its bark [APPEARANCE](#) Don't judge a man until [CRITICISM](#) Judge not, that ye be not judged [PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE](#) No one should be judge in his own [LAW](#)

**judged** Judge not, that ye be not judged [PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE](#)

**June** dripping June sets all in tune [SUMMER](#)

**jury** fox should not be on the jury [JUSTICE](#)

**just** Be just before you're generous [JUSTICE](#) Just say no [DETERMINATION](#) Just when you thought it was safe [DANGER](#)

**justice** Justice delayed is justice denied [JUSTICE](#) We all love justice [JUSTICE](#)

**justifies** end justifies the means [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**keep** It is one thing to keep your morals [BEHAVIOUR](#) Keep a thing seven years [POSSESSIONS](#) Keep calm and carry on [CRISES](#) Keep one eye on the frying-pan [COOKING](#) Keep your own shop [BUSINESS](#) secret is either too good to keep [SECRECY](#) Three may keep a secret [SECRECY](#)

**Kent** Some places of Kent [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**Kentish** Essex stiles, Kentish miles [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**key** golden key can open any door [CORRUPTION](#)

**keys** April and May are keys to the whole year [SPRING](#)

**kill** Guns don't kill people [MURDER](#) Kill the chicken to scare [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#)  
What does not kill you makes you [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#)

**killed** Care killed the cat [WORRY](#)

**killing** Killing no murder [MURDER](#) There are more ways of killing a cat [WAYS AND MEANS](#) There are more ways of killing a dog [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**kills** It is not work that kills, but worry [WORRY](#) It is the pace that kills [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#)

**kind** Be kind. Everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle [GENEROSITY](#) Be kind to your friends [FRIENDSHIP](#) One kind word warms three winter [SYMPATHY](#)

**kindle** It is easy to kindle a fire [RELATIONSHIPS](#)

**kindness** By a sweet tongue and kindness [BEHAVIOUR](#)

**king** After the game, the king and the pawn [EQUALITY](#) Breakfast like a king, lunch like [EATING](#)  
Cash is king [MONEY](#) king can do no wrong [ROYALTY](#) king's chaff is worth more [ROYALTY](#) may

look at a king **CATS** peck of March dust is worth a king's **SPRING** Your King and Country need you **ARMED FORCES**

**kingdom** In the kingdom of hope **HOPE**

**kings** Kings have long arms **POWER**

**kirtle** Near is my kirtle, but nearer my smock **SELF-INTEREST**

**Kirton** Kirton was a borough town **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**kisses** There is always one who kisses **RELATIONSHIPS**

**kissing** Kissing goes by favour **LOVE**

**kittens** Wanton kittens make sober cats **YOUTH**

**knife** never try to catch a falling knife **BUSINESS** Tongue is like a sharp knife **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**knocked** You could have knocked me down **SURPRISE**

**knocks** Opportunity never knocks for **OPPORTUNITY** Opportunity never knocks twice  
**OPPORTUNITY**

**know** Better the devil you know **FAMILIARITY** Come live with me and you'll know **FAMILIARITY**  
husband is always the last to know **IGNORANCE** If you do not know where **CIRCUMSTANCE**  
**AND SITUATION** If you don't know where you are going **TRAVEL** It's not what you know  
**CORRUPTION** It's not what you know **OPPORTUNITY** last one to know about the sea  
**IGNORANCE** less you know, the better you sleep **IGNORANCE** One half of the world does not  
know **KNOWLEDGE** satisfied person does not know the hungry **SELF-INTEREST** To know all is  
to forgive all **FORGIVENESS** To know the road ahead, ask those coming back **FORESIGHT** What  
you don't know can't hurt you **IGNORANCE** You never know what you can do **COURAGE** You  
should know a man seven years **NEIGHBOURS**

**knowledge** Knowledge and timber **KNOWLEDGE** Knowledge is power **KNOWLEDGE** larger the  
shoreline of knowledge **KNOWLEDGE** little knowledge is a dangerous thing **KNOWLEDGE**

**known** man is known by the company he **FAMILIARITY** soldier of the Great War, known unto  
**ARMED FORCES**

**knows** frog in a well knows nothing of **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION** Necessity knows  
no law **NECESSITY** Only the camel knows the hundredth **NAMES** Who knows most, speaks least  
**SPEECH**

**kumara** kumara does not speak of its own **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**laborare** *Laborare est orare* **RELIGION**

**labourer** labourer is worthy of his hire **WORK**

**ladders** Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven **SUFFERING**

**lady** Faint heart never won fair lady **COURAGE** opera isn't over till the fat lady sings **ENDING**

**lamb** bleating of the lamb excites the tiger **TEMPTATION** God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb  
**SYMPATHY**

**land** Every land has its own law **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** Learning is better than house and land  
**KNOWLEDGE** When house and land are gone **KNOWLEDGE** You buy land, you buy stones  
**BUYING AND SELLING**

**lands** cat always lands on its feet **CATS**

**lane** It is a long lane that has no turning **PATIENCE**

**lang** Lang may yer lum reek **HOME**

**language** nation without a language is **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**large** large family, quick help **FAMILY** Little pitchers have large ears **SECRECY**

**larger** larger the body, the bigger the heart **BODY** larger the shoreline of knowledge **KNOWLEDGE**

**larks** If the sky falls we shall catch larks **EFFORT**

**last** cobbler to his last and the gunner **KNOWLEDGE** He laughs last, laughs longest **REVENGE**  
husband is always the last to know **IGNORANCE** It is the last straw **EXCESS** last drop makes the  
cup run over **EXCESS** last one to know about the sea **IGNORANCE** Let the cobbler stick to his last  
**KNOWLEDGE** Nice guys finish last **SPORTS AND GAMES** When the last tree is cut  
**ENVIRONMENT**

**late** Better late than never **PUNCTUALITY** early man never borrows from the late **PREPARATION  
AND READINESS** It is never too late to learn **EDUCATION** It is never too late to mend **CHANGE**  
It's too late to shut the stable door **FORESIGHT**

**laugh** Do not laugh at the fallen **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** Laugh and the world laughs with you  
**SYMPATHY** Let them laugh that win **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**laughs** earth laughs at him who **ENVIRONMENT** He who laughs last, laughs longest **REVENGE** Jove  
but laughs at lovers' perjury **LOVE** Laugh and the world laughs with you **SYMPATHY** Love laughs  
at locksmiths **LOVE**

**laughter** Laughter is the best medicine **MEDICINE**

**law** Every land has its own law **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** Hard cases make bad law **LAW**  
Ignorance of the law is no excuse **LAW** Necessity knows no law **NECESSITY** One law for the rich  
**JUSTICE** Possession is nine points of the law **LAW** Self-preservation is the first law of nature  
**SELF-INTEREST** Where the law is uncertain, there is no law **LAW**

**laws** Laws of Thermodynamics **SCIENCE** more laws, the more thieves and bandits **LAW** New lords,  
new laws **CHANGE**

**lawyer** man who is his own lawyer has a fool **LAW**

**lazy** Long and lazy, little and loud **WOMEN** quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog **WORDS**

**lead** He who would lead must be a bridge **LEADERSHIP** If the people will lead **LEADERSHIP** If you are not the lead dog **LEADERSHIP**

**leader** good leader is also a good follower **LEADERSHIP**

**leads** man who reads is the man who leads **READING**

**leap** Look before you leap **CAUTION**

**learn** It is never too late to learn **EDUCATION** Live and learn **EXPERIENCE** Never too old to learn **EDUCATION** We must learn to walk before **PATIENCE**

**learned** Nobody is born learned **CLERGY**

**learning** Learning is a treasure that follows **KNOWLEDGE** Learning is better than house and land **KNOWLEDGE** sea of learning has no end **KNOWLEDGE** There is no royal road to learning **EDUCATION** Travelling is learning **TRAVEL**

**leather** There is nothing like leather **WAYS AND MEANS**

**leave** Always leave the party when **HOSPITALITY**

**leaves** Falling leaves have to return **HOME** He who leaves succeeds **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**led** army of stags led by a lion **ARMED FORCES**

**leeks** Eat leeks in March and ramsons in May **HEALTH**

**legs** Do not add legs to the snake **EXCESS**

**leisure** busiest men have the most leisure **LEISURE** Idle people have the least leisure **IDLENESS** Marry in haste and repent at leisure **MARRIAGE** There is luck in leisure **PATIENCE**

**lemon** answer is a lemon **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT**

**lemons** If life hands you lemons **ADVERSITY**

**lend** Lend your money, and lose your friend **DEBT AND BORROWING**

**lender** Neither a borrower, nor a lender be **DEBT AND BORROWING**

**length** Length begets loathing **SPEECH**

**lengthening** Travelling is one way of lengthening life **TRAVEL**

**lengthens** As the day lengthens, so the cold **WEATHER**

**leopard** leopard does not change his spots **CHANGE**

**less** Fear less, hope more; Eat less **LIFESTYLES** Less is more **MODERATION** less you know, the better you sleep **IGNORANCE** Of two evils choose the less **CHOICE**

**let** Let sleeping dogs lie **CAUTION** Let well alone **CAUTION** Let your conscience be your guide  
**CONSCIENCE** Live and let live **PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE**

**letter** Beauty is a good letter **BEAUTY** Change the name and not the letter **MARRIAGE** Do not close  
a letter without reading it **LETTERS** love letter sometimes costs more **LETTERS** Someone,  
somewhere, wants a letter **LETTERS**

**leveller** Death is the great leveller **DEATH**

**liar** liar ought to have a good memory **LIES** liar's candle lasts till evening **LIES**

**libel** greater the truth, the greater the libel **GOSSIP**

**liberal** conservative is a liberal who's **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**liberté** *Liberté! Égalité! Fraternité!* **POLITICS**

**library** library is a repository of medicine **BOOKS**

**lick** It is a poor cook that cannot lick **COOKING**

**lie** As a tree falls, so shall it lie **DEATH** Deceit is a lie **DECEPTION** Half the truth is often a whole lie  
**LIES** If you lie down with dogs **FAMILIARITY** lie can go around the world **LIES** One seldom  
meets a lonely lie **LIES**

**lies** camera never lies **TECHNOLOGY**

**life** Art is long and life is short **LIFE** best things in life are free **MONEY** dog is for life, not just for  
Christmas **DOGS** golden rule of life is **BEGINNING** If life hands you lemons **ADVERSITY** I  
married my husband for life **MEN** Life begins at forty **AGE** Life begins on the day you start  
**GARDENS** Life is a sexually transmitted disease **LIFE** Life is harder than crossing a field **LIFE**  
Life isn't all beer and skittles **LIFE** Life is the best gift **LIFE** Life's a bitch, and then you die **LIFE**  
Life without a friend, is death **FRIENDSHIP** Medicine can prolong life, but **MEDICINE** Travelling  
is one way of lengthening life **TRAVEL** Variety is the spice of life **CHANGE** While there's life  
there's hope **HOPE**

**lifeblood** Gossip is the lifeblood of society **GOSSIP**

**light** Light come, light go **POSSESSIONS** Light for all **NEWS AND JOURNALISM** Light the blue  
touch paper **DANGER** Many hands make light work **COOPERATION**

**lighthouse** It is dark at the foot of the lighthouse **IGNORANCE**

**lightly** Touch the earth lightly **ENVIRONMENT**

**lightning** Lightning never strikes twice **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**like** Here's tae us; wha's like us **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION** If you don't like the heat,  
get out **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** Like breeds like **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** Like



father, like son [FAMILY](#) Like master, like man [WORK](#) Like mother, like daughter [FAMILY](#) Like  
people, like priest [CLERGY](#) Like will to like [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#)

**Lincoln** Lincoln was, London is [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**line** Not a day without a line [ART](#)

**linen** Never choose your women or linen [APPEARANCE](#) One does not wash one's dirty linen  
[SECRECY](#)

**lining** Every cloud has a silver lining [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#)

**link** You are the weakest link [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#)

**lion** army of stags led by a lion [ARMED FORCES](#) dog is a lion in his own house [DOGS](#) live dog is  
better than a dead lion [LIFE](#) March comes in like a lion [SPRING](#) mouse may help a lion [POWER](#)  
When the lion shows its teeth [DANGER](#)

**lions** Christians to the lions [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#) Until the lions produce their own [HISTORY](#)

**lip** There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip [MISTAKES](#)

**lips** Loose lips sink ships [GOSSIP](#) When the lips are gone, the teeth are cold [COOPERATION](#)

**lipstick** You can put lipstick on a pig [FUTILITY](#)

**listen** If I listen, I have the advantage [SPEECH](#) Listen a thousand times, and speak once [SPEECH](#)

**listeners** Listeners never hear good [SECRECY](#)

**little** Big fish eat little fish [POWER](#) Every little helps [COOPERATION](#) Few have too much, and fewer  
too little [WEALTH](#) little absence does much good [ABSENCE](#) Little children, little sorrows  
[CHILDREN](#) Little fish are sweet [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) little knowledge is a dangerous  
thing [KNOWLEDGE](#) Little pitchers have large ears [SECRECY](#) little pot is soon hot [ANGER](#) Little  
strokes fell great oaks [DETERMINATION](#) Little things please little minds [VALUE](#) Love me little,  
love me long [LOYALTY](#) Many a little makes a mickle [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) There is no  
little enemy [ENEMIES](#)

**live** Come live with me and you'll know [FAMILIARITY](#) Eat to live, not live to eat [EATING](#) If you  
want to live and thrive [CHANCE AND LUCK](#) Live and learn [EXPERIENCE](#) Live and let live  
[PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE](#) live dog is better than a dead lion [LIFE](#) Man cannot live by bread  
alone [LIFE](#) They that live longest, see most [EXPERIENCE](#) Threatened men live long [WORDS  
AND DEEDS](#)

**lived** And they all lived happily ever after [ENDING](#)

**lives** Careless talk costs lives [GOSSIP](#) cat has nine lives [CATS](#) He lives long who lives well [VIRTUE](#)  
He that lives in hope dances to an ill tune [HOPE](#)

**living** Be happy while y'er leevin **LIFE** Envy feeds on the living **ENVY** Living well is the best revenge **REVENGE** Saturday's child works hard for a living **WORK**

**lizard** smaller the lizard, the greater its hopes **AMBITION**

**loaf** Half a loaf is better than no bread **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** slice off a cut loaf isn't missed **IGNORANCE**

**loathing** Length begets loathing **SPEECH**

**local** Local ginger is not hot **FAMILIARITY**

**locally** Think globally, act locally **ENVIRONMENT**

**locksmiths** Love laughs at locksmiths **LOVE**

**loft** September blow soft till the fruit's in the loft **AUTUMN**

**log** No matter how long a log floats **CHANGE**

**London** Lincoln was, London is **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**lone** lone sheep is in danger from the wolf **SOLITUDE**

**lonely** One seldom meets a lonely lie **LIES**

**long** Art is long and life is short **LIFE** Be the day weary or be the day long **TIME** He lives long who lives well **VIRTUE** How long is a piece of string **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES** It is a long lane that has no turning **PATIENCE** Kings have long arms **POWER** Lang may yer lum reek **HOME** Long and lazy, little and loud **WOMEN** Long foretold, long last **WEATHER** Love me little, love me long **LOYALTY** Never is a long time **TIME** stern chase is a long chase **DETERMINATION** Threatened men live long **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**longest** He who laughs last, laughs longest **REVENGE** longest journey begins with a single **BEGINNING** longest way home is the shortest **PATIENCE** They that live longest, see most **EXPERIENCE**

