

UNIT 1

Pre-reading Tasks

1. What is a proverb? What features does a proverb have?
2. Where do proverbs generally come from?
3. Do you use proverbs in daily life? If so, in what way?
4. How do you understand the following proverbs?
 - (1) Content is happiness.
 - (2) Actions speak louder than words.
 - (3) Well begun is half done.
 - (4) A heavy snow promises a good harvest.
 - (5) All roads lead to Rome.
 - (6) It's never too old to learn.
5. What other proverbs do you know? Which one is your favorite? Why?

Text

Meet the “Proverbial” Scholar

By Stacy Teicher Khadaroo

Paremiology—the study of proverbs, from the Greek “paroimia.” I stumble across this curious word in my background research, but I haven't a clue what it really means until I meet Wolfgang Mieder in the office he shares with his proverb paraphernalia at the University of Vermont.

This animated gentleman has built up a worldwide reputation during his 30-plus years of reveling in the common phrases people use to persuade, humor, or moralize.

But the scope of Professor Mieder's devotion isn't fully apparent until he hands over a volume of his international bibliography of proverbs. (He has annotated entries for more than 7,000 publications, and by the end of May that number will have climbed to include all 10,000 publications in his archive.) A chance opening to the “M” section reveals page after page full of references to books and articles authored by “Mieder, Wolfgang.”

“It's kind of sick, yah?” he says, his German accent persisting after four decades in the United States. He often jokes his passion keeps him out of trouble. “Just imagine what I'd be doing if I weren't doing this!” He lets out a quick belly laugh before getting back to business.

In the index, he notes, you can look up “anything you want from mathematics to sex to love to animals to meteorology... Proverbs are ubiquitous and they deal with every aspect of life. That’s what has fascinated me.”

What, exactly, is a proverb? “A concise statement of apparent truth, which has had, has, or will have currency,” he says, adding that it’s generally 10 words or less. “You need ready-made formulaic expressions that you can pull out of your drawer, so to speak.”

Proverbs are not universal truths. Indeed, they often contradict each another. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but out of sight, out of mind.

We all make alterations when we know a proverb but it doesn’t quite fit. Mieder admits some pride at having coined a term for this that has caught on international scholarship: Anti proverb—“an intentional parody or play with an existing proverb.” Think of this bumper-sticker slogan: A woman’s place is in the House and Senate.

“Shakespeare was the greatest modifier of existing proverbs (in English),” he suggests, and that’s one reason his works often perplex students.

Politics is one topic he’s come back to again and again. Professor Mieder and a colleague searched 40,000 pages of Winston Churchill’s writing and speeches to find proverbs beyond the well-known “Strike while the iron’s hot.” He once studied the inaugural speeches of every US president.

When researching the proverbs of Frederick Douglass for a book, he became enamored of the abolitionist statesman. “He pushed me over to become an American citizen,” says Mieder, who switched allegiances just four years ago. “Look at that handsome man,” he says, tapping the picture on the finished book’s cover.

Poetry, art, law. You name the subject and Mieder can give you a proverb as if he’s pulling a quarter out of your ear.

Most of us aren’t proverbial magicians. We can think of proverbs only when the context is right. Average people know about 300 proverbs in their native tongue. Mieder says. It’s called the “paremiological minimum.”

Mieder is so prolific partly because he challenges himself along with his students (he has taught various subjects in the Department of German and Russian here since 1971). He often writes a paper at the same time his students have one due.

Recently he dared his advanced German class to produce a book with him, in German. “Every paper needs to be publishable,” he told them, “No child left behind!” One chose to look at proverbs in James Bond Movies, others opted for the *Bible*, Valentine’s Day cards, and Johnny Cash lyrics. As Mieder shows me the books, he is so exuberant that his petite frame seems taller, as if he’s standing on tiptoe.

Proverbs can have a dark side, though. Whether used by Hitler against Jews or by Americans against racial minorities, proverbs “can be very dangerous,” Mieder says.

Longstanding proverbs in the Western world generally come from three sources: antiquity, the Bible, and Medieval Latin. But for many, it’s difficult to trace the origin. “The buck stops here” is commonly associated with President Harry S. Truman, but Truman had heard the

proverb used by a judge, Mieder says.

Sometimes it's easier to see when a proverb is dying. To illustrate, Mieder quizzes me on the meaning of "Cobbler, stick to your last." I know that a cobbler fixes shoes, but I've never heard of the foot-shaped equipment called a last. Mieder explains that this means: Stick to what you're good at.

To replace fading references to "carrying coals to Newcastle," Mieder has been trying to coin a new proverb by saying that redundancies are like "carrying maple syrup to Vermont."

Mieder traces the beginning of his love affair with proverbs to his time as a PhD student at Michigan State University in the late 1960s—when he took a German folklore course taught by Stuart Gallacher. "Two weeks were dedicated to proverbs and then it clicked—it stuck with me," he says.

He glances around his office, reverently pointing out framed portraits of "giants" in his field, which share wall space with proverb art and photos of students. Over there is Archer Taylor, author of the seminal 1931 book *The Proverb*. Over here is an excerpt from Finland, and another from Russia. "There's one like me pretty much in every country," he says.

He turns quietly nostalgic when he notes that many of his friends have died, including American folklorist Alan Dundes. He hands me a published version of his long-running correspondence with Dundes, saying, "This I think shows you a friendship among crazy people."

Mieder says he's often accused of being a workaholic, and 95 percent of the time he can laugh it off. "Then there's that 5 percent of the time where it hurts... Some of the old-fashioned work ethics are not all bad."

He credits his very understanding wife of nearly 40 years, Barbara. She lets him enjoy his work, he says, "but I've got plenty of time to do other things."

