

American proverbs

A

- A handful of gold is a heart of iron.
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
- Act your age, not your shoe size. (Also, "Act your age, not your IQ")
- Actions speak louder than words, but words of action speak proudly.
- * A fool and his money are soon parted
- A friend in need, is a friend indeed!
- A horse with two heads wins no races. (Variant: Too many chiefs, and not enough Indians.)
- All hat, no cattle
- All's fair in love and war.
- Almost only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades.
- A man who acts as his own attorney has a fool for a client.
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- Originated in the 1900s as a marketing slogan dreamed up by American growers concerned that the temperance movement would cut into sales of apple cider. (Michael Pollan, *The Botany of Desire*, Random House, 2001, ISBN 0375501290, p. 22, cf. p. 9 & 50)
- An idle mind is the devil's workshop/playground
- An ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure. - Unknown
- A penny saved is a penny earned.
- As California goes, so goes the nation.
- As the crow flies
- As the twig is bent, so inclines the tree.
- A bad guy is another man's good guy
- A watched pot never boils.
- A wise man admits his ignorance; an ignorant man admits he's wise.
- All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.
- All that glitters, is not gold!
- A stitch in time saves nine.

B

- Be careful what you wish for.
 - Variant: Be careful what you wish for, you might get it.
- Be the best that you can be.

- Be yourself in every situation.
- Beggars can't be choosers.
- Begin where you end.
- Better late than never.
- Better safe than sorry.
- Be useful better than beautiful.
- Back to square one.
- Butter would not melt in her mouth.

C

- Can't see it from my house
- Curiosity killed the cat
 - Variant: Curiosity killed the cat, but satisfaction brought it back.
- Close, but no cigar.
- Close is nice, but it isn't enough.
- Clothes make the man, naked people have little or no influence in society. - Mark Twain
- Close enough for government work.
- Chase two rabbits and they'll both get away.
- Character is what you are in the dark.

D

- Different strokes for different folks.
- Do as I say, not as I do.
- Don't do the crime if you can't do the time.
- Don't remove a fly from your friend's head with a hatchet.
- Don't bite the hand that feeds you.
- Don't get high on your own supply.
- Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
- Don't take any wooden nickels
- Don't take life seriously; no one gets out alive.
- Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
- Don't say it, do it.
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you
- Don't be sorry, be different!
- Don't ever let school get in the way of your education. [Mark Twain]

E

- Early to bed, early to rise, keeps a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
- Experience is what you get when you don't get what you want.

F

- Failure to prepare is preparing to fail.
- Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Fool me thrice, shame on both of us.
- Fortune favors the bold.
- Fly by the seat of your pants.
- Failing to plan is planning to fail.
- Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.

G

- Good fences make good neighbors.
- Good enough for Government work.
- Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people. - Eleanor Roosevelt

H

* Haste makes waste. - Ben Franklin

- He who has the gold makes the rules.
 - Variant: He who taxes the gold makes the rules. - Robert Kiyosaki, author of "Rich Dad, Poor Dad"
- He who laughs last laughs the loudest.
 - Variant: He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- Ben Franklin said as Poor Richard, "He who teaches himself hath a fool for a teacher", but I must tell you that he who does not teach himself has no teachers at all
- Heads they win, tails you lose.
- Hesitation is a killer.
- Hindsight is 20/20.

I

- If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.
- If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

- If it seems too good to be true then it probably is.
- If it's free, it's for me!
- If three people tell you that you are drunk, you better lie down.
- If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.
 - Variant: Yeah, and if wishes were horses, we'd all be eatin' *steak*. - Jayne Cobb
- If you can't beat them, join them.
- If you can't stand the heat, get out of the Kitchen.
- If you can't walk, why bother tying your shoes. - Doc Michaels
- If you wait till the last minute, it'll only take a minute.
- If you want it bad, you'll get it bad.
- Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.
- In God we trust, all others pay cash.
- It is better to say nothing and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt. - Abraham Lincoln
- It's always darkest before the dawn.
- It is easier said than done.
- It takes a village to raise a child.
- It takes two to tango.
- If knowledge of all is power, then knowledge of self is divine. - Carlos Lugo II
- I'd be a failure if it weren't for all the mistakes I've made.
- It's not over till the fat lady sings.
- It's never too late to be what you might have been. - George Eliot
- It's nice to be at the end of a journey but it's the journey that matters in the end.
- It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice.
- It's not the actions that define a person, but the reasoning behind them.
- It will all come out in the wash.

J

- Jack of all trades, Master of none.
- Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

K

- Kill them with kindness.
- Kill two birds with one stone.
- Keep it simple, stupid (or otherwise known as "K.I.S.S.")
 - Variant: Keep it simple and stupid.
 - Variant: Keep it short and simple.