**look** Look before you leap **CAUTION**

**lookers** Lookers-on see most of the game **ACTION AND INACTION**

**loose** Loose lips sink ships **GOSSIP**

**lord** abomination unto the Lord, but **LIES** Everybody loves a lord **RANK**

**lords** New lords, new laws **CHANGE**

**lose** Heads I win, tails you lose **WINNING AND LOSING** If you snooze, you lose **OPPORTUNITY** Lend your money, and lose your friend **DEBT AND BORROWING** Those who lose dreaming **DREAMS** What you lose on the swings **WINNING AND LOSING** You cannot lose what you never had **POSSESSIONS** You win a few, you lose a few **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**losers** Finders keepers (losers weepers) **POSSESSIONS**

**loses** tale never loses in the telling **GOSSIP**

**loss** One man's loss is another man's gain **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** There's no great loss without **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**lost** For want of a nail the shoe was lost **PREPARATION AND READINESS** He who hesitates is lost **INDECISION** No one was ever lost on a straight road **PREPARATION AND READINESS** There is nothing lost by civility **MANNERS** 'Tis better to have loved and lost **LOVE** What a neighbour gets is not lost **NEIGHBOURS**

**lottery** Marriage is a lottery **MARRIAGE**

**louder** Actions speak louder than words **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**louse** Sue a beggar and catch a louse **FUTILITY**

**lousy** Lousy but loyal **LOYALTY**

**love** All's fair in love and war **JUSTICE** course of true love never did run smooth **LOVE** fence between makes love more **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** Grief is the price we pay for love **MOURNING** It is best to be off with the old love **LOVE** Love and a cough **LOVE** Love begets love **LOVE** Love is blind **LOVE** Love laughs at locksmiths **LOVE** love letter sometimes costs more **LETTERS** Love makes the world go round **LOVE** Love makes time pass **LOVE** Love me, love my dog **DOGS** Love will find a way **LOVE** Love your enemy **ENEMIES** Love your neighbour, but don't **NEIGHBOURS** Lucky at cards, unlucky in love **CHANCE AND LUCK** Make love not war **LIFESTYLES** Of soup and love, the first is best **FOOD** One cannot love and be wise **LOVE** Pity is akin to love **SYMPATHY** To understand your parents' love **PARENTS** We all love justice **JUSTICE** Whom the gods love die young **YOUTH** You do not marry the person you love **MARRIAGE**

**loved** better to have loved **LOVE**

**Lovell** cat, the rat, and Lovell the dog **GOVERNMENT**

**lovers** Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury **LOVE** quarrel of lovers is the renewal **LOVE**

**loves** Everybody loves a lord **RANK** Misery loves company **SORROW**

**loving** Friday's child is loving and giving **GENEROSITY**

**loyal** Lousy but loyal **LOYALTY**

**luck** devil's children have the devil's luck **CHANCE AND LUCK** Fools for luck **CHANCE AND LUCK** great fortune depends on luck **CHANCE AND LUCK** There is luck in leisure **PATIENCE** There is luck in odd numbers **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**luckier** harder I work, the luckier **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**lucky** It is better to be born lucky **CHANCE AND LUCK** Lucky at cards, unlucky in love **CHANCE AND LUCK** Third time lucky **CHANCE AND LUCK** Throw a lucky man into the sea **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**lum** Lang may yer lum reek [HOME](#)

**lunch** Breakfast like a king, lunch like [EATING](#) There's no such thing as a free lunch [TEMPTATION](#)

**Macgregor** Where Macgregor sits is the head [RANK](#)

**mad** Don't get mad, get even [REVENGE](#)

**Madrid** From Madrid to heaven [TOWNS AND CITIES](#)

**Mahomet** If the mountain will not come to Mahomet [NECESSITY](#)

**Maine** As Maine goes, so goes the nation [POLITICS](#)

**make** Fake it 'til you make it [BEHAVIOUR](#) Happiness is what you make [HAPPINESS](#) If you don't make mistakes [INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES](#) Make do and mend [THRIFT](#) Make love not war [LIFESTYLES](#)

**maketh** Manners maketh man [MANNERS](#)

**mal** *Honi soit qui mal y pense* [GOOD AND EVIL](#)

**malice** Never attribute to malice what is adequately explained by stupidity [FOOLS](#)

**Mammon** You cannot serve God and Mammon [MONEY](#)

**man** Am I not a man and a brother [HUMAN RACE](#) child is the father of the man [CHARACTER](#)  
Clothes make the man [DRESS](#) earth is man's only friend [ENVIRONMENT](#) Every elm has its man  
[TREES](#) Like master, like man [WORK](#) Man cannot live by bread alone [LIFE](#) Man fears Time, but  
Time fears [TIME](#) man is as old as he feels [MEN AND WOMEN](#) Man is a wolf to man [HUMAN  
RACE](#) man is known by the company he [FAMILIARITY](#) Man is the enemy of [IGNORANCE](#) Man is  
the measure [HUMAN RACE](#) Manners maketh man [MANNERS](#) Man proposes, God disposes [FATE](#)  
man who is born in a stable [CHARACTER](#) Never send a boy to do a man's job [YOUTH](#) Nine  
tailors make a man [DRESS](#) No moon, no man [CHILDREN](#) Six hours' sleep for a man [SLEEP](#) way  
to a man's heart is through [MEN](#) Whatever man has done [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**manage** You can only manage what you can [MANAGEMENT](#)

**manager** No manager ever got fired [COMPUTING](#)

**Manchester** What Manchester says today [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**mangoes** Eat the mangoes. Do not count the trees [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**mankind** All mankind is divided into three [HUMAN RACE](#)

**manners** Other times, other manners [CHANGE](#) Striking manners are bad manners [MANNERS](#) test of  
good manners is [MANNERS](#)

**manure** Money, like manure, does no good [MONEY](#)

**many** Many a little makes a mickle [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) Many a mickle makes a muckle  
[QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) Many hands make light work [COOPERATION](#) So many men, so

many opinions [OPINION](#)

**March** Eat leeks in March and ramsons in May [HEALTH](#) March borrowed from April three days  
[SPRING](#) March comes in like a lion [SPRING](#) On the first of March, crows begin [SPRING](#) peck of  
March dust is worth a king's [SPRING](#) So many mists in March, so many frosts [SPRING](#)

**mare** *A mare usque ad mare* [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

**mare** grey mare is the better horse [MARRIAGE](#) Money makes the mare to go [MONEY](#) Nothing so  
bold as a blind mare [IGNORANCE](#)

**market** He that cannot abide a bad market [BUSINESS](#)

**markets** Bull markets climb a wall of worry [BUSINESS](#)

**marriage** Marriage is a lottery [MARRIAGE](#) There goes more to marriage [MARRIAGE](#)

**marriages** Marriages are made in heaven [MARRIAGE](#)

**married** I married my husband for life [MEN](#) young man married is a [MARRIAGE](#)

**marry** Marry in haste and repent at leisure [MARRIAGE](#) Marry in May, rue for aye [WEDDINGS](#)  
Never marry for money, but [MARRIAGE](#)

**marrying** Building and marrying of children [ARCHITECTURE](#)

**Martinmas** Every hog has his Martinmas [FATE](#)

**martyrs** blood of the martyrs [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#)

**Marxist** I am a Marxist—of the Groucho [POLITICS](#)

**mass** Meat and mass [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#)

**master** eye of a master does more work [EMPLOYMENT](#) Fire is a good servant, but a bad master  
[WAYS AND MEANS](#) Jack is as good as his master [EQUALITY](#) Jack of all trades and master of  
none [EMPLOYMENT](#) Like master, like man [WORK](#) When the pupil is ready, the master  
[EDUCATION](#)

**masters** No man can serve two masters [CHOICE](#)

**matters** What matters is what works [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**May** April and May are keys to the whole year [SPRING](#) April showers bring forth May flowers  
[SPRING](#) cold May and windy [SPRING](#) Eat leeks in March and ramsons in May [HEALTH](#) He that  
will not when he may [OPPORTUNITY](#) Marry in May, rue for aye [WEDDINGS](#) May chickens come  
cheeping [SPRING](#) Ne'er cast a clout till May be out [DRESS](#) Sell in May and go away [BUYING](#)  
[AND SELLING](#) swarm in May is worth a load of hay [SUMMER](#) warm January, a cold May  
[WEATHER](#)

**means** end justifies the means [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**measure** Man is the measure of all things [HUMAN RACE](#) Measure seven times, cut once  
[PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) There is measure in all things [MODERATION](#)

**measures** Exceptional times require exceptional measures [NECESSITY](#)

**meat** After meat, mustard [EATING](#) God sends meat, but the Devil [COOKING](#) Meat and mass  
[CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#) nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) One  
man's meat is another man's poison [LIKES AND DISLIKES](#)

**medicine** Food without hospitality is medicine [HOSPITALITY](#) Good medicine always has a bitter  
taste [MEDICINE](#) Hospitality and medicine must be [HOSPITALITY](#) Laughter is the best medicine  
[MEDICINE](#) library is a repository of medicine [BOOKS](#) Medicine can prolong life, but [MEDICINE](#)  
Your food is your medicine [HEALTH](#)

**meet** Do not meet troubles half way [WORRY](#) Extremes meet [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#)

**meets** When Greek meets Greek [SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE](#)

**memory** liar ought to have a good memory [LIES](#) Our memory is always at fault [MIND](#)

**men** best of men are but men at best [HUMAN RACE](#)

**mend** It is never too late to mend [CHANGE](#) Make do and mend [THRIFT](#)

**mending** woman and a ship ever want mending [WOMEN](#)

**mercy** May God in his mercy look down [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**merit** Merit in appearance is [APPEARANCE](#)

**merrier** more the merrier [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#)

**merry** cherry year, a merry year [SUMMER](#) Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow [LIFESTYLES](#) It is  
merry in hall when beards wag all [HOSPITALITY](#)

**mice** cat in gloves catches no mice [CAUTION](#) It is better to feed one cat than many mice [CATS](#) Keep  
no more cats than will catch mice [MODERATION](#) When the cat's away, the mice will  
[OPPORTUNITY](#)

**mickle** Many a little makes a mickle [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) Many a mickle makes a  
muckle [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#)

**midnight** One hour's sleep before midnight [SLEEP](#)

**might** Might is right [POWER](#)

**mightier** pen is mightier than the sword [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**mile** miss is as good as a mile [MISTAKES](#)

**miles** Essex stiles, Kentish miles [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#) Every two miles the water  
changes [TRAVEL](#) Glasgow's miles better [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#) Walking ten thousand  
miles [EXPERIENCE](#) Walking ten thousand miles [KNOWLEDGE](#)

**milk** Feeding a snake with milk **CHARACTER** It is no use crying over spilt milk **MISFORTUNES**  
Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap **SEX**

**mill** All is grist that comes to the mill **OPPORTUNITY** mill cannot grind with the water that  
**OPPORTUNITY**

**million** If you really want to make a million **WEALTH** Never ask about the first million **WEALTH**

**mills** mills of God grind slowly **FATE**

**mind** mind enlightened is like heaven **MIND** Mind has no sex **MIND** mind is a terrible thing to waste  
**MIND** Out of sight, out of mind **ABSENCE** Travel broadens the mind **TRAVEL** wise man changes  
his mind **FOOLS**

**minds** Great minds think alike **THINKING** Little things please little minds **VALUE**

**miracles** age of miracles is past **SURPRISE**

**mischievous** mother of mischief is no bigger **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**misery** Misery loves company **SORROW**

**misfortune** Ignorance is voluntary misfortune **IGNORANCE**

**misfortunes** Misfortunes never come singly **MISFORTUNES**

**miss** miss is as good as a mile **MISTAKES** You never miss the water till the well **GRATITUDE**

**missed** slice off a cut loaf isn't missed **IGNORANCE**

**misses** person who misses his chance **OPPORTUNITY**

**mistakes** If you don't make mistakes **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES**

**mists** So many mists in March, so many frosts **SPRING**

**mixen** Better wed over the mixen **FAMILIARITY**

**mockingbird** mockingbird has no voice **BIRDS**

**moderation** Moderation in all things **MODERATION**

**moment** Enjoy the present moment **PRESENT** To question and ask is a moment's shame **THINKING**

**Monday** Monday's child is fair of face **BEAUTY** They that wash on Monday **HOUSEWORK**

**money** bulls make money, the bears make **BUYING AND SELLING** fool and his money are soon  
parted **FOOLS** Get the money honestly if you can **MONEY** Lend your money, and lose your friend  
**DEBT AND BORROWING** Money can't buy happiness **MONEY** Money has no smell **MONEY**  
Money is like sea water **MONEY** Money isn't everything **MONEY** Money is power **MONEY**  
Money is the root of all evil **MONEY** Money like manure, does no good **MONEY** Money makes a  
man **WEALTH** Money makes money **WEALTH** Money makes the dog dance **MONEY** Money  
makes the mare to go **MONEY** Money talks **MONEY** Never marry for money, but **MARRIAGE**

Time is money **MONEY** When money speaks, the truth **CORRUPTION** You pay your money  
**CHOICE**

**moneyless** moneyless man goes fast through **POVERTY**

**monk** cowl does not make the monk **APPEARANCE**

**monkey** higher the monkey climbs **AMBITION** rusty monkey wrench **DETERMINATION** Softlee,  
softlee, catchee monkey **PATIENCE** What can a monkey know of the taste **VALUE**

**monkeys** Even monkeys sometimes fall off a tree **MISTAKES** If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys  
**VALUE**

**months** Nine months of winter **WEATHER**

**monument** You'll die facing the monument **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**monumentum** *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice* **ARCHITECTURE**

**moon** Clear moon, frost soon **WEATHER** No moon, no man **CHILDREN**

**morals** It is one thing to keep your morals **BEHAVIOUR**

**more** Fear less, hope more; Eat less **LIFESTYLES** Less is more **MODERATION** more arguments you  
win, the less **ARGUMENT** more butter, the worse cheese **FOOD** More haste, less speed **HASTE**  
**AND DELAY** more laws, the more thieves and bandits **LAW** more the merrier **QUANTITIES AND**  
**QUALITIES** More things grow in the garden **GARDENS** more you get the more you want **GREED**  
Much would have more **GREED** whole is more than the sum **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**morning** afternoon knows what the morning never suspected **FORESIGHT** guest is like the morning  
dew **HOSPITALITY** morning daylight appears plainer **TIME** Morning dreams come true **DREAMS**  
morning knows no more than the evening **SLEEP**

**morrow** Never bid the Devil good morrow **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

**mortgage** Home is where the mortgage is **HOME**

**mortuis** *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* **REPUTATION**

**Moses** For every Pharaoh there is a Moses **COURAGE** Moses took a chance **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**moss** rolling stone gathers no moss **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**most** Who knows most, speaks least **SPEECH**

**mother** Absence is the mother of disillusion **ABSENCE** Diligence is the mother of **CHANCE AND**  
**LUCK** Like mother, like daughter **FAMILY** mother of mischief is no bigger **CAUSES AND**  
**CONSEQUENCES** mother understands what the child **PARENTS** Necessity is the mother of  
invention **NECESSITY** Summer is the mother of the poor **SUMMER**

**mount** wise man will climb Mount Fuji once **TRAVEL**



**mountain** If the mountain will not come to Mahomet **NECESSITY** man who removes a mountain  
**PATIENCE** One mountain cannot accommodate two **LEADERSHIP**

**mountains** Beyond mountains there are more **DETERMINATION** Faith will move mountains **BELIEF**  
mountains are high, and the emperor **GOVERNMENT** We have no friends but the mountains  
**DANGER**

**mouse** It's the second mouse that gets **PREPARATION AND READINESS** mouse may help a lion  
**POWER** One for the mouse, one for the crow **NATURE**

