

TEACHER'S NOTES

ACTIVITY 2C. My favourite proverb, idiom or saying

In this activity, students will...

- Reflect on how languages and cultures are intertwined.
- Gain an insight into other cultures, languages and ways of thinking.
- Become aware of their own and others' multilingualism and multiculturalism.
- Become aware of linguistic diversity, including within a single language.

ESTIMATED
TIME

45 MIN

How to use this resource

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| STAGE 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to your students that language and culture are intertwined, something that is especially evident in proverbs, idioms and sayings. • Show your students the example provided or use your own favourite proverb, idiom or saying as an example. • Tell your students to think about their favourite proverb, idiom or saying in any given language for the next session. Encourage them to talk to a family member (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) with whom they can think together about a proverb they especially like or use frequently. They can also think about proverbs they like in other (foreign) languages they speak. You can provide them with a card, on which they should write down the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proverb, idiom or saying (if possible, in the original writing system and/or taking into account regional pronunciation; it is fine to just write it down as it is pronounced, especially if it is in a language with another writing system), its meaning, its origin (ask them to look this up on the internet), a word-for-word translation (if it is not in English), and a similar expression in English / other languages. | 10' |
| STAGE 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: put students whose proverbs are in the same language into a group to share them with each other. There should be a similar number of students in each group. In groups with proverbs in a language other than English, students can discuss and help each other with the translation of each proverb (since they probably have different language skills). • Option 2: if the class is too homogeneous or too heterogeneous, each group of students can have proverbs in different languages. • Ask each group to choose two proverbs they would like to share with the whole class; if the groups are small, they can simply share all their proverbs. | 15' |
| STAGE 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the students pin the cards with the proverbs they would like to share with the class on the board (or similar). • Ask students to volunteer to choose a card and read aloud the proverb in its original language and, if applicable, its translation in English. • Use this as a cue to start a discussion about the link between language and culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there similar expressions in other languages? • What does each proverb tell us about the culture in which it originated? | 20' |

Prep time suggestions

- For stage 1:
 - Print out the instruction sheet with the example; you can add an example of your own if you like.
 - Bring cards (e.g. size A5) for your students; alternatively, you can ask them to write down their proverbs on a piece of paper.
- If the class is mainly monolingual, you could prepare cards with proverbs, idioms or sayings in different languages and ask your students to research their origins and translations, either at home or in class.
- Read chapter 2 of the Teacher's Book *Inclusion, Diversity and Communication Across Cultures*, available online (<https://pagines.uab.cat/eylbid/en/content/teachers-book>), especially section 2.3.2, for extra background information on the link between language and culture and how it is most evident in idiomatic expressions, such as idioms, proverbs and sayings.

My favourite proverb, idiom or saying

Do you have a favourite proverb? We would love to hear it in our next session, when we will be learning about different proverbs from all around the world! You can ask a member of your family to suggest a proverb they like or use frequently. You can write down any proverb in any language you like, be it your mother tongue or another language you can speak. If you choose a proverb in a language with a different writing system, you can either write it in Latin characters or in the language's original writing system. You should also do a little research about the origin of the proverb you choose. If you choose a proverb in a language other than English, think about whether your classmates will understand it. Could you translate it into English? Is there a proverb in English with a similar meaning? Take a look at the example for inspiration!



Example:

- Greek proverb: "Τα μάτια σου δεκατέσσερα"
- Meaning: Be careful / Stay alert / Keep your eyes open
- Origin: It seems to come from the Byzantine Empire; the Byzantines believed that some people had the gift of seeing not only with their eyes but also with other parts of their bodies.
- Word-for-word translation: (To have) your eyes fourteen / To have fourteen eyes
- Similar proverb, idiom or saying in English / another language: "Keep an eye out"