Mieder shares the fruits of his labor everywhere from elementary school classrooms to Rotary luncheons (and it's a given at faculty meetings, he says, "that little Wolfgang will come up with a little bit of wisdom"). For presentations, he can choose from among more than 10,000 slides he's put together over the years.

Most people in the world doing dissertations on proverbs eventually correspond with Mieder or visit his international archive, which is so voluminous that he's had to split it between his home and a room down the hall from his office.

Standing in that room, he rifles through newspaper clippings in a box, delighting in the antiproverbs he's found in headlines. Three blue ceramic monkeys sit on a shelf nearby—seeing, hearing, and speaking no evil.

Suddenly Mieder reminds me that he hasn't yet told me his favorite proverb. Can he really have a favorite? Just minutes before he was tipping his chair onto its back legs and talking about proverbs like a grandpa on the porch praising his precious grandchildren.

But Mieder is a decisive man. "‘Different strokes for different folks’ is my favorite proverb," he says. He traces it back to 1950s African-American culture, noting that a song by Sly & the Family Stone popularized the phrase in the 1960s. Images flash in my mind from the TV

show “Different Strokes”, which spanned my childhood in the 1970s and 80s.

“I would argue it had to grow on American ground, because it doesn’t tell you what to do. It says, ‘Accept the differences in people,’” Mieder says, “I think it’s a truly liberating proverb.”



Notes to the Text

1. *Stacy Teicher Khadaroo*: staff writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*. She graduated from Smith College, earned her master’s degree at the University of Missouri and is now editing and writing feature articles, essays and poetry.
2. *Wolfgang Mieder* (1944—): professor of German and folklore at the University of Vermont. He is the editor of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, author of over 460 articles and over 200 books, and recipient of the 2012 Robert V. Daniels Award for outstanding contributions to international education.
3. *I stumble across this curious word ... at the University of Vermont*: I came upon this interesting word when I was doing my background research about Professor Wolfgang Mieder, but I had no idea what it means until I meet him at the University of Vermont. He possesses a huge collection of proverbs in his office where he received me.
 - (1) to stumble across: to discover or meet unexpectedly, e.g.
 - Gant Redmon was hunting for a job when he stumbled across CareerBuilder, a job database on the Internet.
 - (2) background research: access to any background information (published and unpublished) about a site, a region, a person, or a particular topic of interest. Here, it refers to Khadaroo’s attempts at finding the background information about Professor Mieder before she actually went for the interview.
 - (3) to have not a clue: to have no idea, e.g.
 - Jane doesn’t have a clue as to why John won’t call her.
 - I haven’t a clue where you left your watch.
 - (4) proverb paraphernalia: collection of proverbs.
4. ... of reveling in the common phrases...

torevel in: to greatly enjoy (esp. sth. that most other people do not enjoy), e.g.

 - She revels in all the attention she gets from the media.
 - He seems to revel in inflicting pain.
5. *A woman’s place is in the House and Senate*.

A woman should work in the office of the Congress, rather than doing house work at home. It is a parody of “A woman’s place is in the home”, meaning that a woman’s duty is to take care of children at home. “House and Senate” are the House of Representatives and the Senate.
6. *Winston Churchill* (1874—1965): British politician, Prime Minister (1940—1945, 1951—1955), orator, historian, and artist. He won Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953.

7. *Douglass Frederick* (1818—1895): American abolitionist, orator, writer, newspaper and magazine editor, and political reformer. His autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* is his most important work.
8. “*No child left behind!*”: an education policy initiated by President Bush in 2006.
9. *Valentine’s Day*: also St. Valentine’s Day (Feb. 14) on which lovers exchange flowers or confectionery. Named after two Christian martyrs named Valentine, it became associated with romantic love in the Middle Ages when courtly love flourished.
10. *Johnny Cash* (1932—2003): an influential figure in American country music during the last half of the 20th century, famous for his charismatic outlaw persona, deep, authoritative voice, and dark songs.
11. *The buck stops here*: a motto on President Truman’s desk, meaning “you have to make your decision”.
 “The buck stops here” derives from “pass the buck”, a slang expression used in the game of poker, in which if the player did not wish to deal he could pass the “buck” (the counter) to the next player.
12. *Harry S. Truman* (1884—1972): 33rd President of the United States (1945—1953).
13. *it clicked—it stuck with me*: It suddenly occurred to me that my real interest was in proverbs.
 to click: to suddenly understand or realize, e.g.
 - I puzzled over it for hours before it finally clicked.
 - The speaker gave us a humorous joke which suddenly clicked with us and we all laughed.
14. *Archer Taylor* (1890—1973): professor of German at Washington University (1915—1925), the University of Chicago (1925—1939), and the University of California, Berkeley (1939—1957). His books include *The Shanghai Gesture* and *The History of Bibliographies, Book Catalogues: Their Varieties and Uses*.
15. *Alan Dundes* (1934—2005): folklorist at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of twelve books, both academic and popular; and editor of two dozen more.
16. *Rotary*: the Rotary Club, an organization of business people in a town who work together to raise money for the poor or the sick.
17. *to laugh sth. off*: to pretend that something is less serious than it really is by laughing or joking about it.
18. *credit*: approval or praise that you give to sb. for what he has done.
19. *seeing, hearing, and speaking no evil*: another version of “See no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil”, a proverb which means to focus on the good aspects of things.
20. *Sly & the Family Stone*: an American rock, funk (放克), and soul (索尔乐, 也称灵魂乐) band from San Francisco. Active from 1967 to 1983, the band was pivotal in the development of soul, funk, and psychedelic music (迷幻音乐).
21. *Different Strokes*: an American television sitcom that aired on the NBC television network from November 3, 1978 to May 4, 1985, and on ABC from September 27, 1985 to March 7, 1986.

