PROVERBS & IDIOMS

Proverbs

A *proverb* is a wise saying or expression that is widely used. It states a basic or general truth and gives advice or a warning.

For example

The rolling stone gathers no moss.

This proverb tells us if a person keeps moving from place to place, they will not have any friends or possessions.

Proverbs are usually short and to the point. Some proverbs use rhyme to make them easy to remember.

For example

Too much bed, makes a dull head.

This proverb means that if you sleep too much, you will not be able to think clearly.
Examples of Proverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention is better than cure.</td>
<td>It’s better to try and prevent something before it happens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence makes the heart grow fonder.</td>
<td>When you are away from someone, you miss them and love them more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and tide will wait for no man.</td>
<td>Delaying something will not prevent it from happening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.</td>
<td>Everyone needs time to relax. It’s not good to work all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety is the spice of life.</td>
<td>Doing a lot of different things, makes life more interesting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Go to the link below for a list and meanings of proverbs:

Many proverbs are rooted in folklore. Different proverbs are found in different cultures and in different languages.

For example

**Chinese Proverb:** A single day of sub-zero temperature is not enough to create three feet of ice.

This proverb means that great things cannot be accomplished in a short time, similar to the English proverb “Rome was not built in a day”.

Go to the link below for a list of proverbs from different countries:
http://creativeproverbs.com/cp-index.htm

The bible contains many proverbs.

For example

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Click on the link below for meanings and origins of some popular proverbs:
http://tww.id.au/proverbs/origin.html#fill
**Idioms**

An *idiom* is a group of words that when put together, has a figurative (not literal) meaning.

**For example**

Hit the sack.

The above idiom means ‘to go to bed or sleep’.

From the above, we can see that idioms are *figurative expressions* which alter or exaggerate the normal meaning of the words.

It is estimated that there are over 25,000 idioms in use in the English language and these are common expressions that are used every day.

An idiom is different to a proverb in that it does not offer any advice or a warning. Often an idiom does not make sense on its own, without seeing the rest of the text.

**Examples of Idioms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the bag</td>
<td>Something that is confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the wrong foot</td>
<td>To start a relationship off badly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep your chin up</td>
<td>Stay positive in a difficult situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let sleeping dogs lie</td>
<td>Avoid bringing up an argument or problem again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass the buck</td>
<td>Avoid responsibility or give it to someone else.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Go to the links below for a list and meanings of idioms:

http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/
http://www.idiomsite.com/