Introducing the Lesson

Vocabulary for the Selection

There is no vocabulary for this selection.

Prereading

Discuss with students the Prereading note on page 2 before they begin reading the selection. Discuss the following with students before they begin reading:

• **Proverb.** Explain that a proverb is simply a traditional saying and that sayings become traditional because they were memorable and expressed something worth saying—a bit of wisdom. As students to think of proverbs, or traditional sayings, that they know. Examples might include the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” or “Truth is stranger than fiction” or “Better late than never.” Advanced students: Ask them to consider the difference between wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is accumulated concepts and skills. Wisdom is knowledge plus judgment. For example, one might know about savings accounts and how to compute compound interest but not have the necessary judgment to put a little of what one earns aside so that it will accumulate over time, which would be a wise thing to do.

Close Reading

Have students glance through the questions under Key Ideas and Details on page 9 and answer these questions as they read through the selection. (See the answers given below under “Answer Key.”)

Checktest

After students have read the selection, administer the multiple-choice checktest to ensure that they have done the reading.

Discussing the Selection

After students have finished the checktest, hold a class discussion of the selection.

Summarize for your students A Reading of the Selection on page 8. Explain to your students that traditional cultures tend to place a lot of stock in the accumulated wisdom that people gain over time. Many Native American and African tribal groups, for example, had councils of elders who made the important decisions. In ancient Israel and Judea, before the development of monarchy, elders with exceptional wisdom were appointed judges, again to make important decisions for the people. Such cultures tended to place a lot of importance on traditional wisdom expressed in proverbs. Among the writings of the ancient Hebrews that have come down to us, for example, is the collection of traditional sayings called the Book of Proverbs. Authorship of the Book of Proverbs was traditionally attributed to Solomon, who was remembered as a person of exceptional wisdom.

Choose a student to read aloud the note on the Cultural/Historical Context of the selection. As an example of a cultural tradition kept alive in the New World via oral transmission, tell your students about the stories of Anansi (or Ananzi) the spider—traditional West African stories still told today in the Georgia Sea Islands, in the Caribbean, and in other parts of the New World. Explain that there were many kinds of works in the oral tradition, including poems, stories, proverbs, parables, fables, folk tales, and myths.

Read the note under About the Author on page 8. Make sure that students understand that while a work in the oral tradition has no known author, its earliest form had to have been created by someone. The earliest author is anonymous, or unknown, and as the work was passed down through the generations, from one teller to another, it has numerous authors and, in their retellings, would
change. Many stories from the oral tradition, such as the Cinderella story or the story of a person who is granted three wishes, have been passed from teller to teller all over the world and exist in very widely different variants.

Refer students to the questions raised under Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas on page 9. Discuss the questions raised in these sections, in turn. (See the answers given below under “Answer Key.”

**Answer Key**

**Key Ideas and Details**

1. Look over the proverbs on the preceding pages. What are some of the characteristics of these proverbs that make them memorable?

   Answers will vary. Many of the proverbs use striking analogies, similes, or metaphors (e.g., “The heart of a wise man lies quiet like limpid water”). Many involve ironies, twists, or surprises (“Thought breaks the heart,” “Silence is also speech,” and “He who learns, teaches”). Some use repetition (“One scoops with a scoop” and “The friend of a friend is a friend”) or parallelism (“When the right hand washes the left and the left washes the right, both become clean,” “If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for something,” and “He who talks incessantly talks nonsense”).

2. Some proverbs make use of comparisons or of metaphors, in which one thing is spoken of as if it were another. Can you find five examples from the preceding proverbs of ones that make comparisons or make use of metaphor?

   Answers will vary.

   *Examples in which the two parts of the comparison are both mentioned:*

   “If you try to cleanse others, you will, like soap, waste away in the process.”

   “Evil enters like a needle and spreads like an oak tree.”

   “Truth is a hot pepper.”

   *Implied comparisons in which one part of the comparison is not explicitly stated:*

   “When the moon is not full, the stars shine more brightly.” (This proverb deals with the effect that an exceptional person has on people’s attitudes toward others around him or her.)

   “When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.” (This proverb deals with the consequences for less powerful or influential people of the quarrels of powerful and influential people.)

3. Some proverbs teach moral lessons. That is, they teach people how they ought to behave. Can you find five examples among the preceding proverbs of ones that teach moral lessons?

   Answers will vary. Examples of proverbs that teach moral lessons include the following:

   “One who loves you, warns you.”

   “A man with too much ambition cannot sleep in peace.”

   “He who talks incessantly talks nonsense.”

   “It takes two to make a quarrel.”

   “A fool and water will go the way they are diverted.”

4. Often proverbs are used to respond to particular situations. For example, suppose that a friend...
has helped you study for a test. Later, someone asks you why you are helping that friend with something. You might respond by saying, “A good deed is something one returns.” Choose three proverbs from this lesson. To what situations might these proverbs apply?