? Comprehension Tasks

A. Answer the following questions according to the text.

1. What is a proverb? What is the name for the “study of proverbs”? Can you think of an example of a Chinese proverb?
2. Most of us don't know much about proverbs and might not even be interested. How does the author bridge our relative ignorance about proverbs and Professor Meider's expertise?
3. What does it mean to say “proverbs are ubiquitous”?
4. Is Professor Meider a reliable source of information about proverbs? What does Khadaroo tell us about him?
5. What does it mean to say a proverb is a statement of “apparent truth”?
6. We're told that “Mieder admits some pride at having coined a term for this that has caught on international scholarship: Antiproverb...” What do the words “coin” and “parody” mean in this context?
7. What does this “anti-proverb” mean: “A woman's place is in the House and Senate”?
8. Did Shakespeare use proverbs?
9. Did Winston Churchill use many proverbs?
10. Who was Frederick Douglas and what was his significance?
11. Whether you are aware of it or not, about how many proverbs are you likely to know, according to Mieder?
12. Do you think these short phrases are worth studying? Why or why not?

B. Paraphrase the following sentences.

1. “It's kind of sick, yah?” he says, his German accent persisting after four decades in the United States.
2. He lets out a quick belly laugh before getting back to business.
3. What, exactly, is a proverb? “A concise statement of apparent truth, which has had, has, or will have currency,” he says, adding that it's generally 10 words or less.
4. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but out of sight, out of mind.
5. Most of us aren't proverbial magicians. We can think of proverbs only when the context is right.
6. He glances around his office, reverently pointing out framed portraits of “giants” in his field, which share wall space with proverb art and photos of students.
7. Some of the old-fashioned work ethics are not all bad.
8. Three blue ceramic monkeys sit on a shelf nearby—seeing, hearing, and speaking no evil.

Linguistic Competence

I New Words and Expressions

A. Match the following words in the left column with the words or phrases in the right column.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. stumble across (Para. 1) | a. choose, select |
| 2. revel (Para. 2) | b. productive |
| 3. annotate (Para. 3) | c. having strong influences |
| 4. ubiquitous (Para. 5) | d. find by chance |
| 5. enamor (Para. 11) | e. showing reverence |
| 6. prolific (Para. 14) | f. present everywhere |
| 7. opt for (Para. 15) | g. fond of |
| 8. reverently (Para. 21) | h. take great delight |
| 9. seminal (Para. 21) | i. add notes to |
| 10. nostalgic (Para. 22) | j. longing for things that are past |

B. Look up the following words and write down their definitions according to their use in the text.

1. paraphernalia (Para. 1) _____
2. archive (Para. 3) _____
3. meteorology (Para. 5) _____
4. bumper-sticker (Para. 8) _____
5. abolitionist (Para. 11) _____
6. publishable (Para. 15) _____
7. exuberant (Para. 15) _____
8. syrup (Para. 19) _____
9. folklorist (Para. 22) _____
10. voluminous (Para. 26) _____

II Word Power: Homonyms (1)

A. Definition.

Homonyms refer to words that are identical in spelling and sound but different in meaning. There are three types of homonyms in English: perfect homonyms (identical in sound and spelling, but different in meaning), homographs (identical in spelling, but different

in sound and meaning), and homophones (identical in sound but different in spelling and meaning).

| Types | Sound | Spelling | Meaning | Examples |
|------------------|-------|----------|---------|---|
| Perfect homonyms | ✓ | ✓ | × | meet [mi:t]: come face to face with sb. meet [mi:t]: suitable, appropriate |
| Homographs | × | ✓ | × | lead [li:d]: guidance given by going first lead [led]: heavy soft metal used to make alloys |
| Homophones | ✓ | × | × | cell [sel]: small room in prison, compartment in a honeycomb, or microscopic unit of living matter sell [sel]: give to sb. after receiving payment |

B. *Underline the homonyms in the following sentences. The first two have been done for you.*

- The wind blew my blue shirt into the pool.
- Chery rode along as we rowed the boat from the island to the lakeside road.
- I've never seen such a beautiful scene.
- We want a site for our home that will be out of sight.
- The seam in the tent doesn't seem to hold back the rain.
- Due to the dry weather, we do not see any dew on the grass.
- I knew they had a new gnu at the zoo.
- Some people know that you add to find the sum.
- They're hanging their coats over there.
- I ate the eight cakes that were on my plate.
- How many ways can I tell him that he weighs too much?
- They banned the crude band from playing at the concert.
- She only won one ticket to the show.
- We must raze the old building before the sun's rays can raise the temperature.
- We'll find a tropical isle where I'll walk down the aisle with my bride.

