

English Proverbs

“A proverb is an ornament to language.”

(Persian proverb)

1. What is a Proverb?

Proverbs are short, memorable phrases or sayings which contain wisdom, truth, experience, lessons and advice concerning life. They are often used at the end of a true story, or in response to some events.

Consider the following situations:

→ Situation 1:

Ahmed : How was your day, Sarah?

Sarah: Awful! This morning I woke up late and missed the bus. I took a taxi to work, but I left my mobile phone in the taxi. When I finally arrived at work I spilt coffee all over a really important document.

Ahmed : What a disaster, but as the saying goes, **When it rains it pours.**

→ Situation 2

You are walking down the street with your friends and see a man trying to move a heavy fridge into his new apartment. He is having a very difficult time. The three of you go over and help him. With your help the fridge is soon inside. The man thanks you and says :

Many hands make light work.

→ Situation 3

Steve often criticises people when they are late, but he is sometimes late himself. You tell him that **People in glasshouses shouldn't throw stones.**

2. Explanations:

- ❖ **When it rains it pours:** When there is one problem, often many follow. It can be used in a positive or negative context in a wide variety of situations.
- ❖ **Many hands make light work:** people can do things more quickly and easily when they work together.
- ❖ **People in glasshouses shouldn't throw stones:** people who have faults should not criticize other people for having the same faults.

3. Exercise: write a paragraph about a proverb of your choice .