**mousetrap** only free cheese is in a mousetrap **TEMPTATION**

**mouth** Never look a gift horse in the mouth **GRATITUDE** shut mouth catches no flies **SILENCE**

**mouths** God never sends mouths but **FOOD** Out of the mouths of babes — **WISDOM**

**moutons** *Revenons à ces moutons* **DETERMINATION**

**move** Did the earth move for you **SEX** When you pray, move your feet **RELIGION**

**moved** shall not be moved **DETERMINATION**

**moves** If it moves, salute it **ARMED FORCES**

**much** Few have too much, and fewer too little **WEALTH** Much would have more **GREED** Sow much,  
reap much **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** You can have too much of a good thing **EXCESS**

**muck** Where there's muck there's brass **MONEY**

**muckle** Many a mickle makes a muckle **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**mulberry** With time and patience the mulberry leaf **PATIENCE**

**mule** If you lead your mule to the top **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

**multitude** Charity covers a multitude of sins **FORGIVENESS**

**mummified** Custom is mummified by habit **CUSTOM AND HABIT**

**murder** Killing no murder **MURDER** Murder will out **MURDER**

**music** Music helps not the toothache **MUSIC** When the music changes **CHANGE**

**must** What must be, must be **FATE**

**mustard** After meat, mustard **EATING**

**nail** For want of a nail the shoe was lost **PREPARATION AND READINESS** nail that sticks up is  
certain to **MANAGEMENT** One nail drives out another **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**name** Change the name and not the letter **MARRIAGE** Give a dog a bad name and hang **GOSSIP**  
good name is better than a golden girdle **REPUTATION** He that has an ill name **REPUTATION** We  
name the guilty men **GUILT**

**names** No names, no pack drill **SECRECY**

**Naples** See Naples and die [TOWNS AND CITIES](#)

**nation** As Maine goes, so goes the nation [POLITICS](#) Nation shall speak peace unto  
[BROADCASTING](#) nation without a language [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

**national** national debt, if it is not excessive [DEBT AND BORROWING](#)

**nature** Death is nature's way [DEATH](#) father is a banker provided by nature [PARENTS](#) Nature abhors  
a vacuum [NATURE](#) Self-preservation is the first law of nature [SELF-INTEREST](#) Some sleep five  
hours; nature requires [SLEEP](#) You can drive out nature with a pitchfork [NATURE](#)

**naughty** Naughty but nice [TEMPTATION](#)

**near** Near is my kirtle, but nearer my smock [SELF-INTEREST](#) Near is my shirt, but nearer my skin  
[SELF-INTEREST](#)

**nearer** nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) nearer the church, the  
farther from God [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#)

**necessary** Is your journey really necessary [TRAVEL](#)

**necessity** Make a virtue of necessity [NECESSITY](#) Necessity is the mother of invention [NECESSITY](#)  
Necessity knows no law [NECESSITY](#) Necessity sharpens industry [NECESSITY](#)

**nectar** Even nectar is a poison [EXCESS](#)

**need** Charity sees the need [CHARITY](#) friend in need is a friend indeed [FRIENDSHIP](#) Need makes  
greed [GREED](#) Your King and Country need you [ARMED FORCES](#)

**needle** When a pine needle falls in the forest [KNOWLEDGE](#) Where the needle goes the thread must  
follow [POWER](#)

**needles** Needles and pins, needles and pins [MARRIAGE](#)

**needs** Needs must when the devil drives [NECESSITY](#)

**neglected** Business neglected [BUSINESS](#)

**neighbour** Love your neighbour, but don't [NEIGHBOURS](#) rotten apple injures its neighbour  
[CORRUPTION](#) What a neighbour gets is not lost [NEIGHBOURS](#)

**neighbours** Good fences make good neighbours [NEIGHBOURS](#)

**nemo** *Nemo me impune lacessit* [DEFIANCE](#)

**nest** It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest [LOYALTY](#) There are no birds in last year's nest [CHANGE](#)

**nests** Birds in their little nests [ARGUMENT](#)

**net** All is fish that comes to the net [OPPORTUNITY](#) In vain the net is spread [FUTILITY](#) man in debt  
is caught in a net [DEBT AND BORROWING](#) old net is cast aside while the new net [YOUTH](#)

**never** Better late than never [PUNCTUALITY](#) It is never too late to learn [EDUCATION](#) Never is a long  
time [TIME](#) Never let the sun go down on [FORGIVENESS](#) Never say never [CHANGE](#) Never too old

to learn **EDUCATION** Opportunity never knocks for **OPPORTUNITY** Opportunity never knocks twice **OPPORTUNITY**

**new** Always something new out of Africa **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES** New brooms sweep clean **CHANGE** New circumstances, new controls **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** New lords, new laws **CHANGE** old net is cast aside while the new net **YOUTH** Out with the old, in with the new **CHANGE** There is nothing new under the sun **FAMILIARITY** What is new cannot be true **CUSTOM AND HABIT** You can't put new wine in old bottles **CHANGE** You can't teach an old dog new tricks **CUSTOM AND HABIT**

**news** All the news that's fit to print **NEWS AND JOURNALISM** Bad news travels fast **NEWS AND JOURNALISM** Go abroad and you'll hear news of home **TRAVEL** No news is good news **NEWS AND JOURNALISM**

**next** Next year in Jerusalem **TOWNS AND CITIES**

**nibbles** fish will soon be caught that nibbles **TEMPTATION**

**nice** Naughty but nice **TEMPTATION** Nice guys finish last **SPORTS AND GAMES** Nice to see you **MEETING AND PARTING** No more Mr Nice Guy **CHANGE**

**night** day has eyes, the night has ears **SECRECY** Night brings counsel **ADVICE** Red sky at night, shepherd's delight **WEATHER**

**nil** *Nil carborundum illegitimi* **DETERMINATION**

**nine** cat has nine lives **CATS** Nine months of winter **WEATHER** Nine tailors make a man **DRESS** Parsley seed goes nine times **GARDENS** Possession is nine points of the law **LAW** stitch in time saves nine **CAUTION**

**nineteen** All dancing girls are nineteen **YOUTH**

**no** Just say no **DETERMINATION** No cross, no crown **SUFFERING** No foot, no horse **HORSES** No man is an island **SOLITUDE** No names, no pack drill **SECRECY** No surrender **DEFIANCE** There's no such thing as a free lunch **TEMPTATION**

**nobody** Everybody's business is nobody's **RESPONSIBILITY** Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition **SURPRISE**

**nod** nod's as good as a wink **ADVICE**

**nods** Homer sometimes nods **MISTAKES**

**noise** Silence is a still noise **SILENCE**

**nonsense** little nonsense now and then, is relished by the wisest men **WISDOM**

**north** North wind doth blow **WEATHER**

**Northamptonshire** Northamptonshire for squires **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**nose** Don't cut off your nose to spite **REVENGE**

**not** Not a day without a line **ART** Not guilty, but don't do it again **GUILT**

**nothing** Doing nothing is ill **IDLENESS** If you have nothing **POSSESSIONS** Nothing can bring you peace but **PEACE** Nothing comes from nothing **VALUE** Nothing for nothing **VALUE** Nothing is certain but death **CERTAINTY AND DOUBT** Nothing is certain but the unforeseen **FORESIGHT** Nothing is for ever **CHANGE** Nothing is stolen without hands **HONESTY** Nothing so bad but it might have been **SYMPATHY** Nothing succeeds like success **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** Nothing venture, nothing gain **THOROUGHNESS** Nothing venture, nothing have **THOROUGHNESS** Something is better than nothing **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** There is nothing like leather **WAYS AND MEANS**

**now** And now for something **CHANGE**

**nowt** Hear all, see all, say nowt **SELF-INTEREST** There's nowt so queer as folk **HUMAN RACE**  
When in doubt, do nowt **ACTION AND INACTION**

**nullius** *Nullius in verba* **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**number** Age is just a number **AGE**

**numbers** There is luck in odd numbers **CHANCE AND LUCK** There is safety in numbers  
**QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**nuts** gods send nuts to those **AGE**

**oak** When the oak is before the ash **TREES**

**oaks** Great oaks from little acorns **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** Little strokes fell great oaks  
**DETERMINATION**

**obedience** first duty of a soldier is obedience **ARMED FORCES**

**obey** He that cannot obey cannot command **LEADERSHIP**

**obvious** obvious choice is usually **CHOICE**

**odd** There is luck in odd numbers **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**odious** Comparisons are odious **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**offenders** Offenders never pardon **FORGIVENESS**

**offered** They offered death **CHOICE**

**old** Better be an old man's darling **MARRIAGE** Don't throw away the old bucket **PREPARATION AND READINESS** For the unlearned, old age is winter **AGE** Good soup is made in an old pot **EXPERIENCE** man is as old as he feels **MEN AND WOMEN** Never too old to learn **EDUCATION** old error is always more popular **TRUTH** Old habits die hard **CUSTOM AND HABIT** old horse does not spoil the furrow **AGE** old net is cast aside while the new net **YOUTH** old poacher makes

the best gamekeeper **WAYS AND MEANS** Old sins cast long shadows **PAST** Old soldiers never die **ARMED FORCES** Out with the old **CHANGE** There's no fool like an old fool **AGE** You cannot catch old birds **EXPERIENCE** You cannot put an old head **EXPERIENCE** You cannot shift an old tree **CUSTOM AND HABIT** You can't put new wine in old bottles **CHANGE** You can't teach an old dog new tricks **CUSTOM AND HABIT** Young folks think old folks to be fools **YOUTH** Young men may die, but old men **DEATH** Young saint, old devil **HUMAN RACE**

**older** older the ginger, the more pungent **AGE**

**omelette** You cannot make an omelette **PRACTICALITY**

**once** Christmas comes but once a year **CHRISTMAS** Once a —, always a — **CHARACTER** Once a priest, always **CLERGY**

**one** Beware of the man of one book **BOOKS** Children: one is one **CHILDREN** One for sorrow, two for mirth **BIRDS** One good turn deserves another **COOPERATION** One mountain cannot accommodate two **LEADERSHIP** One step at a time **PATIENCE**

**onions** One day honey, one day onions **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**only** Only — shopping days to Christmas **CHRISTMAS**

**open** door must be either shut or open **CHOICE** Teachers open the door **EDUCATION**

**opens** When one door shuts, another opens **OPPORTUNITY**

**opera** opera isn't over till the fat lady sings **ENDING**

**opinions** So many men, so many opinions **OPINION** Those who never retract their opinions **OPINION** Where there are two Jews, there are three opinions **OPINION**

**opportunities** Opportunities look for you **OPPORTUNITY**

**opportunity** Every crisis provides an opportunity **OPPORTUNITY** Man's extremity is God's opportunity **RELIGION** Opportunity makes a thief **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** Opportunity never knocks for **OPPORTUNITY** Opportunity never knocks twice **OPPORTUNITY**

**orare** *Laborare est orare* **RELIGION**

**other** Other times, other manners **CHANGE**

**others** Do unto others as you would they **LIFESTYLES**

**ounce** ounce of practice is worth a pound of **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**out** Don't halloo till you are out of the wood **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** Out of debt, out of danger **DEBT AND BORROWING** Out of sight, out of mind **ABSENCE** Out with the old **CHANGE**

**oven** You can put your boots in the oven **FUTILITY**

**overcome** We shall overcome **DETERMINATION**

**overload** Don't overload gratitude **GRATITUDE**

**own** He who slaps his own face **MISTAKES**

**oyster** world is one's oyster **OPPORTUNITY**

**oysters** Don't eat oysters unless **FOOD**

**pace** It is the pace that kills **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** Pace makes the race **HORSES**

**pack drill** No names, no pack drill **SECRECY**

**padlock** Wedlock is a padlock **MARRIAGE**

**pain** No pain, no gain **EFFORT** Pride feels no pain **PRIDE** rock in the water does not know the pain  
**SYMPATHY**

**paint** blind man's wife needs no paint **APPEARANCE**

**painted** black as he is painted **REPUTATION**

**painter** Every painter paints himself **ART** good painter can draw a devil **ART**

**paints** Every painter paints himself **ART**

**palman** *Palman qui meruit* **ACHIEVEMENT**

**pans** If ifs and ands were pots and pans **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**paper** Paper bleeds little **WRITING** Paper is patient **WRITING**

**paradise** England is the paradise of women **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**pardon** Offenders never pardon **FORGIVENESS**

**parent** art of being a parent **CHILDREN** Caution is the parent of safety **CAUTION**

**parents** Parents want their children to become **PARENTS** To understand your parents' love **PARENTS**

**parsley** Parsley seed goes nine times **GARDENS**

**parsnips** Fine words butter no parsnips **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**part** best of friends must part **MEETING AND PARTING**

**parted** fool and his money are soon parted **FOOLS**

**parts** Heineken refreshes the parts **DRINK**

**party** Always leave the party when **HOSPITALITY**

**pass** And this, too, shall pass away **TRANSCIENCE** If the Bermudas let you pass **SEA** Love makes  
time pass **LOVE**

**passe** *Tout passe, tout casse* **LIFE**

**passeront** *Ils ne passeront pas* **DEFIANCE**

**passion** passion for freedom never dies **POLITICS**

**past** age of miracles is past **SURPRISE** past always looks better **PAST** past at least is secure **PAST**  
past is always ahead of us **PAST** Things past cannot be recalled **PAST**

**patch** There is no patch for stupid **COMPUTERS**

**paternoster** No penny, no paternoster **BUSINESS**

**path** Do not follow where the path may lead **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES**

**paths** paths are many, but the goal is the same **WAYS AND MEANS**

**patience** All commend patience **PATIENCE** Patience is a virtue **PATIENCE** With time and patience  
the mulberry leaf **PATIENCE**

**patient** Paper is patient **WRITING**

**Paul** If Saint Paul's day be fair and clear **WINTER**

**pawn** After the game, the king and the pawn **EQUALITY**

**pay** Can't pay, won't pay **DEFIANCE** Crime doesn't pay **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** He that cannot  
pay, let him pray **MONEY** If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys **VALUE** No cure, no pay  
**BUSINESS** Pay beforehand was never well **BUSINESS** price we pay for love **MOURNING** Service  
is the rent we pay **CHARITY** Take what you want, and pay for it **RESPONSIBILITY** They that  
dance must pay the fiddler **POWER**

**pays** Death pays all debts **DEATH** He who pays the piper calls the tune **POWER** It pays to advertise  
**ADVERTISING** third time pays for all **DETERMINATION** You pays your money **CHOICE**

**peace** If you want peace, you must prepare **PREPARATION AND READINESS** Nation shall speak  
peace unto **BROADCASTING** Nothing can bring you peace but **PEACE** Peace is the dream of the  
wise **PEACE**

**peacock** peacock is always happy because **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**peanuts** If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys **VALUE**

**pears** Walnuts and pears you plant for **GARDENS**

**peck** peck of March dust is worth a king's **SPRING** We must eat a peck of dirt **EATING**

**Pebbles** Pebbles for pleasure **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**pegs** All words are pegs to hang ideas on **WORDS**

**pen** pen is mightier than the sword **WAYS AND MEANS** What is written with a pen **WRITING**

**pence** Take care of the pence **THRIFT**

**penny** bad penny always turns up **CHARACTER** In for a penny, in for a pound **THOROUGHNESS** No  
penny, no paternoster **BUSINESS** penny saved is a penny earned **THRIFT** Penny wise and pound  
foolish **THRIFT**

**pense** *Honi soit qui mal y pense* **GOOD AND EVIL**

**people** Guns don't kill people **MURDER** If the people will lead **LEADERSHIP** Like people, like priest  
**CLERGY** Power to the people **POLITICS** Proverbs are the coins of the people **SAYINGS** To  
understand the people **SAYINGS** voice of the people is the voice of God **POLITICS**