Answers will vary. The proverb “He who hunts two rats catches none” might be applied to anyone who overextends himself or herself, as when a student tries to study for two tests in a single evening. The proverb “If a dead tree falls, it carries with it a live one” might be applied to a president who loses a re-election bid; the vice president also loses his or her job. “It is little by little that the bird builds its nest” might be applied to any situation in which people gain a great deal by doing a little each day, such as working out in the gym, practicing a musical instrument, or learning algebra.

5. Find two proverbs from the previous pages that are especially meaningful to you. Why do you consider them particularly meaningful or important? Can you find one or two proverbs with which you do not agree? Explain the reasons for your disagreement.

Answers will vary. Point out that many proverbs are contradictory. For example, common proverbs in English are “He who hesitates is lost,” which suggests that one should act quickly and decisively, and “Look before you leap,” which suggests that one should take one’s time and NOT act quickly and decisively. Of course, they can both be true in different situations.

Craft and Structure

Here are a few proverbs that you might want to share with your students:

Arabic proverb: “When Allah wanted to doom the ant, the have it wings.”

Chinese: “When the student is ready, the master will come.”

Latin (from ancient Rome): “When there is no wind, row.”

Yiddish: “God couldn’t be everywhere, so He created mothers.”

Cherokee: “When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world will cry and you will rejoice.”

Hopi: “One finger cannot lift a pebble.”

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Answers will vary. Here are some common American proverbs:

Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
Actions speak louder than words.
After the feast comes the reckoning.
All that glitters is not gold.
An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.
Bad news travels fast.
Barking dogs seldom bite.
Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.
Beggars can’t be choosers.
The best things in life are free.
Better a live coward than a dead hero.
Better late than never.
Better safe than sorry.
The bigger they are, the harder they fall.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
Birds of a feather flock together.
Blood is thicker than water.
Charity begins at home.
Clothes do not make the man.
Curiosity killed the cat.
African Proverbs, p. 2

Do as I say, not as I do.
Don’t bite off more than you can chew.
Don’t bite the hand that feeds you.
Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched.
Don’t cry over spilled milk.
Don’t judge a book by its cover.
Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked in his boots.
Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth.
Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.
Don’t put off for tomorrow what you can do today.
Don’t put the cart before the horse.
Familiarity breeds contempt.
The first step is always the hardest.
A fool and his money are soon parted.
Forewarned is forearmed.
A friend in need is a friend indeed.
A friend who shares is a friend who cares.
Good things come in small packages.
The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.
Haste makes waste.
He who hesitates is lost.
He who laughs last, laughs best.
Hindsight is better than foresight.
If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.
If you can’t beat them, join them.
If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.
Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.
In unity there is strength.
It never rains but it pours.
It takes two to tango.
Leave well enough alone.
A leopard cannot change its spots.
Lightning never strikes twice in the same place.
Look before you leap.
Love is blind.
Love makes the world go round.
Make hay while the sun shines.
Man does not live by bread alone.
A man is known by the company he keeps.
Might makes right.
Misery loves company.
A miss is as good as a mile.
Money does not grow on trees.
Necessity is the mother of invention.
No news is good news.
No pain, no gain.
Nothing hurts like the truth.
Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
Old habits die hard.
One good turn deserves another.
One man’s gravy is another man’s poison.
One swallow does not a summer make.
The pen is mightier than the sword.
Possession is nine-tenths of the law.
Practice makes perfect.
The proof of the pudding is in the eating.
The road to hell is paved with good intentions.
Rome wasn’t built in a day.
The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
The squeaking wheel gets the oil.
Strike while the iron is hot.
There is no honor among thieves.
There’s more than one way to skin a cat.
There’s no fool like an old fool.
There’s no place like home.
Too many chiefs, not enough Indians.
Too many cooks spoil the broth.
Two heads are better than one.
Two’s company, but three’s a crowd.
Variety is the spice of life.
The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.
When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
When the cat’s away, the mice play.
Where there’s smoke, there’s fire.
You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.
You can’t have your cake and eat it too.
You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.
You have to take the good with the bad.
You reap what you sow.
You’re never too old to learn.
Writing Practice

Use the Writing Rubric: Narrative to assess the student’s work. This rubric is available at http://callistoeeducation.com/Teacher10.htm.

Speaking and Listening Practice

Answers will vary. Stories that are exaggerated or incredible are interesting and so are more likely to be passed on to others. In addition, people may embellish stories as they tell them, exaggerating and adding incredible details to make them more compelling.

Language Practice

1. reduction
2. pacification
3. liquify
4. modernize
5. foolishness
6. engagement
7. absurdity
8. artful
9. deceitfulness
10. delusion

Differentiating the Instruction

Here are some ideas for differentiating your instruction for the selection:

• Ability with spoken language generally outpaces reading and writing ability. You may wish to read aloud part or all of the Prereading and other study apparatus for the selection to your English language learners.

• Consider reading part of the selection aloud to your class and having them then complete the reading on their own.

• Divide your class into study groups and have each group choose, with your assistance, a gifted reader to introduce (and read aloud) each part of the study apparatus.

Additional Resources

Here are some additional resources for teaching the lesson:
