**Course2:**

**English Proverbs**

* A Proverb is a short sentence or expression. It often gives an advice or a common life experience.
* In this course, you are going to learn some common proverbs that may be useful for you during oral discussions.
* Dear students, start thinking about some common Arabic, English or French proverbs that you often use in your daily speech.

Why do we use these proverbs?

Proverbs are wise sayings that give advice about life. They are culturally specific, yet their meaning has the universality; everyone can relate to them in some way and on some level. There is a proverb for almost any situation. We may sometimes not understand a big lecture but we understand a small proverb very easily because the truth they speak can span the globe. They can also give a greater potency to what is being conveyed.

If you really want to take your English to a higher level, or you want to speak English like a **native speaker**, it is important to learn as many proverbs as possible.

**Here is a list of some English proverbs :**

* A stumble may prevent a fall.
* All good things come to those who wait.
* Everyone must row with the oars he has.
* Every path has its puddle.
* God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.
* One of these days is none of these days.
* Revenge is a dish best served cold.
* Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.

**Some proverbs and their meanings**

* Beauty without grace is like a hook without bait. Caught between a rock and a hard place  
  Caught between the devil and the deep blue sea   
  (to be stuck with two choices that are both undesirable) .
* Out of the frying pan and into the fire   
  (to go from a bad to a worse situation) .
* Might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb   
  (if you're going to get into the same amount of trouble, you might as well commit the greater offense)
* Six of one, half a dozen of the other .  
  (each choice is really the same thing)
* Two sides of the same coin.  
  (two aspects of a situation that are connected by necessity) .
* In for a penny, in for a pound.  
  (if you're going to make a minor committment you might as well make the entire committment) .
* Don't count your chickens before they're hatched.   
  (don't start making plans for something until it is a reality, rather than a pleasant speculation) .
* Don't cross your bridges before you get to them .

(don't worry about future problems before you need to) .

* A stitch in time saves nine.   
  (if you take care of a problem while it's small you won't have a bigger problem to deal with later)
* Time and tide wait for no man.  
  (act in a timely fashion because you can't get back lost chances) .
* To listen is to learn, and to understand is to inspire.
* A lie well stuck to is as good as the truth.

Contrary Proverbs

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| A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush | BUT | A man's reach should exceed his grasp |
| A miss is as good as a mile | BUT | Half a loaf is better than none |
| All good things come to those who wait | BUT | Time and tide wait for no man |
| Birds of a feather flock together | BUT | Opposites attract |
| Clothes make the man | BUT | Never judge a book by its cover |
| Don't cross your bridges before you come to them | BUT | Forewarned is forearmed |
| Doubt is the beginning of wisdom | BUT | Faith will move mountains |
| Good things come in small packages | BUT | The bigger the better |
| Great starts make great finishes | BUT | It ain't over 'till it's over |
| He who hesitates is lost | BUT | Fools rush in where angels fear to tread |
| BUT | Look before you leap |
| Practice makes perfect | BUT | All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy |
| Silence is golden | BUT | The squeaky wheel gets the grease |
| The pen is mightier than the sword | BUT | Actions speak louder than words |
| You're never too old to learn | BUT | You can't teach an old dog new tricks |
| What's good for the goose is good for the gander | BUT | One man's meat is another man's poison. |
| Wise men think alike | BUT | Fools seldom differ |

Proverbs of Humor

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|  | **Sources** |
| A penny saved makes Jack a dull boy | A penny saved is a penny earned, *and*   All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy |
| Absence makes the heart go wander | Absence makes the heart grow fonder  Abstinence makes the heart go wander |
| Chaste makes waste | Haste makes waste |
| If practice makes perfect and nobody's perfect then why practice? | Practice makes perfect *and* Nobody's perfect |
| The early bird catches the worm, but it is the early worm that gets caught | The early bird catches the worm |
| The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese |
| Time wounds all heels | Time heals all wounds |
| Where there's a will, there's a relative | Where there's a will, there's a way |

Rule10  
Circumlocutory Proverbs

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| A disposition towards inquiry deprived the feline of its vital state | Curiosity killed the cat |
| Elementary sartorial techniques initially applied obviate the need for repetitive similar actions to the square of three | A stitch in time saves nine |
| Exigency is the matriarch of ingenious contrivance | Necessity is the mother of invention |
| The stylus is more potent than the claymore | The pen is mightier than the sword |
| There is illumination at the termination of the subterranean excavation | There's a light at the end of the tunnel (Barry Klein, Melbourne, Australia) |

Rule10  
Stunted Proverbs

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| Familiarity breeds contempt | BUT | Familiarity breeds! |
| People living in glass houses should not pelt stones | BUT | People living in glass houses should not! |

Rule10

New Proverbs

1. If you're too open-minded, your brains will fall out.
2. Age is a very high price to pay for maturity.
3. Before you criticize someone, walk a mile in his shoes. That way, if he gets angry, he'll be a mile way - and barefoot.
4. Going to church doesn't make you a holy person any more than going to a garage makes you a mechanic.
5. Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.
6. A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
7. A closed mouth gathers no feet.
8. If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.
9. My idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance.
10. Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious.
11. It is easier to get forgiveness than permission.
12. I have found at my age going bra-less pulls all the wrinkles out of my face.
13. For every action, there is an equal and opposite government program.
14. If you look like your passport picture, you probably need the trip.
15. Always yield to temptation, because it may not pass your way again.
16. A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.
17. Eat well, stay fit, die anyway.
18. No husband has ever been shot while doing the dishes.
19. Men are from earth. Women are from earth. Deal with it.
20. It's amazing what you won't find if you don't look for it, especially if it's not there. (Thanks to Mark O'Reilly, Dundee, Scotland.)

Rule10

Practice

Proverb completion

Dear students, this is a list of some well known proverbs. You are given the first half of the proverbs, try to come up with the rest.

1. As you shall make your bed, so shall you..........mess it up
2. Better to be safe than....................punch a 5th grader
3. Strike while the................................bug is close
4. It's always darkest before.............daylight savings time
5. You can lead a horse to water but.......................how?
6. Don't bite the hand that.........................looks dirty
7. A miss is as good as a...................................Mr.
8. You can't teach an old dog new..........................math
9. If you lie down with the dogs, you'll.....stink in the morning
10. The pen is mightier than the............................pigs
11. An idle mind is.........................the best way to relax
12. Where there's smoke, there's.......................pollution
13. Happy the bride who......................gets all the presents
14. A penny saved is.....................................not much
15. Two's company, three's..........................the musketeers
16. Laugh and the whole world laughs with you, cry and....you have to blow your nose
17. Children should be seen and not..........spanked or grounded
18. When the blind leadeth the blind..........get out of the way

This collection introduces you to the most often used English proverbs such as:

* All wealth begins in mind.
* A man is known by the company he keeps .
* Death levels all men.
* Justice delayed is justice denied.
* Seeking happiness is a straight way to misery.

Additionally, learn some less well known, more colloquial or even humorous statements such as:

* A heavy purse makes a light heart
* A fart does not have a nose
* Don't get mad. Get even!
* Booze and fags will kill your bugs