**Peoria** It'll play in Peoria **POLITICS**

**perfect** Practice makes perfect **WORK**

**perfection** Trifles make perfection **WORK**

**perfume** Flattery, like perfume **PRAISE AND FLATTERY**

**perjury** Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury **LOVE**

**Persil** Persil washes whiter **HOUSEWORK**

**personal** personal is political **POLITICS**

**Pharaoh** For every Pharaoh there is a Moses **COURAGE**

**philosophy** Philosophy bakes no bread **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**photos** Take only photos **ENVIRONMENT**

**pick** Pick your battles **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

See a pin and pick it up **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**picture** Every picture tells a story **KNOWLEDGE** One picture is worth ten thousand words **WORDS  
AND DEEDS** Writing is a picture of the writer's heart **WRITING**

**pie** apple pie without some cheese **FOOD** Promises, like piecrust, are made **TRUST AND  
TREACHERY**

**pies** devil makes his Christmas pies **LAW**

**pig** only part of a pig that can't be used **PRACTICALITY** What can you expect from a pig  
**CHARACTER** You can put lipstick on a pig **FUTILITY**

**pigs** Pigs get fat, but hogs get **GREED** Pigs may fly **BELIEF**

**pile** Pile it high, sell it cheap **BUSINESS**

**pillar** Hope is the pillar of the world **HOPE**

**pillow** clean conscience is a good pillow **CONSCIENCE**

**pilot** In a calm sea, every man is a pilot **ACHIEVEMENT**

**pin** He that will not stoop for a pin **PRIDE** It's a sin to steal a pin **HONESTY** See a pin and pick it up  
**CHANCE AND LUCK**

**pine** When a pine needle falls in the forest **KNOWLEDGE**

**pins** Needles and pins, needles and pins **MARRIAGE**

**pint** You cannot get a quart into a pint **FUTILITY**



**piper** He who pays the piper calls the tune **POWER** It takes seven years to make a piper **MUSIC**

**pitch** He that touches pitch shall be defiled **GOOD AND EVIL**

**pitcher** pitcher will go to the well **EXCESS**

**pitchers** Little pitchers have large ears **SECRECY**

**pitchfork** You can drive out nature with a pitchfork **NATURE**

**pitied** Better be envied than pitied **ENVY**

**pity** Pity is akin to love **SYMPATHY**

**place** There's a time and a place **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** There's no place like home  
**HOME**

**plague** Please your eye and plague **BEAUTY**

**plan** He who fails to plan, plans to fail **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** No plan survives first contact  
**PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**plans** He who fails to plan, plans to fail **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**plant** best time to plant a tree was **TREES** Confidence is a plant of slowth growth **TRUST AND  
TREACHERY** To plant a tree is to plant hope **TREES** Walnuts and pears you plant for **GARDENS**

**planted** Trees planted by the ancestors **TREES**

**plants** One generation plants the trees **TREES**

**play** All work and no play makes Jack **LEISURE** Fair play's a jewel **JUSTICE** Give and take is fair  
play **JUSTICE** If you play with fire you get burnt **DANGER** It'll play in Peoria **POLITICS** Turn  
about is fair play **JUSTICE**

**please** Little things please little minds **VALUE** Please to remember the Fifth **TRUST AND  
TREACHERY** Please your eye and plague **BEAUTY** You can't please everyone **LIKES AND  
DISLIKES**

**pleasure** Business before pleasure **BUSINESS** He that would go to sea for pleasure **SEA** Peebles for  
pleasure **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**poacher** old poacher makes the best gamekeeper **WAYS AND MEANS**

**pockets** Shrouds have no pockets **MONEY**

**pointed** I pointed out to you the stars **KNOWLEDGE**

**poison** Even nectar is a poison **EXCESS** One man's meat is another man's poison **LIKES AND  
DISLIKES**

**poke** Poke a bush, a snake comes **CAUTION**

**policy** Honesty is the best policy **HONESTY**

**politeness** Punctuality is the politeness of princes **PUNCTUALITY**

**political** personal is political **POLITICS**

**politics** In politics, a man must learn to rise **POLITICS** Politics makes strange bedfellows **POLITICS**

**pomegranate** Every pomegranate has one seed **FOOD**

**poor** It is a poor cook **COOKING** It is a poor dog that's not worth **VALUE** It is a poor heart that never rejoices **HAPPINESS** Summer is the mother of the poor **SUMMER**

**port** Any port in a storm **CRISES**

**possession** Possession is nine points **LAW**

**possible** All things are possible with God **GOD**

**post** *Post coitum omne animal triste* **SEX**

**post** post of honour is the post of danger **DANGER**

**postern** postern door makes a thief **OPPORTUNITY**

**pot** Good soup is made in an old pot **EXPERIENCE** little pot is soon hot **ANGER** pot boils, friendship lives **HOSPITALITY** watched pot never boils **PATIENCE**

**pots** If ifs and ands were pots and pans **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**pound** In for a penny, in for a pound **THOROUGHNESS** ounce of practice is worth a pound of **WORDS AND DEEDS** Penny wise and pound foolish **THRIFT**

**pounds** Take care of the pence and the pounds **THRIFT**

**pours** It never rains but it pours **MISFORTUNES**

**poverty** Both poverty and prosperity **POVERTY** Make poverty history **POVERTY** Poverty comes from God **POVERTY** Poverty is a blessing **POVERTY** Poverty is no disgrace **POVERTY** Poverty is not a crime **POVERTY**

**power** Beauty is power **BEAUTY** Knowledge is power **KNOWLEDGE** Money is power **MONEY** Power corrupts **POWER** Power is like an egg **POWER** Power to the people **POLITICS**

**practice** ounce of practice is worth a pound of **WORDS AND DEEDS** Practice makes perfect **WORK**

**practise** practise what you preach **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**practised** Honesty is more praised than practised **HONESTY**

**praise** Praise the child, and you make love to **PARENTS** Self-praise is no recommendation **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**praised** Honesty is more praised than practised **HONESTY**

**pray** He that cannot pay, let him pray **MONEY** When you pray, move your feet **RELIGION**

**prayer** Prayer to God, and service to the tsar **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**prays** family that prays together stays **RELIGION**

**preach** Practise what you preach **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**precept** Example is better than precept **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**prepare** Hope for the best and prepare for **PREPARATION AND READINESS** If you want peace, you must prepare **PREPARATION AND READINESS** To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**prepared** Be prepared **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**present** Enjoy the present moment **PRESENT** No time like the present **OPPORTUNITY** There's no future like the present **FUTURE**

**preservation** Self-preservation is the first law of nature **SELF-INTEREST**

**press** You press the button, we do the rest **TECHNOLOGY**

**pressed** One volunteer is worth two pressed men **WORK**

**pretend** We pretend to work **EMPLOYMENT**

**prettiest** prettiest girl in the world **BEAUTY**

**pretty** Pretty is as pretty does **BEHAVIOUR**

**prevention** Prevention is better than cure **FORESIGHT**

**prey** Birds of prey do not sing **BIRDS**

**price** Every man has his price **CORRUPTION** Everything has a price, but jade is **VALUE** Grief is the price we pay for love **MOURNING**

**pride** Pride feels no pain **PRIDE** Pride goes before a fall **PRIDE** Stupidity and pride grow **PRIDE**

**priest** Like people, like priest **CLERGY** Once a priest, always **CLERGY**

**princes** Camels, fleas, and princes **ROYALTY** Punctuality is the politeness of princes **PUNCTUALITY**

**principle** In matters of principle, stand **CERTAINTY**

**print** All the news that's fit to print **NEWS AND JOURNALISM**

**probably** There's probably no God **GOD**

**procrastination** Procrastination is the thief of time **HASTE AND DELAY**

**promises** Promises, like piecrust, are made **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**proof** proof of the pudding is in the eating **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**prophet** prophet is not without honour **FAMILIARITY**

**prophets** Is Saul also among the prophets **ABILITY**

**proposes** Man proposes, God disposes **FATE**

**prosper** Cheats never prosper **DECEPTION**

**prosperity** Both poverty and prosperity **POVERTY**

**proverb** There is no proverb without a grain **SAYINGS**

**proverbs** Proverbs are the coins of the people **SAYINGS**

**providence** Providence is always on the side of **ARMED FORCES**

**public** One does not wash one's dirty linen **SECRECY**

**publicity** Any publicity is good publicity **ADVERTISING**

**pudding** proof of the pudding is in the eating **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**puddle** sun loses nothing by shining into a puddle **GOOD AND EVIL** When the stars begin to huddle, the earth will soon become a puddle **WEATHER**

**punctuality** Punctuality is the art of guessing **PUNCTUALITY** Punctuality is the politeness of princes **PUNCTUALITY** Punctuality is the soul of business **PUNCTUALITY**

**pungent** older the ginger, the more pungent **AGE** Sour, sweet, bitter, pungent **FATE**

**pupil** When the pupil is ready, the master **EDUCATION**

**purse** You can't make a silk purse **FUTILITY**

**pursueth** guilty flee when no man pursueth **GUILT**

**push** Do not push the river, it will flow **FUTILITY**

**put** Never put off till tomorrow **HASTE AND DELAY**

**putt** Drive for show, and putt for dough **SPORTS AND GAMES**

**quality** Every good quality is contained in ginger **HEALTH** Never mind the quality, feel the width **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**quarrel** It takes two to make a quarrel **ARGUMENT** quarrel of lovers is the renewal **LOVE**

**quart** You cannot get a quart into a pint **FUTILITY**

**queer** There's nowt so queer as folk **HUMAN RACE**

**question** Ask a silly question and you get **FOOLS** civil question deserves a civil answer **MANNERS**  
Fools ask questions that wise men **WISDOM** There are two sides to every question **JUSTICE** To question and ask is a moment's shame **THINKING**

**quick** quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog **WORDS**

**quickly** He gives twice who gives quickly **GENEROSITY** Quickly come, quickly go **LOYALTY**

**quickness** quickness of the hand deceives the eye **DECEPTION**

**quiet** best doctors are Dr Quiet, Dr Diet **MEDICINE** quiet conscience sleeps in thunder  
**CONSCIENCE**

**quits** winner never quits, and a quitter never wins **WINNING AND LOSING**

**quitter** winner never quits, and a quitter never wins **WINNING AND LOSING**

**quote** devil can quote Scripture **SAYINGS**

**race** Pace makes the race **HORSES** race is not to the swift, nor the battle **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**  
Slow and steady wins the race **DETERMINATION**

**radio** Always turn the radio on before **BROADCASTING**

**rain** Blessed are the dead that the rain **DEATH** Now you will feel no rain **WEDDINGS** Rain before  
seven, fine before eleven **WEATHER** Rain, rain, go away **WEATHER** Today's rain is tomorrow's  
whisky **DRINK** To dream of the dead is a sign of rain **DREAMS**

**rains** Have an umbrella ready before it rains **PREPARATION AND READINESS** In the woods it rains  
twice **TREES** It never rains but it pours **MISFORTUNES**

**raise** It is easier to raise the Devil **BEGINNING**

**ramsons** Eat leeks in March and ramsons in May **HEALTH**

**rat** cat, the rat, and Lovell the dog **GOVERNMENT**

**read** He that runs may read **READING**

**reading** Do not close a letter without reading it **LETTERS**

**reads** man who reads is the man who leads **READING**

**real** Will the real — please stand up **SECRECY**

**reap** As you sow, so you reap **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** Sow an act, and reap **CUSTOM**  
**AND HABIT** Sow much, reap much **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**reaps** Speech sows, silence reaps **SILENCE**

**reason** There is reason in the roasting of eggs **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**recalled** Things past cannot be recalled **PAST**

**receive** He gives twice who gives quickly **GENEROSITY**

**receivers** If there were no receivers **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**reckonings** Short reckonings make long friends **DEBT AND BORROWING**

**recommendation** Self-praise is no recommendation **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**red** Better red than dead **CHOICE** Red sky at night, shepherd's delight **WEATHER**

**redressed** fault confessed is half redressed **FORGIVENESS**

**reed** reed before the wind lives on **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**reek** Lang may yer lum reek **HOME**

**rejoices** It is a poor heart that never rejoices **HAPPINESS**

**relationship** I belong by blood relationship **FAMILY**

**remedy** There is a remedy for everything **DEATH**

**remember** Please to remember the Fifth **TRUST AND TREACHERY** Remember the Alamo  
**WARFARE** When you drink water, remember **GRATITUDE**

**removals** Three removals are as bad **CHANGE**

**renewal** quarrel of lovers is the renewal **LOVE**

**rent** Service is the rent we pay **CHARITY**

**repeats** History repeats itself **HISTORY**

**repent** Marry in haste and repent at leisure **MARRIAGE**

**republican** Not to be a republican at twenty **POLITICS**

**reputation** good reputation stands still **REPUTATION** man's best reputation for his future  
**REPUTATION**

**request** No flowers by request **MOURNING**

**rest** After dinner rest a while **EATING** change is as good as a rest **CHANGE** You press the button, we  
do the rest **TECHNOLOGY**

**revenge** If you want revenge, dig two graves **REVENGE** Living well is the best revenge **REVENGE**  
Revenge is a dish that can be eaten **REVENGE** Revenge is sweet **REVENGE**

**revenons** *Revenons à ces moutons* **DETERMINATION**

**revenue** Thrift is a great revenue **THRIFT**

**revolution** Every revolution was first a thought **REVOLUTION AND REBELLION**

**revolutions** Revolutions are not made by **REVOLUTION AND REBELLION** Revolutions are not  
made with **REVOLUTION AND REBELLION**

**reward** Virtue is its own reward **VIRTUE**

**rib** elephant does not die of one broken rib **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**rice** Talk will not cook rice **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**rich** One law for the rich **JUSTICE** rich man gets his ice in summer **WEALTH**

**ride** If wishes were horses, beggars would ride **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**rides** He who rides a tiger **DANGER**

**ridiculous** From the sublime to the ridiculous **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**right** customer is always right **BUSINESS** Do right and fear no man **CONSCIENCE** Even a stopped clock is right twice a day **TIME** God's in his heaven; all's right **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** He is always right who suspects **MISTAKES** Might is right **POWER** Two wrongs don't make a right **GOOD AND EVIL**

**ripe** Soon ripe, soon rotten **YOUTH**

**rise** Early to bed and early to rise **HEALTH** In politics, a man must learn to rise **POLITICS** stream cannot rise above its source **CHARACTER**

**rising** rising tide lifts all boats **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**river** Cross the river by feeling **CAUTION** Cross the river in a crowd **COOPERATION** Do not push the river, it will flow **FUTILITY** If you sit by the river long enough **PATIENCE** live in the river **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** river that forgets its source **GRATITUDE** sea refuses no river **GREED** Where the river is deepest **CHARACTER**

**rivers** All rivers run into the sea **RIVERS**

**road** No one was ever lost on a straight road **PREPARATION AND READINESS** road to a friend's house is never long **FRIENDSHIP** road to hell is paved with **ACTION AND INACTION** There is no royal road to learning **EDUCATION** To know the road ahead, ask those coming back **FORESIGHT** Why did the chicken cross the road **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

**roads** All roads lead to Rome **TOWNS AND CITIES** Roads are made by walking **TRAVEL**

**roasting** There is reason in the roasting of eggs **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**robbery** Fair exchange is no robbery **JUSTICE**

**robin** robin and the wren are God's **BIRDS** Robin Hood could brave all weathers **WEATHER**

**rock** In matters of principle, stand like a rock **CERTAINTY** rock in the water does not know the pain **SYMPATHY**

**rocket** Up like a rocket, down like a stick **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**rocking** Worry is like a rocking chair **WORRY**

**rocks** hand that rocks the cradle rules **WOMEN**

**rod** Spare the rod and spoil **CHILDREN**

**roll** Assistant heads must roll **BROADCASTING**

**rolling** rolling stone gathers no moss **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**Romans** When in Rome, do as the Romans do **BEHAVIOUR**

