



# P roverbs

to promote understanding across generations and cultures



PENNSTATE



College of Agricultural Sciences  
Cooperative Extension

Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce.

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*Theme 1:* **Old age can be a time of enjoyment.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Italian**

To retire is like getting a second youth.

**Japanese**

The second life.

**Korean**

Life begins when you are sixty.

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*Theme 2:* **Along with old age comes a greater level of wisdom and life experience.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Spanish**

The devil knows more because he's old than because he's the devil.

**Chinese  
(Mandarin)**

I have eaten more salt than you have eaten rice.

**Arabic  
(Lebanese)**

He who has not any old man (in his household) let him buy one.

**Chinese  
(Mandarin)**

An old horse will never get lost.

**Tongan**

Literally, "Keeper of the land."

**Portuguese**

The old pan is the one that makes good food.

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*Theme 3:* **Old age as a time of challenge—  
potential for loneliness, vulnerability, and  
lack of ability.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Swedish**

Youth goes in a flock, manhood in pairs, and old age alone.

**Hawaiian**

An oldster who has never reared children sleeps by the roadside.

**Chinese  
(Cantonese)**

Teaching an old person to learn is like asking a cow to climb a tree.

**Irish**

The old man hasn't the place of the cat in the ashes.

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*Theme 4:* **We have control over how we age.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**German**

The person who rests will rust.

**French**

A man is as old as his arteries.

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*Theme 1:* **Youth as a time of naivete and inexperience.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Hungarian**

The eggshell is still on your butt.

**Korean**

There is blood on your head and it is not dried off yet.

**Chinese**

He who has no hair on his lip can't be trusted to do anything well.

**Spanish**

Youth is an illness that time cures.

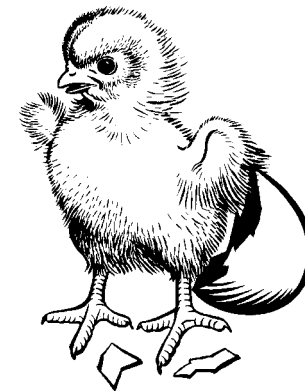
**Hawaiian**

You are a bud, he is spurred.

**Tongan**

Uttering of fools.

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*Theme 2:* **Childhood and youth as times of hopefulness and celebration.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Spanish**

Youth lives on hope and old age on memories.

**Japanese**

The flower of youth.

**Kannada  
(India)**

The upbringing of today's youth is the determinant of tomorrow's world.

**Chinese  
(Mandarin)**

Young people are like the rising sun.

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*Theme 1:* **Difficulties of intergenerational communication.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Chinese  
(Cantonese)**

Intergenerational communication is like  
“playing music to a cow.”

**Chinese  
(Mandarin)**

A young person talking to an older adult is like  
“a chicken talking to a duck.”

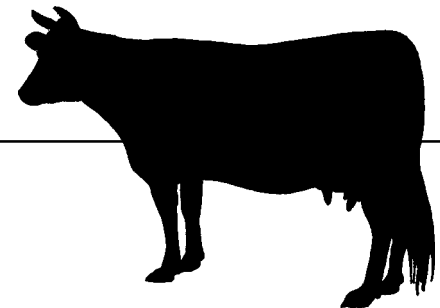
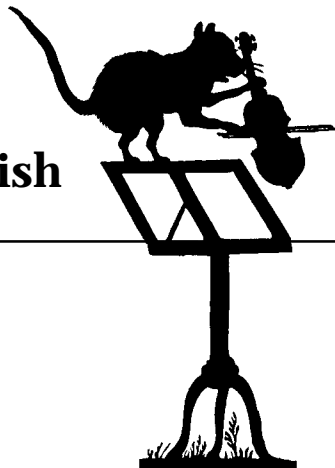
**Indonesia**

Intergenerational communication is like  
“an areca nut divided into two.”

**Swedish**

It is like a river. It flows downstream.

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*Theme 2:* **Positive aspects of intergenerational communication (notions of interdependence).**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Chinese**

As in the Yangtse River, the waves behind drive on those ahead, so each young generation should excel the last one.

**Chinese**

One generation plants the trees under whose shade future generations rest.

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*Theme 3:* **Intergenerational relations within the family.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Chuuk**

When one has many relatives, he is like a chief. He can accomplish anything. He has money, work goes well, and food is provided.

**Korean**

The more branches a tree has, the more winds it attracts.

**Ilocano  
(Phillipines)**

Take care of the young and they will take care of you in your old age.

**Spanish**

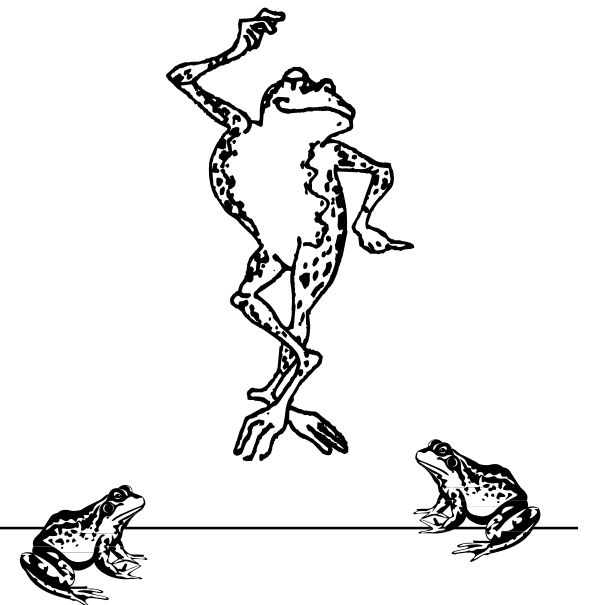
From such a stick, such a splinter.  
Like father, like son.

