

**African Proverbs**

In Africa, the people of some cultures often recite proverbs when they make decisions. To learn about African proverbs, study the following information and complete the activity.

Proverbs are sayings that contain some basic wisdom that people commonly accept to be true and that sometimes helps them to make decisions. Such sayings exist in most cultures. In the United States, for example, one person may advise another, "Don't cry over spilt milk," or "A penny saved is a penny earned." These sayings are both proverbs.

In African societies, proverbs have many uses. They may express a timeless truth. They can serve as warnings against foolish acts, as guides to good conduct, or as solutions to particular problems.

One African folktale tells of a man named Kwaku Ananse, who possessed the world's wisdom. To keep others from becoming wise, he put all wisdom in a large pot, which he attempted to hide in the top of a tree. When he was unable to climb the tree with such a load, he became angry and threw the pot down, causing the wisdom to spill out. That is how, according to the folktale, African wisdom was spread throughout the entire world.

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From Florida Geographic Alliance Lesson Plans, Linda Zieler, and Sherry Dobbs (West Junior High School; Columbia, Missouri, 1977) from *The African Folktale* (Resource Unit).

The left column below lists some African proverbs. Some American proverbs are on the right. Match each American proverb to the similar African proverb by placing its letter on the appropriate line in the left column.

<b>African Proverbs</b>	<b>American Proverbs</b>
_____ 1. Evil knows where evil sleeps.	<b>a.</b> Time heals all wounds.
_____ 2. Time destroys all things.	<b>b.</b> Everybody likes a winner.
_____ 3. All sunshine makes desert.	<b>c.</b> It takes one to know one.
_____ 4. A wealthy man will always have followers.	<b>d.</b> A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
_____ 5. He who hunts two rats catches none.	<b>e.</b> You can have too much of a good thing.