**Rome** All roads lead to Rome **TOWNS AND CITIES** Rome was not built in a day **PATIENCE** When in Rome, do as the Romans do **BEHAVIOUR**

**room** There's always room at the top **AMBITION**

**rooster** cuckoo praises the rooster **PRAISE AND FLATTERY** Rooster today, feather duster tomorrow  
**SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**root** Money is the root of all evil **MONEY** No tree takes so deep a root **PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE** Root, hog, or die **WORK**

**roots** roots of charity are always green **CHARITY**

**rope** Give a man enough rope **WAYS AND MEANS**

**rose** Do not grieve that rose trees have thorns **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** He who wants a rose **PRACTICALITY** No rose without a thorn **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**roses** Take time to smell the roses **LEISURE** Time brings roses **PATIENCE**

**rots** Winter never rots in the sky **WINTER**

**rotten** rotten apple injures its neighbour **CORRUPTION** Small choice in rotten apples **CHOICE** Soon ripe, soon rotten **YOUTH**

**round** Love makes the world go round **LOVE**

**row** Call on God, but row away **CAUTION**

**royal** There is no royal road to learning **EDUCATION**

**rudder** Who won't be ruled by the rudder **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**rudderless** widow is a rudderless boat **MARRIAGE**

**rue** Marry in May, rue for aye **WEDDINGS**

**rule** Divide and rule **GOVERNMENT** exception proves the rule **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT** golden rule of life is **BEGINNING** Self-interest is the rule **SELF-INTEREST** There is an exception to every rule **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**ruled** Who won't be ruled by the rudder **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**rules** hand that rocks the cradle rules **WOMEN** Rules are made to be broken **LAW**

**run** All rivers run into the sea **RIVERS** You cannot run with the hare **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**runs** guilty one always runs **GUILT** He that runs may read **READING** He who fights and runs away **CAUTION**

**Russian** Scratch a Russian and you find **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**rust** Better to wear out than to rust **IDLENESS**

**rusts** If gold rusts, what will iron do **CORRUPTION**

**Sabbath** child that is born on the Sabbath **CHILDREN**

**sack** You can't hide an awl in a sack **SECRECY**

**sacks** Empty sacks will never stand upright **POVERTY**



**safe** Better be safe than sorry **CAUTION** Just when you thought it was safe **DANGER** Safe bind, safe find **CAUTION**

**safety** Caution is the parent of safety **CAUTION** There is safety in numbers **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**said** They haif said: Quhat say they **DEFIANCE** What the soldier said isn't evidence **GOSSIP**

**sailor** One cannot become a good sailor **EFFORT**

**sailors** Heaven protects children, sailors **DANGER**

**saint** Devil was sick, the Devil a saint **GRATITUDE** greater the sinner, the greater the saint **GOOD AND EVIL** If Saint Paul's day be fair and clear **WINTER** on Saint Thomas the Divine **WINTER** Young saint, old devil **HUMAN RACE**

**saints** There are more saints in Cornwall **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**salt** Help you to salt, help you to sorrow **MISFORTUNES**

**salty** Those who eat salty fish **RESPONSIBILITY**

**salute** If it moves, salute it **ARMED FORCES**

**Satan** Satan rebuking sin **GOOD AND EVIL**

**satisfied** satisfied person does not know the hungry **SELF-INTEREST**

**Saturday** Saturday's child works hard for a living **WORK**

**sauce** Hunger is the best sauce **EATING** What's sauce for the goose **JUSTICE**

**Saul** Is Saul also among the prophets **ABILITY**

**save** Save the whale **ENVIRONMENT** Save us from our friends **FRIENDSHIP**

**saved** penny saved is a penny earned **THRIFT**

**saw** Saw wood and say nothing **CAUTION**

**say** Do as I say, not as I do **BEHAVIOUR** Hear all, see all, say nowt **SELF-INTEREST** Saw wood and say nothing **CAUTION** Say it with flowers **FLOWERS** They haif said: Quhat say they **DEFIANCE**

**says** What everybody says must be true **TRUTH** What Manchester says today **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS** Who says A must say B **NECESSITY**

**scabbard** Two swords do not fit in one scabbard **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**scalded** He who has been scalded **CAUTION**

**scarce** Good men are scarce **VIRTUE**

**scare** Kill the chicken to scare **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**scholar** ink of a scholar is holier than **EDUCATION**

**school** Experience keeps a dear school **EXPERIENCE** Never tell tales out of school **SECRECY**

**science** Much science, much sorrow [SCIENCE](#) Science finds, industry applies [TECHNOLOGY](#)

Science has no enemy but the ignorant [SCIENCE](#)

**scorned** Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned [WOMEN](#)

**scrambled** You can't unscramble scrambled eggs [FUTILITY](#)

**scratch** Scratch a Russian and you find [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#)

**scripture** devil can quote Scripture [SAYINGS](#)

**sea** All rivers run into the sea [RIVERS](#) Chess is a sea where a gnat may drink [SPORTS AND GAMES](#)

He that would go to sea for pleasure [SEA](#) In a calm sea, every man is a pilot [ACHIEVEMENT](#) last one to know about the sea [IGNORANCE](#) Money is like sea water [MONEY](#) sea of learning has no end [KNOWLEDGE](#) sea refuses no river [GREED](#) sea wants to be visited [SEA](#) There are as good fish in the sea [LOVE](#) Throw a lucky man into the sea [CHANCE AND LUCK](#) willing foe and sea room [ARMED FORCES](#)

**seaman** good seaman is known in bad weather [SEA](#)

**second** It's the second mouse that gets [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) Second thoughts are best [CAUTION](#)

**secret** secret is either too good to keep [SECRECY](#) Three may keep a secret [SECRECY](#)

**secure** past at least is secure [PAST](#)

**see** He who can see three days ahead [FORESIGHT](#) Lookers-on see most of the game [ACTION AND INACTION](#) Nice to see you [MEETING AND PARTING](#) See all your best work go unnoticed [SECRECY](#) See Naples and die [TOWNS AND CITIES](#) See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil [VIRTUE](#) They that live longest, see most [EXPERIENCE](#) What the eye doesn't see, the heart [IGNORANCE](#) What you see is what you get [APPEARANCE](#)

**seed** blood of the martyrs is the seed [CHRISTIAN CHURCH](#) Every pomegranate has one seed [FOOD](#)

Good seed makes a bad crop [CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES](#) seed hidden in the heart of an apple [TREES](#)

**seeding** One year's seeding makes seven [GARDENS](#)

**seeing** By seeing one spot [CHARACTER](#) Seeing is believing [BELIEF](#)

**seek** Seek and ye shall find [ACTION AND INACTION](#)

**seekers** Seekers are finders [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**seem** Be what you would seem [BEHAVIOUR](#)

**seen** Children should be seen and not [CHILDREN](#)

**sees** One who sees something good [NEWS AND JOURNALISM](#)

**self** Deny self for self's sake [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#)

**self-praise** Self-praise is no recommendation [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#)

**sell** Don't sell the skin till you have caught [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#) Pile it high, sell it cheap  
[BUSINESS](#) Sell honestly, but not honesty [HONESTY](#) Sell in May and go away [BUYING AND SELLING](#)

**semper** *Semper eadem* [CHANGE](#)

**send** Never send a boy to do a man's job [YOUTH](#)

**September** September blow soft till the fruit's [AUTUMN](#) September dries up wells [AUTUMN](#)

**seriously** Seriously, though, he's [ACHIEVEMENT](#)

**serpent** Strike the serpent's head [ENEMIES](#)

**servant** Fire is a good servant, but a bad master [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**serve** You cannot serve God and Mammon [MONEY](#)

**served** Youth must be served [YOUTH](#)

**service** Prayer to God, and service to the tsar [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) Service is the rent we pay [CHARITY](#)

**set** Sow dry and set wet [GARDENS](#)

**settling** In settling an island, the first building [ARCHITECTURE](#)

**seven** Fall seven times, stand up eight [DETERMINATION](#) Give me a child for the first seven  
[EDUCATION](#) It takes seven years to make a piper [MUSIC](#) Keep a thing seven years [POSSESSIONS](#)  
Measure seven times, cut once [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) One year's seeding makes seven  
[GARDENS](#) Rain before seven, fine before eleven [WEATHER](#) You should know a man seven years  
[NEIGHBOURS](#)

**sex** Mind has no sex [MIND](#)

**sexually** Life is a sexually transmitted disease [LIFE](#)

**Shackleton** When disaster strikes . . . pray for Shackleton [CRISES](#)

**shadow** Coming events cast their shadow [FUTURE](#) We live in each other's shadow [COOPERATION](#)  
Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow [WORRY](#)

**shadows** Old sins cast long shadows [PAST](#)

**shame** Fool me once, shame on you [DECEPTION](#) Tell the truth and shame the devil [TRUTH](#) To question and ask is a moment's shame [THINKING](#)

**shared** Shared joy is double joy [SYMPATHY](#) trouble shared is a trouble halved [COOPERATION](#)

**sharpens** Iron sharpens iron [CHARACTER](#)

**sharper** sharper the storm, the sooner it's over [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#)

**shed** You can shed tears that she is gone **MOURNING**

**sheep** bleating sheep loses a bite **OPPORTUNITY** lone sheep is in danger from the wolf **SOLITUDE**  
One might as well be hanged for a sheep **THOROUGHNESS** wolves are well fed and the sheep  
**DANGER**

**shepherd** Red sky at night, shepherd's delight **WEATHER**

**shines** Make hay while the sun shines **OPPORTUNITY** So much sun as shines on **WEATHER**

**shining** sun loses nothing by shining into a puddle **GOOD AND EVIL**

**ship** Do not spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar **THOROUGHNESS** One hand for oneself and one for  
the ship **SEA** woman and a ship ever want mending **WOMEN**

**ships** Loose lips sink ships **GOSSIP**

**shirt** Near is my shirt, but nearer my skin **SELF-INTEREST**

**shirtsleeves** From shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**shoe** For want of a nail the shoe was lost **PREPARATION AND READINESS** If the shoe fits, wear it  
**NAMES**

**shoemaker** shoemaker's son always goes **FAMILY**

**shoes** I cried because I had no shoes **MISFORTUNES** It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes **AMBITION**  
You need more than dancing shoes **DANCE**

**shoot** When you shoot an arrow of truth **TRUTH**

**shop** Keep your own shop **BUSINESS**

**shopping** Only — shopping days to Christmas **CHRISTMAS**

**shore** I sit on the shore, and wait for the wind **PATIENCE**

**shoreline** larger the shoreline of knowledge **KNOWLEDGE**

**shorn** God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb **SYMPATHY**

**short** Art is long and life is short **LIFE** short cut is often a wrong cut **WAYS AND MEANS** short  
horse is soon curried **WORK** Short reckonings make long friends **DEBT AND BORROWING**

**shortest** longest way home is the shortest **PATIENCE**

**show** Drive for show, and putt for dough **SPORTS AND GAMES** show must go on  
**DETERMINATION** Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and **TEACHING**

**showers** April showers bring forth May flowers **SPRING**

**shrimp** shrimp that falls asleep **ACTION AND INACTION** When whales fight, the shrimp's back is  
broken **POWER**

**shrouds** Shrouds have no pockets **MONEY**

**shut** door must be either shut or open **CHOICE** It's too late to shut the stable door **FORESIGHT** shut mouth catches no flies **SILENCE**

**shuts** When one door shuts, another opens **OPPORTUNITY**

**shy** Once bitten, twice shy **EXPERIENCE**

**sick** Devil was sick, the Devil a saint **GRATITUDE** Hope deferred makes the heart sick **HOPE**

**sickly** bloody war and a sickly season **ARMED FORCES**

**side** bread never falls but on its buttered side **MISFORTUNES** Providence is always on the side of **ARMED FORCES**

**sides** There are two sides to every question **JUSTICE**

**sight** Out of sight, out of mind **ABSENCE**

**silence** Silence is a still noise **SILENCE** Silence is a woman's best garment **WOMEN** Silence means consent **SILENCE** Speech is silver, but silence is golden **SILENCE** Speech sows, silence reaps **SILENCE**

**silent** It is the calm and silent water **DANGER**

**silk** You can't make a silk purse **FUTILITY**

**silly** Ask a silly question and you get **FOOLS**

**silver** Every cloud has a silver lining **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** Speech is silver, but silence is golden **SILENCE**

**similia** *Similia similibus curantur* **MEDICINE**

**sin** It's a sin to steal a pin **HONESTY** Satan rebuking sin **GOOD AND EVIL**

**sincerest** Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery **PRAISE AND FLATTERY**

**sing** Birds of prey do not sing **BIRDS** Little birds that can sing **COOPERATION** Sing before breakfast, cry **FEELINGS**

**singing** singing army and a **ARMED FORCES**

**single** Beauty draws with a single hair **BEAUTY** longest journey begins with a single **BEGINNING** single arrow is easily broken **COOPERATION** single bracelet does not jingle **COOPERATION**

**singly** Misfortunes never come singly **MISFORTUNES**

**sings** opera isn't over till the fat lady sings **ENDING**

**sinner** greater the sinner, the greater the saint **GOOD AND EVIL**

**sins** Charity covers a multitude of sins **FORGIVENESS** Old sins cast long shadows **PAST**

**sir** Praise from Sir Hubert **PRAISE AND FLATTERY**

**site** Select a proper site for your garden **GARDENS**

**sitting** It is as cheap sitting as standing [ACTION AND INACTION](#)

**sixpence** Bang goes sixpence [THRIFT](#)

**size** One size does not fit all [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**skin** Beauty is only skin deep [BEAUTY](#) Don't sell the skin till you have caught [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#) fair skin hides seven defects [APPEARANCE](#) Near is my shirt, but nearer my skin [SELF-INTEREST](#) There is more than one way to skin a cat [WAYS AND MEANS](#) When a tiger dies it leaves its skin [REPUTATION](#)

**skittles** Life isn't all beer and skittles [LIFE](#)

**sky** If the sky falls we shall catch larks [EFFORT](#) No fist is big enough to hide the sky [GOVERNMENT](#) Red sky at night, shepherd's delight [WEATHER](#) Winter never rots in the sky [WINTER](#) Women hold up half the sky [WOMEN](#)

**slap** Slip, slop, slap [HEALTH](#)

**slaps** He who slaps his own face [MISTAKES](#)

**sleep** beginning of health is sleep [SLEEP](#) less you know, the better you sleep [IGNORANCE](#) One hour's sleep before midnight [SLEEP](#) Six hours' sleep for a man [SLEEP](#) Some sleep five hours; nature requires [SLEEP](#) We never sleep [SLEEP](#)

**sleeping** Let sleeping dogs lie [CAUTION](#) sleeping fox counts hens [CHARACTER](#)

**sleeps** quiet conscience sleeps in thunder [CONSCIENCE](#)

**slice** slice off a cut loaf isn't missed [IGNORANCE](#)

**slip** Slip, slop, slap [HEALTH](#) There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip [MISTAKES](#)

**slop** Slip, slop, slap [HEALTH](#)

**slow** Confidence is a plant of slow growth [TRUST AND TREACHERY](#) Slow and steady wins the race [DETERMINATION](#) Slow but sure [PATIENCE](#)

**slowly** Make haste slowly [HASTE AND DELAY](#)

**small** Better are small fish than an empty dish [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#) Small choice in rotten apples [CHOICE](#) Small is beautiful [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) Wink at sma' faults, ye hae great anes [MISTAKES](#)

**smaller** bigger the hat, the smaller the property [SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION](#) smaller the lizard, the greater its hopes [AMBITION](#)