- Knowledge is like manure, it's only good when spread.

L

- Leave well enough alone
- Let sleeping dogs lie.
- Life is a bitch and then you die.
- Life is a journey, not a destination.
- Life is like a box of chocolate; it's full of surprises
 - Variant: Life is like a box of chocolates; You never know what you're gonna get. - Forest Gump

.* Like father, like son.

- Listen and silent are spelled using the same letters
- Loose lips sink ships.
- Looks like the shoe's on the other foot.

M

- Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood. - Daniel Burnham
- Many hands make light work.
- Many roads lead to Rome.
- Misery loves company.
- Misery plus time equals humor.
- Money is like manure, it does no good until it is spread.

N

- Neither a borrower nor a lender be.
- Never approach a bull from the front, never approach a horse from the rear and never approach a fool from any direction
- Never enter a mud fight with a pig. You'll both get dirty, but the pig likes it.
- Never laugh at a live dragon.
- Never look a gift horse in the mouth.
- Never pick a fight with someone who buys ink by the barrel.
- Nice guys finish last - Leo "the Lip" Durocher, major league baseball manager.
- No good deed goes unpunished.
- No honor among thieves.
- Nobody leaves us, we only leave others.

O

- Old habits die hard.
- One bad apple can spoil the whole barrel.
- One can only hope.
- One fly makes a summer - Mark Twain
- One never truly feels the breeze until it blows him away. - Ken Kesey
- One man's trash is another man's treasure.

P

- Practice makes perfect
 - Variant: Practice makes permanent.
 - Variant: Perfect practice makes perfect.
- "Procrastination is the key to failure."
- People who don't talk are thought to be stupid; people who do prove it.
- People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
- Pretty is as pretty does.

Q

- Quitters never win and winners never quit.

R

- Rome wasn't built in a day
- Rolling stone gathers no moss.

S

- Silence is golden.
- Six of one, half a dozen of the other.
- Second place just means first loser. -Kevin Costner
- Sometimes you eat the bear and sometimes the bear, well, he eats you. - The Big Lebowski
- Succeed or die trying

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.

- Stupid is as stupid does.

T

- Talk is cheap.
- The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.
- The best way to get someone to stop digging his heels in is to dig out the sand around him.
- The cream rises to the top.
- The early bird gets the worm.
- The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- The fastest way to make money is to stop losing it.
- The grass is always greener on the other side.
- The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.
- The man in the black hat always rides the fastest horse.
- The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.
- The pen is mightier than the sword.
- The pot calling the kettle black.
- The road to hell is paved with good intentions.
- The squeaky wheel gets the grease.
- The spouting whale is harpooned.
- The straw that broke the camel's back.
- The tongue is the enemy of the neck.
- The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
- There ain't no such thing as a free lunch.
 - Variant: There's no such thing as a free lunch.
 - This proverb or its acronym "TANSTAAFL" are often attributed to the author Robert A. Heinlein who used them in his novel *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* (1966), but the expression has been dated to the late 1930s, and the acronym to at least as early as October 1949.
- There's no place like home. - Dorothy, in the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*.
- There's more than one way to skin a cat.
- There's plenty of fish in the sea.
- Time flies when you're having fun.
- Time shall tell.
- There are no shortcuts to life's greatest achievements.
- To each his own.
 - Variant: Different strokes for different folks.
- There is nothing as powerful as truth.
- Two heads are better than one.
- Two's company, three's a crowd.

U

- Under a shadow you will never see the sun.

V

- Victory means hard work.

W

- Walk softly, but carry a big stick.
- We have nothing to fear, but fear itself. (Franklin D. Roosevelt)
- Winners find a way.
- Whether you look for happiness or disappointment, you will find it. (Travis Blinkenberg)
- Words uttered only causes confusion. Words written only causes.
- What comes around goes around.
- What goes up must come down.
- What you see, what you hear, when you leave, leave it here.
- When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
- When it rains, it pours.
- When you aren't ready you're scared, when you are ready you're nervous.
- Where there's a will there's a way.
- When the cat's away, the mice will play. (Naveen Kumar c.g)
- When the going gets tough, the tough get going.
- When life hands you lemons make lemonade.
 - Variant: Unless life also gives you water and sugar, your lemonade's gonna suck.
 - Variant: When life gives you lemons, wing 'em back and add some lemons of your own!
- Where there's smoke, there's fire.
- When you buy quality, you only cry once.

Y

- You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.
- You can't get there from here.
- You can't have your cake and eat it, too.
- You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.
- You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
- You catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

Variant: You catch even more flies with manure, what's your point?

- \ You cant make a pickle back into a cucumber.
- You made your bed, now sleep in it.
- Your brain is the greatest weapon you have; use it well and in turn, it will do you well.