

Problematic Proverbs

The English language teems with many thousands of proverbs, proverbial phrases, and other maxims. Some of them are widely known and used, others less so. How good are you at proverbs?

If, for instance, someone were to disguise a standard proverb as "Self-esteem precedes degradation," would you immediately recognize that it was really "Pride goeth before a fall"? Or, if you were given the sentence "A jilted lady makes Hades seem tame," could you transform it into its original, "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned"?

In all probability, these particular examples would offer no difficulty. Naturally, it is possible to make proverb recognition more difficult, either by rewording a well-known maxim more cleverly, or by choosing proverbs that are not quite as common. Listed below are the "translated" versions of ten English proverbs. All ten are standard sayings, taken from reference works published since 1950. Because these proverbs are considerably more difficult to recognize than the specimens quoted above, each "translation" is accompanied by a list of the alphabetic letters in the original form, arranged in alphabetical order. How many of the ten proverbs can you identify correctly?

This is a test of your ability that you are not likely to dispatch in a matter of a few hours. Accordingly, we are allowing you ample time to arrive at the correct solutions by deferring publication of the answers to the next issue of WORD WAYS.

The proverbs were selected and "translated" by Mr. Edward L. Lee of St. Petersburg, Florida.

- (1) When animal orders, celestial body never minds.
AAA B DD EEEEE G G HHHHH I K M NNN OOOOO RR SS
TTTTT V W
- (2) Might makes right.
AA B DD EEEE F GG HH III L NNN OOOOO R SSSS TTTTTT
- (3) A stupid animal is always outfoxed.
AAA CCC EEEEEEE FFF G HH II L M NN OOOO P RRRR SSSS
TTT UU V X YY
- (4) Descend for mate, rise for pal.
AAA CC DDDD EEEEEEE FF GG HHHH III K L NNNN OOOOOO
PP RR S T UUU WWWW YY

- (5) These flowers will floor you.
AAA B D EEE G HH I L M OO RRR SSSSS T Y
- (6) Fine, fine fabrics extinguish conflagration.
AAAA CC DD EEEEE F HH IIII KK LLL NNNN O P RR SSSSS
TTTTTTT UU VV
- (7) When man lives alone, there's something rotten in Denmark.
AAA B C EEEEE F HHH I LLL M NNN OO RR SSS T UU Y
- (8) Closing eye makes sadness, foolish talk failure.
AAAAA B C EEEEE FF G HHHHHHH III K LLLL NN OOOO
P RRR SSS TTTTTTTT UU WWW Y
- (9) Great man progresses, but is never satisfied.
AAAAAAA D EEEE FF GG HHH I K L M NN OOO RR SSSS TT
U W Y
- (10) Secondhand apparel may be long coming.
AAAA B DD EEEEE FF GG HHHH I LLL M NNN OOOOOO RR
SS TTT WW

Proverb No. 10, by the way, appears as a quotation in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, employs a number of quaint spellings, and is also quoted in a detective novel. Can you locate this proverb in the Oxford, and identify the novel?

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A WORD DIAMOND

L
C A P
R O B E D
B E M I R E D
R E A M A S S E D
C O M M O T I O N A L
L A B I A T I F L O R A L
P E R S I F L A T E D
D E S O L A T E D
D E N O T E D
D A R E D
L A D
L

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OF SYLLABLES

Mr. Ralph G. Beaman, of Boothwyn, Pennsylvania, contends that BREAK-THROUGHS is the longest English word pronounced in only two syllables.

Can any reader of WORD WAYS prove Mr. Beaman wrong?

WORD WAYS