

FINDING PROVERBS ON THE WEB

by Shiao-Chuan Kung

English Department

Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages

Kaohsiung, Taiwan

sckung@mail.wtuc.edu.tw

Introduction

Proverbs represent the collected wisdom of a nation. They are one of the most colorful aspects of a culture. For the student of a foreign language, comparing the proverbs of the target culture and one's own is a worthwhile if not enlightening experience. This lesson seeks to familiarize ESL/EFL students with some proverbs in the English language as well as to introduce students to two advertisement-free websites designed for them. These two web sites, *Interesting Things for ESL Students* (<http://www.manythings.org>) and *Activities for ESL Students* (<http://a4esl.org/>), contain interactive grammar and vocabulary quizzes, word games, and sentence puzzles. They also have collections of proverbs, slang expressions, and other study materials. Both sites are well-organized, optimized for speed, and free of advertising. The webpages are pleasing to the eye and the information easy to find. Teachers can integrate the materials at these sites into a curriculum or recommend them to students for use for studying on their own.

Level: intermediate

Time: 2 hours

Materials: computers with a Web browser and Internet access. Depending on the

number of computers available and the size of the class, students can work individually or in teams of two or three.

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by asking the students to complete the proverb "You can't tell a book by its..." If the students do not know the answer, encourage them to come up with some reasonable guesses. Possible answers for this proverb could be "title" or "author" or "color." Point out that in this example the missing word has to be a noun.
2. Give half the class worksheet A and the other half worksheet B. (This will prevent the entire class from accessing the same webpages at the same time when they are online.)
3. Ask students to analyze the part of speech of the missing words and to fill in the blanks with plausible, creative guesses. Allow 15 minutes for students to share their predictions.
4. Have the students launch their web browsers and point to the web site <http://www.manythings.org/proverbs/>.
5. Demonstrate how to locate the answer to "You can't tell a book by its..." (The proverbs are organized in alphabetical order at the site.)
6. While the students complete the assignment, circulate around the classroom commenting on the students' guesses and addressing technical difficulties.
7. Allow 10 minutes for students who completed worksheet A to share their answers with students who worked on version B.
8. Ask students to check their knowledge of proverbs by doing the online quiz at <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/quizzes/js/ck/ma-proverbs.html>.
9. As a follow-up activity or homework, ask students to write a story illustrating a

proverb of their choice. They should not include the proverb so that after sharing it with a fellow classmate or the entire class, the other student/s can guess which proverb the author meant.

Proverbs A

Use the information on the website <http://www.manythings.org/proverbs> to complete the following proverbs

1. All is fair in love and _____.
2. A/an _____ a day keeps the doctor away.
3. April showers brings May _____.
4. Blood is thicker than _____.
5. Don't count your chickens before they are _____.
6. Don't go near the water until you learn to _____.
7. Don't put all your eggs in one _____.
8. Early to bed and early to rise, make a man healthy, wealthy and _____.
9. Every picture tells a _____.
10. It is no use crying over spilt _____.

Find a proverb that conveys the same idea as a proverb in your native language. Explain the similarities and differences between the proverb in English and in your mother tongue.

Proverbs B

Use the information on the website <http://www.manythings.org/proverbs> to complete the following proverbs

1. Keep your mouth shut and your _____ open.
2. Look before you _____.
3. Make _____ while the sun shines.
4. No pain, no _____.
5. Out of sight, out of _____.

<p>6. The early bird catches the _____.</p> <p>7. The grass is always greener on the other side of the _____.</p> <p>8. There are two sides to every _____.</p> <p>9. Too many cooks spoil the _____.</p> <p>10. When in Rome, do as the _____ do.</p> <p>Find a proverb that conveys the same idea as a proverb in your native language. Explain the similarities and differences between the proverb in English and in your mother tongue.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Answers

worksheet A	worksheet B
1. war	1. ears
2. apple	2. leap
3. flowers	3. hay
4. water	4. gain
5. hatched	5. mind
6. swim	6. worm
7. basket	7. fence
8. wise	8. question
9. story	9. broth
10. milk	10. Romans