**Japanese**

Children of frogs are frogs.

**Korean**

Father hands down, son hands down.



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*Theme 4:* **Youth rebellion.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Swedish**

If the Stone Age children had obeyed their parents, we would still be living in the Stone Age.

**Swedish**

In a family, the mother is the government, the father is the people, and the kid is the opposition.

**Japanese**

When you become old, you should obey your child.

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*Theme 1:* **It is best not to act too hastily.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Chinese**

Think three times before you act.

**Sesotho (African)**

The 'hurry-hurry' person eats goat; the one who takes his or her time eats beef.

**Russian**

Take thy thoughts to bed with thee, for the morning is wiser.

**Danish**

The best advice is found on the pillow.

**English**

Patience is a virtue.

**Portuguese**

Hurry is the number one enemy of perfection.

**English**

Good and quickly seldom meet.

**English**

Haste makes waste.

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*Theme 2:* **The use of time is associated with one's work ethic.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**English**

The early bird gets the worm.

**Zaire**

A person who arrives early to the spring never gets dirty drinking water.

**Assiniboine Indian  
(Native American)**

Be an early riser; the game do not snuggle their heads on feather pillows.

**English**

Early sow, early mow.

**English**

Strike while the iron is hot.

**German**

A little too late is much too late.

**English**

He who hesitates is lost.

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*Theme 3:* **Take responsibility to help yourself.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Indian**

Call on God, but row away from the rocks.

**Arabic**

Trust in Allah, but tie your camel.

**German**

God gives nuts, but he doesn't crack them.

**Japanese**

Pray to God, but hammer away.

**English**

God helps those who help themselves.

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*Theme 4:* **Silence is associated with wisdom and knowledge.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Thai**

A wise man talks a little, an ignorant one talks much.

**Spanish**

Who knows most speaks the least.

**Tanzanian**

The wisest animal is the giraffe; it never speaks.

**Bible**  
**(Proverbs 17:28)**

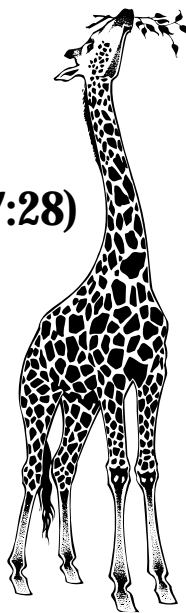
Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

**French**

The less one thinks, the more one speaks.

**English**

A closed mouth catches no flies.



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*Theme 4:* **Silence is associated with wisdom and knowledge.**

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<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>PROVERB</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	Two good talkers are not worth one good listener.
<b>Indonesian</b>	Rippling water shows lack of depth.
<b>Jamaican</b>	If speech wut a schillin', silence wut a pound.
<b>Italian</b>	Many have suffered from talking; none ever suffered for keeping silent.
<b>Peru</b>	From the tree of silence hangs the fruit of tranquility.
<b>Hopi Indian</b>	Eating little and speaking little can hurt no man.

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*Theme 5:* **Excessive or unguarded talking can cause harm.**

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<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>PROVERB</b>
<b>Japanese</b>	The tongue is more to be feared than the sword.
<b>Chinese</b>	The tongue is like a sharp knife. . . it kills without drawing blood.
<b>Nilotic (African)</b>	Words can kill before arms.
<b>Arabic</b>	Turn each word seven times in your tongue before you speak.
<b>American</b>	A word and a stone let go cannot be recalled.
<b>Turkish</b>	Empty vessels make the most noise.

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*Theme 6:* **We are influenced by those with whom we associate.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Argentina**

Associate with good men and you will be one of them.

**Blackfoot Indian**

Those that lay down with dogs get up with fleas.

**Spanish**

Live with wolves and you learn to howl.

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*Theme 7:* **Each person is an individual.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Japanese**

Ten people, ten colors.

**Yiddish**

Everyone is kneaded out of the same dough,  
but not baked in the same oven.

**English**

Different strokes for different folks.

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*Theme 8:* **Greed does not pay.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Russian**

A sparrow in the hand is better than a cock on the roof.

**English**

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

**Latin**

If you run after two hares, you will catch neither.

**Blackfoot Indian**

A sparrow in the bush is better than  
a vulture flying.



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*Theme 9:* **Education is important.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Chinese**

Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day.  
Teach him to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime.

**Chinese**

If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.

**German**

A teacher is better than two books.

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*Theme 10:* **Different conceptions of family.**

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**LANGUAGE**

**PROVERB**

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**Hawaiian**

Look to the source.

**Zulu**

We are who we are today because of you who came before us.

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