C. *Look up the following words and mark out those that are not homonyms but often mixed up.*

- elusion, illusion.
- imminent, immanent
- tortuous, torturous
- deprecate, depreciate

Content Words and Function Words

A. Choose the best answer to complete each of the following sentences.

- “You _____ borrow my notes provided you take care of them,” he told his friend.
A. could B. should C. must D. can
- The painting he bought at the street market the other day was a _____ forgery.
A. man-made B. natural C. crude D. real
- She’s always been kind to me—I can’t just turn _____ on her now that she needs my help.
A. my back B. my head C. my eye D. shoulder
- The bar in the club is for the _____ use of its members.
A. extensive B. exclusive C. inclusive D. comprehensive
- The tuition fees are _____ to students coming from low-income families.
A. approachable B. payable C. reachable D. affordable
- The medical experts warned the authorities of the danger of diseases in the _____ of the earthquake.
A. consequence B. aftermath C. results D. effect
- This sort of rude behavior in public hardly _____ a person in your position.
A. becomes B. fits C. supports D. improves
- After a long delay, she _____ replying to my e-mail.
A. got away with B. got back at C. got back D. got round to
- Personal computers are no longer something beyond the ordinary people; they are _____ available these days.
A. promptly B. instantly C. readily D. quickly
- In my first year at the university I learnt the _____ of journalism.
A. basics B. basic C. elementary D. elements
- According to the new tax law, any money earned over that level is taxed at the _____ of 59 percent.
A. ratio B. percentage C. proportion D. rate
- We stood still, gazing out over the limitless _____ of the dessert.
A. space B. expanse C. stretch D. land

B. Fill in the blanks with a word from the box.

| | | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------|---------|----|---------|------|
| ahead | up | after | through | on | at | over |
| out | down | into | in | to | forward | |

- Who will look _____ after these children while their mother is in hospital?
- Have you looked _____ to what you’ll be doing in five years’ time?
- If you want to know how a word is used, look the word _____ in the *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*.

4. Always look your work _____ before handing it in.
5. Passers-by just looked _____ as a man was viciously attacked.
6. Police will be looking _____ for trouble-makers at today's match.
7. We must look _____ the house before we decide to rent it.
8. She looks _____ on people who've never been to university.
9. We're so much looking _____ to seeing you again.
10. Do look me _____ the next time you're in London.
11. I haven't had time to look _____ your essay yet.
12. A working party has been set up to look _____ the problem.
13. I may look _____ at the party on my way home.
14. Inflation is coming down; unemployment is coming down; things are definitely looking _____.
15. Many new people are looking _____ the new government to reduce unemployment.

C. Fill in the blanks with the proper forms of the words in the box.

| | | | | | |
|----------|---------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| animated | revel | decisive | quiz | ceramics | modifier |
| advance | perplex | persist | allegiance | nostalgic | exuberant |

1. Our leaders made a judicious _____ for our company's future.
2. I felt very _____ when I listened to the music.
3. Rachel _____ David all the night about the people he had seen.
4. Biologists have _____ a new theory to explain this phenomenon.
5. We could see how excited Samuel was by the _____ in his face.
6. The actress _____ in all the attention she gets from the media.
7. Elaine eventually married the most _____ one of her admirers.
8. Charles realized that he had to _____ his views if he wanted to be elected.
9. When new math was introduced into schools, many parents were _____ by it.
10. There area lot of _____ children playing in the park.
11. Private members keep up their _____ outward to the parties they belong to.
12. These _____ tiles are the ultimate in modern kitchen design.

D. Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word beginning with the given letter.

A proverb is a short, well-known (1) s_____ that expresses a common truth or (2) b_____. Many proverbs give advice (3) a_____ the best way to live. Recently, we (4) p_____ a program about proverbs. We asked our listeners to send us their (5) f_____ proverbs. A short time later, we received suggestions from around the world. We heard from listeners in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.

The top proverb among these listeners is this one: "(6) W_____ there is a will, there is a way." This means that you can rise above your problems if you have a goal and work very (7) h_____. Some listeners liked another proverb: "(8) S_____ while the iron is hot." This means it is best to take (9) a_____ quickly and at the right time. Another favorite proverb is "(10) G_____ helps those who help themselves."

Xu Da-ju from China (11) w_____ that his country has thousands of proverbs. Several of them are also used in the United States. One example is “(12) B_____ of a feather flock together.” This means that people who are (13) a_____ often become friends or spend time together.

Another proverb is “Blood is (14) t_____ than water.” This means family (15) t_____ are stronger than other relationships. A similar proverb states “Charity begins at home.” A person should help his family or (16) c_____ friends before helping others.

Alina from China tells us this proverb: “He who would climb a ladder must begin at the (17) b_____.” That is good advice when working around your home or looking for a job.

Antonio Jose from Brazil said his favorite proverb is “Tell me who walks with you, and I’ll tell you who you are.” Didier Vermeulen of France sent us this one: “It does not matter the speed you go. The most (18) i_____ thing is to never stop.”

Wafaa from Egypt says his favorite proverb is, “Think (19) t_____, act wise.” He also says he is making an effort to use this saying in his life.

Another favorite proverb among our listeners is “(20) P_____ makes perfect.” This means you will become good at something if you keep doing it. Another (21) p_____ proverb is: “If you want something done right, do it yourself.”

Najeeb from Afghanistan sent us this proverb: “If you risk (22) n_____, then you risk everything.”

And, here is the favorite proverb of Marius Meledje in Ivory Coast: “Your defeat now is your victory in the future.” He says it means you can (23) l_____ from your mistakes. This will help you do better when (24) f_____ similar situations in the future.

IV Sentence Structure

A. Study the following sentences carefully and make sentences after each of the given patterns.

1. But I haven’t a clue what it really means until I meet Wolfgang Mieder in the office he shares with his proverb paraphernalia at the University of Vermont. (have a clue)
2. This animated gentleman has built up a worldwide reputation during his 30-plus years of reveling in the common phrases people use to persuade, humor, or moralize. (revel in)
3. But the scope of Professor Mieder’s devotion isn’t fully apparent until he hands over a volume of his international bibliography of proverbs. (not... until)
4. He often jokes his passion keeps him out of trouble. (keep A out of B)
5. He lets out a quick belly laugh before getting back to business. (let out)
6. You name the subject and Mieder can give you a proverb as if he’s pulling a quarter out of your ear. (pull a quarter out of one’s ear)
7. He often writes a paper at the same time his students have one due. (have sth. due)
8. Recently he dared his advanced German class to produce a book with him, in German. (dare sb. to do sth.)

