

English Proverbs (or "Sayings")

1. "Two wrongs don't make a right."

When someone has done something bad to you, trying to get revenge will only make things worse.

2. "The pen is mightier than the sword."

Trying to convince people with ideas and words is more effective than trying to force people to do what you want.

3. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

Behave in a way like the people around you. This is particularly useful when traveling abroad, as cultures differ.

4. "More haste, less speed."

The quicker you try to do something, the less progress you make.

5. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Strong people don't give up when they come across challenges. They just work harder.

6. "No man is an island."

You can't live completely independently. Everyone needs help from other people.

7. "Fortune favours the bold."

People who are ambitious are often more successful than those who are not.

8. "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones."

Don't criticize other people if you're not perfect yourself.

9. "Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst."

Bad things might happen, so be prepared.

10. "Better late than never."

It's best to do something on time. But if you can't do it on time, do it late.

11. "Birds of a feather flock together."

People like to spend time with others who are similar to them.

12. "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer."

If you have an enemy, pretend to be friends with them instead of openly fighting with them. That way you can watch them carefully and figure out what they're planning.

13. "A picture is worth a thousand words."

Pictures can convey emotions and messages better than written or spoken explanations.

14. "There's no such thing as a free lunch."

Things that are offered for free always have a hidden cost.

15. "There's no place like home."

Your own home is the most comfortable place to be.

16. "Discretion is the greater part of valour."

Sometimes it's better to stop and stay quiet, instead of acting brave and continuing.

17. "The early bird catches the worm."

You should wake up and start work early if you want to succeed.

18. "Never look a gift horse in the mouth."

If someone offers you a gift, don't question it, just accept it.

19. "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

When you try to do something great, you'll probably make a few people annoyed or angry. Don't worry about those people - just focus on the good results.

20. "God helps those who help themselves."

Don't just wait for good things to happen to you. Work hard to achieve your goals.

21. "You can't have your cake and eat it too."

You can't have everything you want in life – be satisfied with what you have gained.

22. "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

Be clean. God likes that.

23. "A watched pot never boils."

If something takes a long time to finish, don't wait for it, because it will seem to take forever.

24. "Beggars can't be choosers."

If you're asking for a favour from someone, you have to take whatever they give you.

25. "Actions speak louder than words."

Just saying that you will do something isn't as effective as actually doing it.

26. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Don't try to improve something that already works well. You'll probably create new problems.

27. "Practice makes perfect."

You have to practice a skill to become an expert.

28. "Too many cooks spoil the broth."

When there are too many people trying to lead and give their opinions, it's confusing and can produce bad results. Jobs and projects should have one strong leader.

29. "Easy come, easy go."

When you get something quickly and easily, it's easy to let it go quickly, too.

30. "Don't bite the hand that feeds you."

If someone's paying or helping you, then don't make them angry nor say bad things about them.

31. "All good things come to an end." / "Nothing lasts forever."

You can't keep having good luck or fun forever - eventually it will change.

32. "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

When you try to change someone's behaviour and it doesn't work, you might have to consider changing instead.

33. "One man's trash is another man's treasure."

Different people have different ideas about what's valuable.

34. "There's no time like the present."

If you need to do something, don't wait until later. If you have time now, do it now.

35. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." / "Love is blind."

Different people have different ideas about what's beautiful.

36. "Necessity is the mother of invention."

When you're really in need, you will think of creative solutions to solve your problems.

37. "A penny saved is a penny earned."

Save your money. Saving money is just like making money.

38. "Familiarity breeds contempt."

When you're around someone for too long, you can get tired of them.

39. "You can't judge a book by its cover."

Things or people are sometimes not as they first seem. Don't always trust your first impression.

40. "Good things come to those who wait."

Be patient. Eventually something good will happen to you.

41. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket."

Don't risk everything on one plan.

42. "Two heads are better than one."

When two people work together, they can come up with better ideas.

43. "The grass is always greener on the other side of the hill / fence."

People often want what others have.

44. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Don't do bad things to people, as you wouldn't like them to do bad things to you!

45. "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link."

If one member of a team doesn't perform well, the whole team can suffer.

46. "Honesty is the best policy."

Being honest generally delivers better results.

47. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

Being away from your partner gives you time to think about them and appreciate them more.

48. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink."

If you try to help someone, but they don't accept your advice or help, it's better to stop, as you can't force them to accept it.

49. "Don't count your chickens before they hatch."

Your plans might not succeed, so don't plan what you will do afterwards. First wait until you succeed, and then you can plan what to do next.

50. "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself."

If something is really important, and you don't trust others to do it properly, do it yourself.

51. "Don't cry over spilt milk."

Don't waste your time worrying about a small problem.

52. "Give them an inch and they take a mile."

If you give someone some leeway, they sometimes abuse your kindness.

53. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

It is better to keep something that you have, than to risk losing it by trying to get something better.