**smell** Money has no smell [MONEY](#) Take time to smell the roses [LEISURE](#)

**smock** Near is my kirtle, but nearer my smock [SELF-INTEREST](#)

**smoke** No smoke without fire [REPUTATION](#)

**smoking** Smoking can seriously damage [SMOKING](#)

**smooth** course of true love never did run smooth [LOVE](#)

**snake** Do not add legs to the snake [EXCESS](#) Feeding a snake with milk [CHARACTER](#) Once bitten by a snake [CAUTION](#) Poke a bush, a snake comes [CAUTION](#)

**sneezes** Coughs and sneezes spread diseases [SICKNESS](#)

**snooze** If you snooze, you lose [OPPORTUNITY](#)

**snow** swan brings snow on its bill [BIRDS](#)

**soap** Flattery is soft soap [PRAISE AND FLATTERY](#)

**soar** However high a bird may soar [ENVIRONMENT](#)

**sober** Wanton kittens make sober cats [YOUTH](#)

**society** Gossip is the lifeblood of society [GOSSIP](#)

**soft** Flattery is soft soap [PRAISE AND FLATTERY](#) soft answer turneth away wrath [ANGER](#)

**softly** Softlee, softlee, catchee monkey [PATIENCE](#)

**soil** answer lies in the soil [GARDENS](#)

**soldier** Every Turk is born a soldier [COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES](#) first duty of a soldier [ARMED FORCES](#) soldier of the Great War, known unto [ARMED FORCES](#) What the soldier said isn't evidence [GOSSIP](#)

**soldiers** Old soldiers never die [ARMED FORCES](#)

**someone** Someone, somewhere, wants a letter [LETTERS](#)

**something** And now for something [CHANGE](#) Something is better than nothing [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#)

**son** Like father, like son [FAMILY](#) My son is my son till he gets him [PARENTS](#) shoemaker's son always goes [FAMILY](#) son of a duck floats [FAMILY](#)

**songless** believer is a songless bird [BELIEF](#)

**sons** Clergymen's sons always [CLERGY](#)

**soon** Soon ripe, soon rotten [YOUTH](#)

**sooner** sooner begun, the sooner done [BEGINNING](#)

**sorrow** Help you to salt, help you to sorrow [MISFORTUNES](#) Much science, much sorrow [SCIENCE](#) One for sorrow, two for mirth [BIRDS](#)

**sorrows** Little children, little sorrows [CHILDREN](#)

**sorry** Better be safe than sorry [CAUTION](#)

**sorts** It takes all sorts [CHARACTER](#)

**soul** Brevity is the soul of wit **SPEECH** Confession is good for the soul **HONESTY** eyes are the window of the soul **BODY** Punctuality is the soul of business **PUNCTUALITY** Your soul may belong to God **ARMED FORCES**

**sound** Empty vessels make the most sound **FOOLS**

**soup** Good soup is made in an old pot **EXPERIENCE** Of soup and love, the first is best **FOOD**

**sour** Sour, sweet, bitter, pungent **FATE**

**source** river that forgets its source **GRATITUDE** stream cannot rise above its source **CHARACTER**

**sow** As you sow, so you reap **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** If you do not sow in the spring **AUTUMN** Sow an act, and reap **CUSTOM AND HABIT** Sow corn in clay **GARDENS** Sow dry and set wet **GARDENS** sow may whistle, though it has **ABILITY** Sow much, reap much **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES** They that sow the wind **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**sows** Speech sows, silence reaps **SILENCE**

**space** Watch this space **NEWS AND JOURNALISM**

**Spanish** Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition **SURPRISE**

**spare** Spare at the spigot **THRIFT** Spare the rod and spoil **CHILDREN** Spare well and have to spend **THRIFT**

**speak** kumara does not speak of its own **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION** Listen a thousand times, and speak once **SPEECH** Never speak ill of the dead **REPUTATION** See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil **VIRTUE** Some folks speak from experience **EXPERIENCE** Speak as you find **REPUTATION**

**speaks** Everyone speaks well of the bridge **MANNERS** Who knows most, speaks least **SPEECH**

**species** female of the species is more deadly **WOMEN**

**speculate** If you don't speculate **BUSINESS**

**speech** Speech is silver, but silence is golden **SILENCE** Speech sows, silence reaps **SILENCE**

**speed** More haste, less speed **HASTE AND DELAY**

**spend** Spare well and have to spend **THRIFT** What you spend, you have **POSSESSIONS**

**spice** Variety is the spice of life **CHANGE**

**spider** bee sucks honey where the spider **CHARACTER** When spider webs unite **COOPERATION**

**spigot** Spare at the spigot **THRIFT**

**spilt** It is no use crying over spilt milk **MISFORTUNES**

**spindle** Do not fold, spindle or **COMPUTING**

**spite** Don't cut off your nose to spite **REVENGE**



**spoil** Do not spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar **THOROUGHNESS** Spare the rod and spoil **CHILDREN** Too many cooks spoil the broth **WORK**

**spoiled** Better one house spoiled than two **MARRIAGE**

**spoils** One spoonful of tar spoils a barrel **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**spoonful** One spoonful of tar spoils a barrel **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**spot** By seeing one spot **CHARACTER**

**spots** leopard does not change his spots **CHANGE**

**spring** If you do not sow in the spring **AUTUMN** Spring forward, fall back **TIME**

**springs** Hope springs eternal **HOPE**

**squeak** only part of a pig that can't be used is its squeak **PRACTICALITY**

**squires** Northamptonshire for squires **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**stable** It's too late to shut the stable door **FORESIGHT** man who is born in a stable **CHARACTER**

**stables** Care, and not fine stables **HORSES**

**stabs** Stabs heal, but bad words never **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**stags** army of stags led by a lion **ARMED FORCES**

**stand** Empty sacks will never stand upright **POVERTY** Fall seven times, stand up eight **DETERMINATION** Will the real — please stand up **SECRECY**

**standing** It is as cheap sitting as standing **ACTION AND INACTION**

**stars** I pointed out to you the stars **KNOWLEDGE** When the stars begin to huddle **WEATHER**

**start** Don't hurry—start early **HASTE AND DELAY** Life begins on the day you start **GARDENS**

**starve** Feed a cold and starve a fever **SICKNESS**

**stays** family that prays together stays **RELIGION**

**steady** Slow and steady wins the race **DETERMINATION** Steady as she goes **CAUTION**

**steal** It's a sin to steal a pin **HONESTY** One may steal a horse **REPUTATION**

**stealin'** howlin' coyote ain't stealin' no chickens **HONESTY**

**steals** He who steals an egg will steal a camel **HONESTY**

**steed** While the grass grows, the steed **ACHIEVEMENT**

**steel** hammer shatters glass, but forges steel **WAYS AND MEANS**

**step** It is the first step **BEGINNING** One step at a time **PATIENCE**

**stern** stern chase is a long chase **DETERMINATION**

**stey** Put a stout heart to a stey brae **DETERMINATION**

**stick** It is easy to find a stick to beat a dog [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#) Let the cobbler stick to his last [KNOWLEDGE](#) Throw dirt enough, and some will stick [REPUTATION](#) Up like a rocket, down like a stick [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

**sticks** nail that sticks up is certain to [MANAGEMENT](#) Sticks and stones may break my bones [WORDS](#)

**stiles** Essex stiles, Kentish miles [BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS](#)

**still** Silence is a still noise [SILENCE](#) Still achieving, still pursuing [ACHIEVEMENT](#) still tongue makes a wise head [SILENCE](#) Still waters run deep [CHARACTER](#)

**stink** Fish and guests stink after three days [HOSPITALITY](#)

**stinks** fish always stinks from the head [LEADERSHIP](#)

**stir** more you stir it [CAUTION](#)

**stitch** stitch in time saves nine [CAUTION](#)

**stolen** Nothing is stolen without hands [HONESTY](#) Stolen fruit are sweet [TEMPTATION](#) Stolen waters are sweet [TEMPTATION](#)

**stone** God sleeps in the stone, dreams [HUMAN RACE](#) Stone-dead hath no fellow [DEATH](#) You cannot get blood from a stone [FUTILITY](#)

**stones** Cross the river by feeling the stones [CAUTION](#) Sticks and stones may break my bones [WORDS](#) You buy land, you buy stones [BUYING AND SELLING](#)

**stools** Between two stools one falls [INDECISION](#)

**stoop** He that will not stoop for a pin [PRIDE](#)

**stopped** Even a stopped clock is right twice a day [TIME](#)

**storm** After a storm comes a calm [PEACE](#) Any port in a storm [CRISES](#) sharper the storm, the sooner it's over [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#)

**story** everyday story of country folk [COUNTRY AND THE TOWN](#) Every picture tells a story [KNOWLEDGE](#) One story is good till another is told [HYPOTHESIS AND FACT](#)

**stout** Put a stout heart to a stey brae [DETERMINATION](#)

**stove** cook is no better than her stove [COOKING](#)

**straight** God writes straight with crooked lines [GOD](#) No one was ever lost on a straight road [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#)

**strain** Don't strain at a gnat, and swallow [BELIEF](#) Let the train take the strain [TRAVEL](#)

**Strand** You're never alone with a Strand [SMOKING](#)

**strange** Politics makes strange bedfellows [POLITICS](#)

**stranger** Fact is stranger than fiction **TRUTH** tears of the stranger are only water **SYMPATHY** Truth is stranger than fiction **TRUTH**

**straw** drowning man will clutch at a straw **HOPE** It is the last straw **EXCESS** straw vote only shows which way **POLITICS** You cannot make bricks without straw **FUTILITY**

**straws** Straws tell which way the wind blows **KNOWLEDGE**

**stream** stream cannot rise above its source **CHARACTER**

**strength** Strength through joy **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** Union is strength **COOPERATION**

**stretch** Stretch your arm no further than **THRIFT**

**strike** Strike while the iron is hot **OPPORTUNITY**

**strikes** Lightning never strikes twice **CHANCE AND LUCK** Three strikes and you're out **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**striking** It is a striking coincidence that **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** Striking manners are bad manners **MANNERS**

**string** How long is a piece of string **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**strokes** Different strokes for different folks **CHOICE** Little strokes fell great oaks **DETERMINATION**

**stronger** There is one thing stronger than **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES**

**stubborn** Facts are stubborn things **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**stupid** There is no patch for stupid **COMPUTERS**

**stupidity** Never attribute to malice what is adequately explained by stupidity **FOOLS** Stupidity and pride grow **PRIDE**

**style** style is the man **CHARACTER**

**sublime** From the sublime to the ridiculous **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**succeed** If at first you don't succeed **DETERMINATION**

**succeeds** He who leaves succeeds **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** Nothing succeeds like success **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**success** Nothing succeeds like success **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** only place where success comes before **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** Success has many fathers, while failure **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**sue** Sue a beggar and catch a louse **FUTILITY**

**sufficient** Sufficient unto the day is the evil **WORRY**

**sum** whole is more than the sum **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**summer** One swallow does not make a summer **SUMMER** rich man gets his ice in summer **WEALTH**  
Summer is the mother of the poor **SUMMER** Winter is summer's heir **WINTER** Winter thunder,  
summer hunger **WEATHER**

**sun** Do not argue against the sun **ARGUMENT** Happy is the bride the sun shines on **WEDDINGS**  
Make hay while the sun shines **OPPORTUNITY** Never let the sun go down on **FORGIVENESS**  
Only the eagle can gaze at the sun **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** So much sun as shines on  
**WEATHER** sun loses nothing by shining into a puddle **GOOD AND EVIL** There is nothing new  
under the sun **FAMILIARITY** Turn your face to the sun **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**sunny** If Candlemas day be sunny and bright **WINTER**

**superiority** Equality is difficult, but superiority **LEADERSHIP**

**supperless** Better to go to bed supperless **DEBT AND BORROWING**

**sups** He who sups with the devil **CAUTION**

**sure** Slow but sure **PATIENCE**

**surrender** No surrender **DEFIANCE**

**suspects** He is always right who suspects **MISTAKES**

**Sussex** Sussex won't be druv **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**swallow** Don't strain at a gnat, and swallow **BELIEF** It is idle to swallow the cow **DETERMINATION**  
One swallow does not make a summer **SUMMER**

**swan** swan brings snow on its bill **BIRDS**

**swarm** swarm in May is worth a load of hay **SUMMER**

**sweep** If every one would sweep his own **SELF-INTEREST**

**sweeps** It beats as it sweeps as it cleans **HOUSEWORK**

**sweet** By a sweet tongue and kindness **BEHAVIOUR** Little fish are sweet **QUANTITIES AND  
QUALITIES** Revenge is sweet **REVENGE** Sour, sweet, bitter, pungent **FATE** Stolen fruit are sweet  
**TEMPTATION** Stolen waters are sweet **TEMPTATION** Words are sweet, but they never take  
**WORDS AND DEEDS**

**sweeter** nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**sweetest** From the sweetest wine, the tarest **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**swift** race is not to the swift, nor the battle **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**

**swiftest** swiftest horse cannot overtake the word **WORDS**

**swim** Fish, to taste good, must swim **COOKING**

**swings** What you lose on the swings **WINNING AND LOSING**

**Swithin** Saint Swithin's day, if thou be fair **SUMMER**

**sword** pen is mightier than the sword **WAYS AND MEANS** Whosoever draws his sword against  
**REVOLUTION AND REBELLION**

**swords** Two swords do not fit in one scabbard **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**tablets** Keep taking the tablets **MEDICINE**

**tailors** Nine tailors make a man **DRESS**

**tails** Heads I win, tails you lose **WINNING AND LOSING**

**take** Give a thing, and take a thing **GENEROSITY** Take away Aberdeen and twelve **BRITISH**  
**TOWNS AND REGIONS** Take the goods the gods provide **OPPORTUNITY** Take what you want,  
and pay for it **RESPONSIBILITY**

**takes** It takes all sorts **CHARACTER** It takes two to make a bargain **COOPERATION** It takes two to  
tango **COOPERATION**

**taking** Keep taking the tablets **MEDICINE**

**tale** tale never loses in the telling **GOSSIP**

**tales** Dead men tell no tales **SECRECY** Never tell tales out of school **SECRECY**

**talk** Careless talk costs lives **GOSSIP** If you can talk, you can sing **ABILITY** It's good to talk  
**SPEECH** Talk is cheap **WORDS AND DEEDS** Talk of the Devil **MEETING AND PARTING** Talk  
will not cook rice **WORDS AND DEEDS** There isn't much to talk about **HOSPITALITY**

**talks** Money talks **MONEY**

**tall** tall tree attracts the wind **FAME**

**tango** It takes two to tango **COOPERATION**

**tar** Do not spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar **THOROUGHNESS** One spoonful of tar spoils a barrel  
**QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES**

**tartest** From the sweetest wine, the tartest **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**taste** Every man to his taste **LIKES AND DISLIKES** Fish, to taste good, must swim **COOKING** Good  
medicine always has a bitter taste **MEDICINE** What can a monkey know of the taste **VALUE**

**tastes** Tastes differ **LIKES AND DISLIKES** There is no accounting for tastes **LIKES AND DISLIKES**

**tea** If you are cold, tea will warm you **DRINK**

**teach** Don't teach your grandmother **ADVICE** You can't teach an old dog new tricks **CUSTOM AND**  
**HABIT**

**teacher** Experience is the best teacher **EXPERIENCE**

**teachers** Teachers open the door **EDUCATION**

**teaches** He teaches ill who teaches all **TEACHING** He that teaches himself has a fool for **TEACHING**  
Who teaches me for a day is my father **TEACHING**

**tears** tears of the stranger are only water **SYMPATHY** You can shed tears that she is gone  
**MOURNING**

**teeth** If you had teeth of steel, you could eat iron coconuts **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** When the  
lion shows its teeth **DANGER** When the lips are gone, the teeth are cold **COOPERATION** Winter  
either bites with its teeth **WINTER** wolf may lose his teeth, but never **AGE**