9. As Mieder shows me the book, he is so exuberant that his petite frame seems taller, as if he's standing on tiptoe. (so... that... as if...)
10. To illustrate, Mieder quizzes me on the meaning of "Cobbler, stick to your last." (quiz sb. on sth.)
11. He traces it back to 1950s African-American culture. (trace back to)

B. *Analyze the following sentences.*

1. Paremiology—the study of proverbs, from the Greek "paroimia."
2. A chance opening to the "M" section reveals page after page full of references to books and articles authored by "Wolfgang."
3. Mieder admits some pride at having coined a term for this that has caught on international scholarship: Antiproverb—"an intentional parody or play with an existing proverb."
4. This I think shows you a friendship among crazy people.
5. For presentations, he can choose from among more than 10, 000 slides he's put together over the years.
6. Just minutes before he was tipping his chair onto its back legs and talking about proverbs like a grandpa on the porch praising his precious grandchildren.
7. Most people in the world doing dissertations on proverbs eventually correspond with Mieder or visit his international archive, which is so voluminous that he's had to split it between his home and a room down the hall from his office.
8. Images flash in my mind from the TV show "Different Strokes", which spanned my childhood in the 1970s and 80s.

C. *Rewrite the following sentences according to the example.*

Model: He stands in that room. He rifles through newspaper clippings in a box.

→ Standing in that room, he rifles through newspaper clippings in a box.

1. The child lay awake all night. He was waiting for the coming of Santa Claus.

→ _____

2. The little girl stood outside the Sunday School. She looked round for the poor children.

→ _____

3. The teacher stood there. She was surrounded by a lot of students.

→ _____

4. She watched the film. She was weeping and sighing.

→ _____

5. The disabled man sat in the church. He was listening to Christmas carols.

→ _____

D. *Rewrite the following sentences, using an -ing participle/-ed participle/adjective phrase as a nominative absolute.*

Mode: "It's kind of sick, yah?" he says. His German accent persists after four decades in the United States.

→“It’s kind of sick, yah?” he says, his German accent persisting after four decades in the United States.

1. Jim climbed slowly up the creaky steps. His courage slipped away at every step.

→ _____

2. “Mama!” he cried suddenly. Tears were rolling down his cheeks.

→ _____

3. The old man sat quietly in an easy chair. His eyes were closed.

→ _____

4. My mother looked at my father. Her face was pale and stony.

→ _____

5. A small boy ran past. His satchel was trailing behind him.

→ _____

Skill Development

Speaking

- A. Discuss with your partner, note down his/her favorite proverbs and make a two-minute report to the class with the help of the following grid.

Personal Proverbs

| Proverbs | Mine | My Partner’s | Reasons | Report Outline |
|----------|------|--------------|---------|----------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

- B. There are several sub-genres, one of which is the anti-proverb or proverb. In such cases, people twist familiar proverbs to change the meaning. For example, “Nerds of a feather flock together”, or “Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and likely to talk about it”. Anti-proverbs are common on T-shirts, such as “If at first you don’t succeed, skydiving is not for you”. Do you find any anti-proverbs on T-shirts or elsewhere? Discuss with your partner, note down three anti-proverbs you both find interesting, and share them with your classmates.

Our Anti-proverbs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C. Proverbs are found with a wide variety of grammatical structures. In English, for example, you can find the following structures.

- Imperative, negative—Don't beat a dead horse.
- Imperative, positive—Look before you leap.
- Parallel phrases—Garbage in, garbage out.
- Rhetorical question—Is the Pope Catholic?
- Declarative sentence—Birds of a feather flock together.

What about proverbs in Chinese? Discuss with your partner and list the grammatical structures of Chinese proverbs.

D. The picture below shows two Chinese civilians carrying a WWII US pilot fighting in China, who was shot down by the Japanese. How do you translate the proverb into English? What is the English equivalent? What message does it send to the world? Discuss with your partner, and write down your conclusions.



Literal translation: _____

English equivalent: _____

Message it sends: _____

II Translation

A. Translate the following sentences into English.

1. 他摸索着跌跌撞撞地穿过漆黑的建筑物。(stumble)
2. 那男孩绘声绘色地谈着他的热带丛林之行。(animated)
3. 这位女演员陶醉于媒体对她的吹捧。(revel)
4. 士兵们被要求宣誓永远效忠女王。(allegiance)
5. 大多数学生选修理科。(opt)
6. 有几个学生局促不安地东张西望,可就是没有人敢举手或者打破他们自从上小学以来一直保持的沉默。(glance)
7. 我在电视中看到这些旧音乐影片,怀旧之情油然而生。(nostalgic)
8. 她是一个害羞而安静的女孩,喜欢一个人待在角落里。(enamor)
9. 广场上到处都是管违章停车的交通管理人员。(ubiquitous)
10. 他的革命活动长达半个世纪。(span)
11. 她的理论对教育改革影响很大。(seminal)

12. 我们在假日相识,一见如故。(click)
13. 他刻板的发言使所有人感觉乏味。(formulaic)
14. 别把我丢了工作一事泄露出去,行吗?(let out)
15. 虽到老年,他仍吟诗作画,豪兴不减。(exuberant)

B. Translate the last three paragraphs of the text into Chinese.

III Listening

A. Passage dictation.

B. Listening comprehension.

1. True (T) or False (F) ?

- ___ (1) People have been forecasting the weather for centuries.
- ___ (2) Before it rained, some people often observed that ants moved to higher ground, cows lay down, pine cones opened up, frogs croaked more frequently, and sheep's wool curled.
- ___ (3) When looking at weather proverbs, keep this in mind: They are usually based on scientific studies.
- ___ (4) A weather proverb based on observations in one location may not be valid in another location.
- ___ (5) Some proverbs arose simply from coincidence, not weather patterns, and therefore may seldom hold true.

2. Listen to the recording and fill the following blanks.

- (1) Red Sky at _____, sailor's _____ . Red sky in the morning, sailor take warning.
- (2) Mare's _____ and mackerel _____ make tall ships take in their sails.
- (3) _____ moon, _____ soon.
- (4) A year of _____, a year of _____.
- (5) Rainbow in the _____ gives you fair _____.
- (6) When the stars begin to _____, the earth will soon become a _____.

IV Writing

A. Choose one of the proverbs below and write a story of about 350 words.

1. The new broom will sweep clean.
2. Hunger is the best cook.
3. You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.

B. Every culture has its own language and proverbs. Do a little research into your native culture and write an essay of about 500 words on how proverbs have helped shape your language and culture.

C. Write a summary of the text.

Supplementary Reading

Diction Slips

By David Galef

The problem arose when I corrected the paper of a student I'll call A—for *Argument*. “Why did you change that word?” asked A, pointing to a sentence on the first page. “And what does ‘dict.’ mean?”

“It means your diction is off.” I read the offending sentence. The paper had to do with a scary overnight bicycling trip past an old graveyard. “‘The road we biked on was steep and torturous.’ You mean *tortuous*. No *r*.”

“What’s the difference?”

I tried not to sound like a pedantic English teacher I’d had in high school. “*Torturous* means painful, as in *torture*. *Tortuous* is twisted, winding—like certain roads.”

She frowned. “But it was so hilly and crooked, it really was painful to pedal up it.”

I sighed. “Well, maybe. Look, let’s move on. Here you have ‘The epigram on his tombstone read, ‘He who laughed last.’” What you mean is *epitaph*.”

“But you told us that an epigram is a witty saying.”

She began to flip through her class notes. “I actually took it down... somewhere.”

“I probably did say that, but—”

“So why can’t a joke be on a gravestone?” She folded her arms.

“All right, never mind. But here”—I moved on to the next page—“you talk about how *illusive* the man’s ghost was. You mean he can’t be tracked down easily, right?”

A suspected a trap. “Maybe...”

“Then you mean *elusive*.” I explained the term.

“But ghosts are illusions, so they’re hard to spot.”

“Yes, but—”

“So he’s *elusive* because he’s *illusive*!”

And here I draw a veil over the rest of the proceedings, as they used to say in old-fashioned novels. Let’s just say that A got a B instead of a C. Why? Not just because I wanted to get rid of her, though that rationale may have figured partly in my calculations but because I thought she had a point. The reason that certain words are often confused is not just that they’re spelled or pronounced similarly, but rather that their meanings are entwined. For example, when someone—an English teacher correcting your paper, let’s say—*deprecates* your

work, he probably also *depreciates* it. That is, if he expresses disapproval of it, he may well be lessening its value by marking it down. I know this to be true because I'm an English professor, though students instinctively know it, too. Similarly, one doesn't have to be a police officer to recognize that many people who *flout* the law are just the types to *flaunt* their crimes in public. People who scorn the rules of society are often show-offs.

Let's return to that epitaph on the gravestone. Grave markers sometimes do feature epigrams, which may also function as *epigraphs* in poems if they strike the right note. I've seen Oscar Wilde's "One should always be a little improbable" on a marble marker in Woodlawn, but I've also seen it heading up an odd little poem about quantum mechanics. To add further confusion: gravestones may also include *epithets* describing the deceased, such as "Dave, the Incomparable."

But where do we draw the line? *Strunk and White*, that bastion of common sense, make a point of distinguishing between *compose* and *comprise*, though decades of sloppy diction have made a hash of the distinction. A sentence reads helpfully: "A zoo *comprises* mammals, reptiles, and birds" (because it embraces, or includes, them)." But a zoo is *composed* of those same three groups (and these days, here and there, butterflies).

My poor student confused *elusive* and *illusive*, but just as vexing is the conjunction of *allusion* and *illusion*. I think the problem is in describing an allusion as "an indirect reference," which makes it shadowy as an illusion. The sad truth is that, for far too many students taking required literature courses, subtle allusions might as well be illusions. Or maybe the students are just *uninterested* in the material, though they'd probably describe their mood as *disinterested*. The logical connection is clear to anyone who's ever sat in a court of law: How easy to be *disinterested* (impartial) when one is *uninterested* (couldn't care less). And when the teacher at the front of the room makes yet another indirect statement or allusion, the students have to *infer* or guess what the teacher *implies* or suggests (students often write *infer* for *imply*, but for some reason not vice versa).

Other pairs are similarly fused causally, and some even come in quadruplets, to wit: Certain factors may *affect* the *effect*, as in turning up the thermostat and altering the temperature of the room. To perform this act is to *effect* a change, and perhaps induce a psychological *affect* of warmth. Then there are the triplets *insure*, *ensure*, and *assure*, which have several meanings but share one sense: "to secure or guarantee." That is, if the game is fixed, the outcome is assured or insured or ensured (usually the British variant). But *insure* has become entangled with the legalized gambling known as insurance and therefore has lost some of its happier persuasive import. Look at the history of what was once called life assurance, as if life were guaranteed by paying the premiums, and note how it shifted to the more grounded "life insurance"—after a forgettable period of utter realism when it was known as "death insurance."

So slow students aren't the only ones who muddle these words. The problem is further complicated by the often-linked etymology of the terms. After all, *assure* and its brethren all partake of surety. *Torturous* and *tortuous* both derive from the notion of twisting—as in the

rack or as in crooked. And so on. The simple word *limit* or *boundary* is often cruelly abandoned for its more grandiose cousin *limitation*, which often implies (not infers) a drawback of some kind, though, as with *compose* and *comprise*, the two words often slew together. Yet William Safire of *The New York Times* argued for just such a distinction, practically the same day that a *Times* headline proclaimed “Term Limitations” for political offices. I might ask, if the distinction is so clear, why we have statutes of limitations. If that isn’t the limit! (Safire has also taken glee in pointing out the difference between *nudge* and the Yiddish *noodge*, or to *push* versus to *pester*, but surely one nudges people because one is a noodge.)

Is there any refuge from these diction slips? Well, at least they stem from attempts to broaden one’s vocabulary. Most students don’t confuse *imminent* with *immanent* because they don’t know the second word, and the same is true of *energize* and *enervate*. So we’re safe there. Maybe we can take some insurance from that.



Notes to the Text

1. *slip*: a small mistake.
2. *pedantic*: paying too much attention to rules and details, e.g.
 - Mary always pays pedantic attention to the trivial things.
3. *epigram*: a short sentence that expresses an idea in a clear or amusing way, e.g.
 - The play writer Oscar Wilde was noted for his epigram.

epitaph: a short piece of writing on the stone over someone’s grave, e.g.

 - He tried to read the epitaph on the monument.
4. *illusive*: false but seeming to be real or true, e.g.
 - Do not blindly believe in what people have told you because part of it may be illusive.

elusive: difficult to find, not often see, e.g.

 - Interpol have searched all the corners of the earth for the elusive hijackers.
5. *deprecate*: (fml.) to strongly disapprove of or criticize sth, e.g.
 - He deprecates her changing the party’s policy.

to depreciate: to decrease in value or price, e.g.

 - Don’t depreciate my effort to what I have done.
6. *flout*: to deliberately disobey a law, rule, etc., e.g.
 - Countries that flout the agreement will have sanctions imposed on them.

to flaunt: to show your money, success, beauty etc. so that other people notice it, e.g.

 - In New York the rich flaunt their wealth before the poor starve on the streets.
7. *Oscar Wilde* (1854—1900) : Irish playwright, poet and author. Known for his biting wit, he became one of the most successful playwrights of the late Victorian era in London, and one of the greatest celebrities of his day.
8. *Strunk and White*: referring to also *The Elements of Style* (1918) by William Strunk and E. B. White, a prescriptive American English writing style guide comprising eight “elementary rules of usage”, ten “elementary principles of composition”, “a few matters of form”, a list of

- “words and expressions commonly misused”, and a list of “words often misspelled”. In 2011, it was listed by *Times* magazine as one of the best and most influential books written in English.
9. *comprise*: to consist of particular parts, groups, etc., e.g.
 - The house comprises two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room.
 - compose*: to be formed from a group of substances or parts, e.g.
 - The committee was composed mainly of teachers and students.
 10. *imply*: to suggest that something is true without saying this directly, e.g.
 - I don't want to imply that you are wrong.
 - infer*: to reach (an opinion) from facts or reasoning, e.g.
 - It is possible to infer two completely opposite conclusions from this set of facts.
 11. *assure*: to tell (sb.) positively or confidently, e.g.
 - I assure you they'll be perfectly safe with us.
 - ensure*: to make sure, to guarantee, e.g.
 - Please ensure that all the lights are switched off at night.
 - insure*: to buy insurance to protect oneself against misfortunes, e.g.
 - He paid 10, 000 Yuan to insure his house against fire.
 12. *William Safire* (1929—2009) : American author, columnist, and presidential speechwriter. He is a long-time syndicated political columnist for *The New York Times* and a regular contributor to “On Language” in *The New York Times Magazine*, a column on popular etymology, new or unusual usages, and other language-related topics.
 13. *New York Times*: an American newspaper published in New York City, and one of the largest metropolitan newspapers in the United States.
 14. *nudge*: to push people gently usually with your elbow, in order to get their attention, e.g.
 - I nudged her and pointed to the man across the street.
 15. *Yiddish*: a non-territorial High German language of Jewish origin, spoken throughout the world, which is written with the Hebrew alphabet as opposed to a Latin alphabet.
 16. *pester*: to annoy someone repeatedly, especially with frequent requests, e.g.
 - They pestered her to join in the scheme.
 17. *immanent*: (of qualities) naturally present; inherent, e.g.
 - He believed that beauty was not something imposed, but something immanent.
 - imminent*: (of unpleasant events) about to happen; likely to happen very soon, e.g.
 - An announcement of further cuts in government expenditure is imminent.
 18. *enervate*: to lose energy and feel weak, e.g.
 - I was utterly enervated by the argument.
 - energize*: to make someone feel more determined and energetic, e.g.
 - The fresh air in the countryside made him energized.

? Reading Comprehension

A. Answer the following question according to the text.

1. What does “diction” mean?
2. What seems to be the main idea of this short essay?
3. Galef tells us that “The problem is further complicated by the often-linked etymology of the terms.” What is “etymology”?
4. What is the difference between “torturous” and “torture”?
5. What are ways in which “illusive” and “elusive” are similar and different?
6. What are ways in which “epigram”, “epigraph”, and “epitaph” are similar and different?
7. What are ways in which “imply” and “infer” are similar and different?
8. What are ways in which “affect” and “effect” are similar and different?
9. Galef says that he “tried not to sound like a pedantic English teacher (he’d) had in high school.” In what way did he want to sound different? Do you think he succeeded?
10. What does Galef mean by this: “Let’s just say that A got a B instead of a C.”?