**tell** Dead men tell no tales **SECRECY** Don't ask, don't tell **SECRECY** Never tell tales out of school  
**SECRECY** Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and **TEACHING** Tell the truth and shame the devil  
**TRUTH** Time will tell **TIME**

**telling** tale never loses in the telling **GOSSIP**

**tempers** God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb **SYMPATHY**

**terror** Better an end with terror **ENDING**

**test** Test before you trust **TRUST AND TREACHERY** test of good manners is **MANNERS**

**that** Been there, done that, got the T-shirt **TRAVEL**

**thermodynamics** Laws of Thermodynamics **SCIENCE**

**thicker** Blood is thicker than water **FAMILY**

**thief** Hang a thief when he's young **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** Opportunity makes a thief **CRIME  
AND PUNISHMENT** postern door makes a thief **OPPORTUNITY** Procrastination is the thief of  
time **HASTE AND DELAY** Set a thief to catch a thief **WAYS AND MEANS**

**thieves** Little thieves are hanged **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** more laws, the more thieves and  
bandits **LAW** There is honour among thieves **COOPERATION** When thieves fall out **CRIME AND  
PUNISHMENT**

**thing** If a thing's worth doing **EFFORT** You can have too much of a good thing **EXCESS**

**think** Think globally, act locally **ENVIRONMENT**

**third** third time is the charm **CHANCE AND LUCK** Third time lucky **CHANCE AND LUCK** third  
time pays for all **DETERMINATION**

**thirsty** Dig the well before you are thirsty **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**Thomas** On Saint Thomas the Divine **WINTER**

**thorn** No rose without a thorn **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION**

**thorns** Do not grieve that rose trees have thorns **SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT** He who plants  
thorns **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**thought** Action without thought **ACTION AND INACTION** Every revolution was first a thought  
**REVOLUTION AND REBELLION** Thought is free **OPINION** wish is father to the thought  
**OPINION**

**thoughts** First thoughts are best **INDECISION** Second thoughts are best **CAUTION**

**thread** If everyone gives a thread **CHARITY** Where the needle goes the thread must follow **POWER**

**threatened** Threatened men live long **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**three** All mankind is divided into three **HUMAN RACE** Fish and guests stink after three days  
**HOSPITALITY** From clogs to clogs is only three **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** He who can see three  
days ahead **FORESIGHT** It takes three generations to make **RANK** Three acres and a cow  
**POLITICS** Three may keep a secret **SECRECY** Three removals are as bad **CHANGE** Three strikes  
and you're out **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** Three things are not to be trusted **DANGER** Two is  
company, but three is none **FRIENDSHIP**

**threes** Bad things come in threes **MISFORTUNES**

**thrift** Most people consider thrift a fine virtue **THRIFT** Thrift is a great revenue **THRIFT**

**thrive** He that will thrive must first ask **HOUSEWORK** If you want to live and thrive **CHANCE AND  
LUCK** Ill gotten goods never thrive **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**throw** Throw a lucky man into the sea **CHANCE AND LUCK** Throw dirt enough, and some will stick  
**REPUTATION**

**thunder** quiet conscience sleeps in thunder **CONSCIENCE** Winter thunder, summer hunger  
**WEATHER**

**Thursday** Thursday's child has far to go **TRAVEL**

**tide** rising tide lifts all boats **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** Time and tide wait for no man  
**OPPORTUNITY**

**tie** It is a tie between men **READING**

**tiger** bleating of the lamb excites the tiger **TEMPTATION** He who rides a tiger **DANGER** When a  
tiger dies it leaves its skin **REPUTATION**

**Till** Says Tweed to Till **RIVERS**

**timber** Knowledge and timber **KNOWLEDGE**

**time** good time was had by all **HAPPINESS** Love makes time pass **LOVE** Man fears Time, but Time  
fears **TIME** Never is a long time **TIME** No time like the present **OPPORTUNITY** Procrastination is  
the thief of time **HASTE AND DELAY** stitch in time saves nine **CAUTION** Take time to smell the  
roses **LEISURE** There is always a first time **BEGINNING** There is a time for everything **TIME**  
There's a time and a place **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** third time is the charm **CHANCE  
AND LUCK** Those who do not find time for exercise **HEALTH** Time and tide wait for no man

**OPPORTUNITY** Time brings roses **PATIENCE** Time flies **TRANSCIENCE** Time flies when you're having fun **HAPPINESS** Time is a great healer **TIME** Time is money **MONEY** Time will tell **TIME** Time works wonders **TIME** With time and patience the mulberry leaf **PATIENCE** Work expands so as to fill the time **WORK** You have the watches, but we have the time **TIME**

**times** Exceptional times require **NECESSITY** May you live in interesting times **CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION** Other times, other manners **CHANGE** Times change and we with time **CHANGE**

**tobacco** Coffee without tobacco **SMOKING**

**today** Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow **PRESENT** Today's rain is tomorrow's whisky **DRINK** Today you; tomorrow me **FUTURE**

**told** One story is good till another is told **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**tomorrow** All the flowers of tomorrow **FLOWERS** Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow **PRESENT** Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow **LIFESTYLES** Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday **PRESENT** Never put off till tomorrow **HASTE AND DELAY** Today's rain is tomorrow's whisky **DRINK** Today you; tomorrow me **FUTURE** Tomorrow is another day **FUTURE** Tomorrow is often the busiest day **FUTURE** Tomorrow never comes **FUTURE** Yesterday has gone, tomorrow is yet **PRESENT** Yesterday is ashes; tomorrow is wood **PRESENT** You can have apricots tomorrow **FUTURE**

**tongue** By a sweet tongue and kindness **BEHAVIOUR** still tongue makes a wise head **SILENCE** Tongue is like a sharp knife **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**too** Too many cooks spoil the broth **WORK**

**tools** bad workman blames his tools **APOLOGY AND EXCUSES**

**toothache** Music helps not the toothache **MUSIC**

**top** If you lead your mule to the top **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS** There's always room at the top **AMBITION**

**touch** Light the blue touch paper **DANGER** Touch the earth lightly **ENVIRONMENT**

**touches** He that touches pitch shall be defiled **GOOD AND EVIL**

**tout** *Tout passe, tout casse* **LIFE**

**trade** Every man to his trade **WORK** There are tricks in every trade **BUSINESS** Trade follows the flag **BUSINESS** Two of a trade never agree **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

**trades** Jack of all trades and master of none **EMPLOYMENT**

**traduttore** *Traduttore traditore* **SAYINGS**

**trail** Crime leaves a trail **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

**train** Let the train take the strain **TRAVEL**



**trained** We trained hard **MANAGEMENT**

**transit** *Sic transit gloria mundi* **TRANSCIENCE**

**trash** One man's trash is another man's treasure **LIKES AND DISLIKES**

**travel** better to travel hopefully **HOPE** Have gun, will travel **TRAVEL** Travel broadens the mind  
**TRAVEL**

**traveller** heaviest baggage for the traveller **TRAVEL**

**travelling** Travelling is learning **TRAVEL** Travelling is one way of lengthening life **TRAVEL**

**travels** He travels the fastest who travels alone **SOLITUDE** He who travels fast, travels alone  
**COOPERATION**

**Tre** By Tre, Pol, and Pen **NAMES**

**treasure** Learning is a treasure that follows **KNOWLEDGE** One man's trash is another man's treasure  
**LIKES AND DISLIKES**

**treat** Treat a man as he is, and that **RELATIONSHIPS**

**tree** As a tree falls, so shall it lie **DEATH** best time to plant a tree was **TREES** Do not judge a tree by  
its bark **APPEARANCE** Even monkeys sometimes fall off a tree **MISTAKES** falls far from the tree  
**FAMILY** No tree takes so deep a root **PREJUDICE AND TOLERANCE** tall tree attracts the wind  
**FAME** To plant a tree is to plant hope **TREES** tree is known by its fruit **CHARACTER** When the last  
tree is cut **ENVIRONMENT** woman, a dog, and a walnut tree **WOMEN** You can count the apples on  
one tree **QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES** You cannot shift an old tree **CUSTOM AND HABIT**

**trees** Eat the mangoes. Do not count the trees **WAYS AND MEANS** One generation plants the trees  
**TREES** Trees planted by the ancestors **TREES**

**tricks** There are tricks in every trade **BUSINESS** You can't teach an old dog new tricks **CUSTOM  
AND HABIT**

**trifles** Trifles make perfection **WORK**

**trip** Clunk, click, every trip **TRAVEL**

**trouble** Never trouble trouble **CAUTION** There will be trouble if the cobbler **KNOWLEDGE** trouble  
shared is a trouble halved **COOPERATION** When an elephant is in trouble **SUCCESS AND  
FAILURE** Worry is interest paid on trouble **WORRY**

**troubled** It is good fishing in troubled waters **OPPORTUNITY**

**troubles** Do not meet troubles half way **WORRY**

**true** course of true love never did run smooth **LOVE** If something sounds too good to be true  
**EXCELLENCE** Many a true word is spoken in jest **TRUTH** Morning dreams come true **DREAMS**  
What everybody says must be true **TRUTH** What is new cannot be true **CUSTOM AND HABIT**

**trust** Put your trust in God, and keep **PRACTICALITY** Test before you trust **TRUST AND TREACHERY** Trust but verify **CAUTION** Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel **CAUTION**

**trusted** Three things are not to be trusted **DANGER**

**truth** Children and fools tell the truth **HONESTY** greater the truth, the greater the libel **GOSSIP** Half the truth is often a whole lie **LIES** Tell the truth and shame the devil **TRUTH** There is truth in wine **DRUNKENNESS** Truth is stranger than fiction **TRUTH** Truth lies at the bottom of a well **TRUTH** Truth makes the Devil blush **TRUTH** Truth will out **TRUTH** When money speaks, the truth **CORRUPTION** When war is declared, Truth is the first **WARFARE** When you shoot an arrow of truth **TRUTH**

**try** We're number two. We try harder **EFFORT**

**trying** You should make a point of trying **EXPERIENCE**

**tsar** God is high above, and the tsar **GOVERNMENT** Prayer to God, and service to the tsar **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**tub** Every tub must stand on its own bottom **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**Tuesday** If it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium **TRAVEL**

**tune** America is a tune **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** dripping June sets all in tune **SUMMER** He that lives in hope dances to an ill tune **HOPE** He who pays the piper calls the tune **POWER** There's many a good tune **AGE**

**Turk** Every Turk is born a soldier **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

**turkeys** Turkeys, heresy, hops, and beer **INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES**

**turn** Even a worm will turn **NECESSITY** One good turn deserves another **COOPERATION** Turn about is fair play **JUSTICE** Turn your face to the sun **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**turning** It is a long lane that has no turning **PATIENCE**

**turtle** see a turtle on a fencepost **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**Tweed** Says Tweed to Till **RIVERS**

**twelve** Take away Aberdeen and twelve **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**twice** Even a stopped clock is right twice a day **TIME** He gives twice who gives quickly **GENEROSITY** In the woods it rains twice **TREES** Lightning never strikes twice **CHANCE AND LUCK** Twice-cooked cabbage is death **FOOD**

**twig** As the twig is bent **EDUCATION**

**two** Between two stools one falls **INDECISION** bird in the hand is worth two **CAUTION** If two ride on a horse **RANK** If you have two coins **LIFESTYLES** If you run after two hares **INDECISION** If you want revenge, dig two graves **REVENGE** It takes two to make a bargain **COOPERATION** It

takes two to make a quarrel **ARGUMENT** It takes two to tango **COOPERATION** No man can serve two masters **CHOICE** One for sorrow, two for mirth **BIRDS** One mountain cannot accommodate two **LEADERSHIP** There are two sides to every question **JUSTICE** Treat your guest as a guest for two days **HOSPITALITY** Two blacks don't make a white **GOOD AND EVIL** Two boys are half a boy **WORK** Two heads are better than one **THINKING** Two is company, but three is none **FRIENDSHIP** Two of a trade never agree **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** Two swords do not fit in one scabbard **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** Two wrongs don't make a right **GOOD AND EVIL** We're number two. We try harder **EFFORT** While two dogs are fighting **ARGUMENT** You cannot carry two watermelons **FUTILITY** You have two chances **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**tyranny** Democracy is better than tyranny **POLITICS**

**umbrella** Don't put up your umbrella before **CAUTION** Have an umbrella ready before it rains **PREPARATION AND READINESS**

**unbelieving** Believing has a core of unbelieving **BELIEF**

**understand** To understand the people **SAYINGS**

**understands** mother understands what the child **PARENTS**

**undone** What's done cannot be undone **PAST**

**unexpected** unexpected always happens **SURPRISE**

**unforeseen** Nothing is certain but the unforeseen **FORESIGHT**

**union** Union is strength **COOPERATION**

**united** United we stand, divided we **COOPERATION** When spider webs unite **COOPERATION**

**unlearned** For the unlearned, old age is winter **AGE**

**unlucky** Lucky at cards, unlucky in love **CHANCE AND LUCK**

**unnoticed** See all your best work go unnoticed **SECRECY**

**unpunished** No good deed goes unpunished **VIRTUE**

**unrepentant** Forgiving the unrepentant **FORGIVENESS**

**unscramble** You can't unscramble scrambled eggs **FUTILITY**

**unwilling** committee is a group of the unwilling **MANAGEMENT**

**up** Up like a rocket, down like a stick **SUCCESS AND FAILURE** What goes up must come down **FATE**

**us** Here's tae us; wha's like us **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION**

**used** Would you buy a used car from this man **TRUST AND TREACHERY**

**vacuum** Nature abhors a vacuum **NATURE**

**vain** In vain the net is spread **FUTILITY**

**valet** No man is a hero to his valet **FAMILIARITY**

**variety** Variety is the spice of life **CHANGE**

**varlet** ape's an ape, a varlet's a varlet **CHARACTER**

**venture** Nothing venture, nothing gain **THOROUGHNESS** Nothing venture, nothing have  
**THOROUGHNESS**

**verba** *Nullius in verba* **HYPOTHESIS AND FACT**

**verify** Trust but verify **CAUTION**

**vero** *Se non è vero, è molto ben trovato* **TRUTH**

**vessels** Empty vessels make the most sound **FOOLS**

**vice** Gossip is vice **GOSSIP**

**victors** History is written by the victors **HISTORY**

**victory** army knows how to gain a victory **ARMED FORCES** Dig for victory **GARDENS**

**view** Distance lends enchantment to the view **APPEARANCE**

**village** It takes a village to raise a child **CHILDREN**

**virtue** Adversity is the foundation of virtue **ADVERSITY** Make a virtue of necessity **NECESSITY**  
Most people consider thrift a fine virtue **THRIFT** Patience is a virtue **PATIENCE** Virtue is its own  
reward **VIRTUE**

**vision** Vision without action is a daydream **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**visited** sea wants to be visited **SEA**

**vodka** Vodka is an aunt of wine **DRINK**

**voice** mockingbird has no voice **BIRDS** voice of the people is the voice of God **POLITICS**

**voluntary** Ignorance is voluntary misfortune **IGNORANCE**

**volunteer** One volunteer is worth two pressed men **WORK**

**Vorsprung** *Vorsprung durch Technik* **TECHNOLOGY**

**vote** straw vote only shows which way **POLITICS** Vote early and vote often **POLITICS**

**votes** Votes for women **WOMEN**

**wait** All things come to those who wait **PATIENCE** I sit on the shore, and wait for the wind  
**PATIENCE** Time and tide wait for no man **OPPORTUNITY**

**waiting** It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes **AMBITION**

**walk** If you can walk, you can dance **ABILITY** We must learn to walk before **PATIENCE**

**walking** Let your fingers do the walking **TECHNOLOGY** Roads are made by walking **TRAVEL**

Walking ten thousand miles **EXPERIENCE** Walking ten thousand miles **KNOWLEDGE**

**walks** Gray's Inn for walks **LAW**

**wall** Bull markets climb a wall of worry **BUSINESS** wall between both best preserves **NEIGHBOURS**

weakest go to the wall **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**walls** Walls have ears **SECRECY** When the wind of change blows, some build walls **CHANGE**

**walnut** woman, a dog, and a walnut tree **WOMEN**

**walnuts** Walnuts and pears you plant for **GARDENS**

**want** Dress for the job you want **DRESS** For want of a nail the shoe was lost **PREPARATION AND**

**READINESS** If you want peace, you must prepare **PREPARATION AND READINESS** If you want

something done **ACTION AND INACTION** more you get the more you want **GREED** Wilful waste

makes woeful want **THRIFT**

**wanton** Wanton kittens make sober cats **YOUTH**

**wants** Someone, somewhere, wants a letter **LETTERS**

**war** All's fair in love and war **JUSTICE** bloody war and a sickly season **ARMED FORCES** Business

is war **BUSINESS** Councils of war never fight **INDECISION** Make love not war **LIFESTYLES**

soldier of the Great War, known unto **ARMED FORCES** War is God's way of teaching Americans

geography **WARFARE** War will cease when men refuse to fight **WARFARE** When war is declared,

Truth is the first **WARFARE**

**warm** warm January, a cold May **WEATHER**

**wash** One does not wash one's dirty linen **SECRECY** They that wash on Monday **HOUSEWORK**

**washes** One hand washes the other **COOPERATION** Persil washes whiter **HOUSEWORK**

**waste** Haste makes waste **HASTE AND DELAY** mind is a terrible thing to waste **MIND** Wilful waste

makes woeful want **THRIFT**

**watch** Watch this space **NEWS AND JOURNALISM**

**watched** watched pot never boils **PATIENCE**

**watches** You have the watches, but we have the time **TIME**

**water** Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water **LIFESTYLES** Blood is thicker than water

**FAMILY** Dirty water will quench fire **SEX** Every two miles the water changes **TRAVEL** Hot water

does not burn down **FUTILITY** It is the calm and silent water **DANGER** mill cannot grind with the

water that **OPPORTUNITY** rock in the water does not know the pain **SYMPATHY** tears of the

stranger are only water **SYMPATHY** When drinking water, remember the **PARENTS** When you

drink water, remember **GRATITUDE** Where water flows, a channel **PATIENCE** You can take a horse to the water **DEFIANCE** You never miss the water till the well **GRATITUDE**

**watermelons** You cannot carry two watermelons **FUTILITY**

**waters** It is good fishing in troubled waters **OPPORTUNITY** Still waters run deep **CHARACTER**  
Stolen waters are sweet **TEMPTATION**

**Watson** Elementary, my dear Watson **THINKING**

**way** Love will find a way **LOVE** Straws tell which way the wind blows **KNOWLEDGE** straw vote only shows which way **POLITICS** There is more than one way to skin a cat **WAYS AND MEANS**  
way one eats is the way one works **EATING** wilful man must have his way **DETERMINATION**

**ways** There are more ways of killing a cat **WAYS AND MEANS** There are more ways of killing a dog **WAYS AND MEANS**

**weakest** chain is no stronger than its weakest **COOPERATION** weakest go to the wall **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**  
You are the weakest link **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS**

**weapon** bayonet is a weapon with a worker **WARFARE**

**wear** Better to wear out than to rust **IDLENESS** If the cap fits, wear it **NAMES** If the shoe fits, wear it **NAMES**

**weary** Be the day weary or be the day long **TIME**

**weather** sea wants to be visited **SEA** There is no such thing as bad weather **WEATHER**

**weathers** Robin Hood could brave all weathers **WEATHER**

**webs** When spider webs unite **COOPERATION**

**wed** Better wed over the mixen **FAMILIARITY**

**wedding** One wedding brings another **WEDDINGS**

**wedlock** Wedlock is a padlock **MARRIAGE**

**Wednesday** Wednesday's child is full of woe **SORROW**

**weeds** Ill weeds grow apace **GOOD AND EVIL**

**weepers** Finders keepers (losers weepers) **POSSESSIONS**

**well** Dig the well before you are thirsty **PREPARATION AND READINESS** frog in a well knows nothing of **SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTION** He lives long who lives well **VIRTUE** If you want a thing done well **SELF-INTEREST** Let well alone **CAUTION** pitcher will go to the well **EXCESS** Truth lies at the bottom of a well **TRUTH** Well begun is half done **BEGINNING**

**wells** September dries up wells **AUTUMN** You have drunk from wells you did not **PAST**

**west** East is east, and west is west **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** East, west, home's best **HOME**

**wet** Sow dry and set wet [GARDENS](#)

**whale** Save the whale [ENVIRONMENT](#)

**whales** When whales fight, the shrimp's back is broken [POWER](#)

**what** It's not what you know [OPPORTUNITY](#) What you see is what you get [APPEARANCE](#)

**wheel** wheel has come full circle [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#)

**where** If you do not know where you have been [CIRCUMSTANCE AND SITUATION](#) If you don't know where you are going [TRAVEL](#) Where's the beef [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#) Where were you in '62? [ABSENCE](#)

**whisky** Today's rain is tomorrow's whisky [DRINK](#)

**whistle** sow may whistle, though it has [ABILITY](#)

**whistling** whistling woman and a crowing hen [WOMEN](#)

**white** February fill dyke, be it black or white [WINTER](#) Green Christmas, white Easter [WEATHER](#) It hardly matters if it is a white cat or [WAYS AND MEANS](#) One white foot, buy him [HORSES](#) Two blacks don't make a white [GOOD AND EVIL](#) white heron is a bird of [BIRDS](#)

**whiter** Persil washes whiter [HOUSEWORK](#)

**whole** half is better than the whole [MODERATION](#) whole is more than the sum [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#)

**widow** widow is a rudderless boat [MARRIAGE](#)

**width** Never mind the quality, feel the width [QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES](#)

**wife** blind man's wife needs no paint [APPEARANCE](#) deaf husband and a blind wife [MARRIAGE](#)

**wilful** wilful man must have his way [DETERMINATION](#) Wilful waste makes woeful want [THRIFT](#)

**will** He that complies against his will [OPINION](#) He that will not when he may [OPPORTUNITY](#) He that will to Cupar [DETERMINATION](#) Where there's a will [DETERMINATION](#)

**willing** willing foe and sea room [ARMED FORCES](#)

**wills** He who wills the end [DETERMINATION](#)

**win** Heads I win, tails you lose [WINNING AND LOSING](#) Let them laugh that win [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#) You can't win them all [WINNING AND LOSING](#) You win a few, you lose a few [SUCCESS AND FAILURE](#)

**wind** God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb [SYMPATHY](#) I sit on the shore, and wait for the wind [PATIENCE](#) It's an ill wind that blows nobody [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#) North wind doth blow [WEATHER](#) reed before the wind lives on [STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS](#) Straws tell which way the wind blows [KNOWLEDGE](#) tall tree attracts the wind [FAME](#) They that sow the wind [CAUSES](#)

**AND CONSEQUENCES** When the wind is in the east **WEATHER** When the wind of change blows, some build walls **CHANGE** wind of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears **HORSES**

**windmills** When the wind of change blows, some build . . . windmills **CHANGE**

**window** eyes are the window of the soul **BODY**

**winds** You cannot control the winds **MANAGEMENT**

**windy** cold May and windy **SPRING**

**wine** From the sweetest wine, the tartest **SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE** Good wine needs no bush **ADVERTISING** Like fine wine **AGE** There is truth in wine **DRUNKENNESS** Vodka is an aunt of wine **DRINK** When the wine is in, the wit **DRUNKENNESS** You can't put new wine in old bottles **CHANGE**

**wing** bird never flew on one wing **GENEROSITY**

**wink** Wink at sma' fauts, ye hae great anes **MISTAKES**

**wins** Who dares wins **DANGER** winner never quits, and a quitter never wins **WINNING AND LOSING**

**winner** winner never quits, and a quitter never wins **WINNING AND LOSING**

**winter** fire is winter's fruit **WINTER** For the unlearned, old age is winter **AGE** Nine months of winter **WEATHER** One kind word warms three winter **SYMPATHY** winter does not go without **WINTER** Winter either bites with its teeth **WINTER** Winter is summer's heir **WINTER** Winter never rots in the sky **WINTER** Winter thunder, summer hunger **WEATHER**

**wisdom** beginning of wisdom is to call things **NAMES**

**wise** fool may give a wise man **ADVICE** Fools ask questions that wise men **KNOWLEDGE** Fools build houses and wise men **FOOLS** It is a wise child that knows **PARENTS** It is easy to be wise after the event **FORESIGHT** One cannot love and be wise **LOVE** Peace is the dream of the wise **PEACE** Penny wise and pound foolish **THRIFT** still tongue makes a wise head **SILENCE** wise man changes his mind **FOOLS** wise man turns chance into good fortune **OPPORTUNITY** wise man will climb Mount Fuji once **TRAVEL** word to the wise is enough **ADVICE**

**wiser** fall into a ditch makes you wiser **EXPERIENCE** wiser man gives in **DEFIANCE**

**wisest** little nonsense now and then, is relished by the wisest men **WISDOM**

**wish** Be careful what you wish for **CAUTION** wish is father to the thought **OPINION**

**wishes** If wishes were horses, beggars **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM**

**wit** Brevity is the soul of wit **SPEECH** When the wine is in, the wit **DRUNKENNESS**

**wiving** Hanging and wiving go by destiny **FATE**

**woe** Wednesday's child is full of woe **SORROW**



**wolf** caribou feeds the wolf **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** Do not call a wolf to help you **ENEMIES**  
Fear makes the wolf bigger **FEAR** Hunger drives the wolf out of the wood **NECESSITY** lone sheep  
is in danger from the wolf **SOLITUDE** Man is a wolf to man **HUMAN RACE** wolf may lose his  
teeth, but never **AGE**

**wolves** If you are afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS** wolves  
are well fed and the sheep **DANGER**

**woman** For most of history, Anonymous was a woman **WRITING** Hell hath no fury like a woman  
scorned **WOMEN** Silence is a woman's best garment **WOMEN** whistling woman and a crowing hen  
**WOMEN** woman, a dog, and a walnut tree **WOMEN** woman and a ship ever want mending  
**WOMEN** woman's place is in the home **WOMEN** woman's work is never done **HOUSEWORK**

**women** England is the paradise of women **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** Never choose your women  
or linen **APPEARANCE** Votes for women **WOMEN** Women and children first **DANGER** Women  
hold up half the sky **WOMEN**

**wonders** Time works wonders **TIME** Wonders will never cease **SURPRISE**

**wood** Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water **LIFESTYLES** Don't halloo till you are out of  
the wood **OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM** Hunger drives the wolf out of the wood **NECESSITY** Saw  
wood and say nothing **CAUTION**

**woods** Fields have eyes and woods have ears **SECRECY** In the woods it rains twice **TREES**

**wool** Many go out for wool **AMBITION** Much cry and little wool **EFFORT**

**word** Englishman's word is his bond **COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES** Many a true word is spoken in  
jest **TRUTH** One kind word warms three winter **SYMPATHY** swiftest horse cannot overtake the  
word **WORDS** word to the wise is enough **ADVICE**

**words** Actions speak louder than words **WORDS AND DEEDS** All words are pegs to hang ideas on  
**WORDS** Fine words butter no parsnips **WORDS AND DEEDS** Hard words break no bones **WORDS**  
One picture is worth ten thousand words **WORDS AND DEEDS** Stabs heal, but bad words never  
**WORDS AND DEEDS** Words are sweet, but they never take **WORDS AND DEEDS**

**work** All work and no play makes Jack **LEISURE** day without work is a day without food **IDLENESS**  
devil finds work for idle hands **IDLENESS** end crowns the work **ENDING** eye of a master does  
more work **EMPLOYMENT** Go to work on an egg **EATING** harder I work, the luckier **CHANCE**  
**AND LUCK** If you won't work you shan't eat **IDLENESS** It is not work that kills, but worry  
**WORRY** Many hands make light work **COOPERATION** See all your best work go unnoticed  
**SECRECY** We pretend to work **EMPLOYMENT** woman's work is never done **HOUSEWORK** Work  
expands so as to fill the time **WORK**

**worker** bayonet is a weapon with a worker **WARFARE**

**workman** bad workman blames his tools [APOLOGY AND EXCUSES](#)

**works** Saturday's child works hard for a living [WORK](#) way one eats is the way one works [EATING](#)  
What matters is what works [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**workshop** idle brain is the devil's workshop [IDLENESS](#)

**world** Hope is the pillar of the world [HOPE](#) Isfahan is half the world [TOWNS AND CITIES](#) lie can  
go around the world [LIES](#) Love makes the world go round [LOVE](#) One half of the world does not  
know [KNOWLEDGE](#) world is one's oyster [OPPORTUNITY](#)

**worm** early bird catches the worm [PREPARATION AND READINESS](#) Even a worm will turn  
[NECESSITY](#)

**worry** Action is worry's worst enemy [ACTION AND INACTION](#) Bull markets climb a wall of worry  
[BUSINESS](#) It is not work that kills, but worry [WORRY](#) Worry is interest paid [WORRY](#) Worry is  
like a rocking chair [WORRY](#) Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow [WORRY](#)

**worse** Go further and fare worse [SATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT](#)

**worst** When things are at their worst [OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM](#)

**worth** If a thing's worth doing [EFFORT](#) It is a poor dog that's not worth [VALUE](#) One picture is worth  
ten thousand words [WORDS AND DEEDS](#) worth of a thing is what it will bring [VALUE](#)

**worthy** labourer is worthy of his hire [WORK](#)

**would** Do as you would be done by [LIFESTYLES](#)

**wrath** soft answer turneth away wrath [ANGER](#)

**wren** robin and the wren are God's [BIRDS](#)

**write** He who would write and can't [WRITING](#)

**writer** Writing is a picture of the writer's heart [WRITING](#)

**writes** God writes straight with crooked lines [GOD](#)

**writing** art of writing is the art of applying [WRITING](#) Writing is a picture of the writer's heart  
[WRITING](#)

**written** What is written with a pen [WRITING](#)

**wrong** If anything can go wrong, it will [MISFORTUNES](#) king can do no wrong [ROYALTY](#) short cut  
is often a wrong cut [WAYS AND MEANS](#)

**wrongs** Two wrongs don't make a right [GOOD AND EVIL](#)

**year** April and May are keys to the whole year [SPRING](#) cherry year, a merry year [SUMMER](#)  
Christmas comes but once a year [CHRISTMAS](#) Next year in Jerusalem [TOWNS AND CITIES](#) One  
year's seeding makes seven [GARDENS](#)

**years** It takes seven years to make a piper **MUSIC** Keep a thing seven years **POSSESSIONS** You should know a man seven years **NEIGHBOURS**

**yesterday** Yesterday has gone, tomorrow is yet **PRESENT** Yesterday is ashes; tomorrow is wood **PRESENT**

**yew** More than one yew bow in Chester **DANGER**

**Yorkshire** Yorkshire born and Yorkshire bred **BRITISH TOWNS AND REGIONS**

**young** good die young **VIRTUE** Whom the gods love die young **YOUTH** Young folks think old folks to be fools **YOUTH** young man married is a **MARRIAGE** Young men may die, but old men **DEATH** Young saint, old devil **HUMAN RACE**

**youth** Youth must be served **YOUTH**

**Yule** green Yule makes a fat churchyard **CHRISTMAS**