B. Fill in the blanks with the proper forms of words in the box.

| | | | | |
|----------|---------|-----------|------------|----------|
| illusive | elusive | deprecate | depreciate | tortuous |
| flout | flaunt | infer | imminent | immanent |

1. He _____ from the letter that the accused know the murder victim.
2. I thought I saw a ghost but it was just an optical _____.
3. The Christian believes that God is _____.
4. It is foolish for the boy to _____ his mother’s advice.
5. He is a _____ man and sometimes it is difficult to know what he is thinking about.
6. A _____ review has been given by him in conference.
7. His company has suffered a sharp _____ during the economic crisis.
8. She always _____ her new clothes before her friends.
9. No one has given out a warning of the _____ danger.
10. It took all he could do to keep his cart from going over in the _____ mountain trails.

Further Work

A. The study of proverbs is called paremiology. A prominent proverb scholar in the United States is Wolfgang Mieder. Log onto the internet and find further information about Wolfgang Mieder. Pay special notice to how he became a folklorist.

B. Below are typical stylistic features of proverbs outlined by Shirley Arora in her article “The Perception of Proverbiality” (1984). Find more examples that fit into these categories.

- Alliteration: Forgive and forget.
- Parallelism: Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
- Rhyme: When the cat is away, the mice will play.
- Ellipsis: Once bitten, twice shy.

- C. Go to the library, find any books on Chinese proverbs, and see what the stylistic features are.
- D. Proverbs are found in many parts of the world, but some areas seem to have richer stores of proverbs than others, while others have hardly any. Use library and internet resources to find out the areas and countries that are rich in proverbs and those that hardly have any, then give reasonable explanations to your findings.
- E. David Dalef in “Diction Slips” reminds us that some words can be confusing even to native speakers. Do you have any Chinese words that confuse you? Any English words as well? Do they confuse you in the same way?

Learning to Learn

Overviewing and Linking with Already Known Material

- A. Finding a focus for learning is one of the important ways to help learners step out confusion. So, according to the overviewing/linking strategy, you need to preview the materials for an upcoming language task or activity, and to make association with what you have already known. This strategy can be applied to tasks concerning all four language skills. Especially, it benefits vocabulary building.
- B. Translate the following proverbs from this unit into Chinese, and think out other proverbs concerned that you have learned before.
1. Strike while the iron is hot.
 2. Cobber, stick to your last.
 3. Carrying coals to Newcastle.
 4. Different strokes for different folks.
- C. Work with your partner as Tom and Cassie. Finish the following dialogue about Thanksgiving Dinner with the use of what you've already known.
- Tom: Hey, Cassie, do you have any plans for Thanksgiving break?
- Cassie: Well, not really. San Diego is a little too far from Boston for me to go just for the weekend. I might end up sticking around on campus.
- Tom: Really? Well hey, my family lives here in the city. Would you like to join us for Thanksgiving dinner?
- Cassie: Oh man, I really appreciate the offer, but I wouldn't want to be a fifth wheel or anything...

Tom: C' mon now, nonsense! Really we'd love to have you. And besides, what's Thanksgiving without a big huge turkey dinner?

Cassie: Yeah, no doubt. So I guess you have a pretty traditional Thanksgiving dinner?

Tom: Yes, pretty much. We do the turkey and some other typical dishes.

Cassie: So you'll have _____.

Tom: And oh, we do something else that's rather special after the meal.

Cassie: Hmm, what's that?

Tom: After we finish the meal, we usually take a trip out to Plymouth Rock.

Cassie: Oh! That's the place where _____ landed, isn't it?

Tom: Yup, that's right. Our family has been keeping this tradition since my grandfather was my age.

Cassie: Wow, I've never been to Plymouth Rock.

Tom: I think you'll like it. You can learn a lot about the history of the Pilgrims, and their first Thanksgiving harvest that we now celebrate as "Thanksgiving Day".

Cassie: So, remind me. What exactly happened on that first Thanksgiving Day?

Tom: So you know, the pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock in _____. And I guess their first year living in the new land wasn't exactly a walk in the park.

Cassie: Oh I can imagine. It must've been very tough.

Tom: Yes, but as it turns out, they were able to establish a good relationship with _____ that lived in the area. They were taught _____. With the successful harvest the following fall, the Pilgrims and members of the local tribe celebrated the first Thanksgiving harvest.

Cassie: Ah, I see. The thing that really impresses me most about the Thanksgiving story is how people from two different cultures were able to sit at the table and enjoy a meal together. Nowadays, it's hard for family to find time for a family dinner.

Tom: That's exactly the reason why our family takes this trip to Plymouth Rock.

Cassie: Aw, now I'm getting even more excited about spending Thanksgiving Day with your family, Tom! This is really awesome!

D. *Thanksgiving Day is celebrated as a Family Day in America. The significance of it is similar to that of Mid-Autumn Festival in China. Make a dialogue with your partner about Mid-Autumn feast and the origin of this festival. The situation is provided below.*

Liu Tao: a Chinese sophomore in English department

Cathy: an abroad student from the US in university

To celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival in China, Liu Tao is inviting Cathy to join his family for the celebration of this festival.

Self-Assessment

1. In this unit, I learned _____

2. My favorite activity in this unit is _____

3. What ways did I use to help my study of this unit?

4. Did I understand how to use the learning strategy that is introduced in this unit?

5. List out personal vocabulary of this unit.

| Personal Vocabulary | |
|---------------------|--|
| | |

6. My plan for the next unit:

