

## PROVERBS IN THE PROVINCES

1. What is the definition of *proverb* in your *New Zealand Oxford School Dictionary*?

Here are some international proverbs, coupled with a New Zealand version of each:

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| a) | Those who live in glass-houses<br>should not throw stones | Those who live in glass-houses<br>should slip slop slap |
| b) | When the cat's away<br>the mice will play                 | When the cat's away<br>the kea will play                |
| c) | Robbing Peter<br>to pay Paul                              | Robbing Petera<br>to pay Paoro                          |
| d) | Good fences<br>make good neighbours                       | Good fences<br>are made of No. 8 wire                   |
| e) | Revenge<br>is sweet                                       | Pavlova<br>is sweet                                     |

2. What do you think each one means?

3. i) Does the New Zealand version keep the same sense as the original version?  
ii) If not, how has the proverb changed?
4. i) Which words are distinctive New Zealand English terms?  
ii) Are these words simply Kiwi alternatives or do they convey different cultural concepts?  
iii) If so, how?

5. Create ten of your own New Zealand proverbs to match those provided below.

The only guideline is to ensure that your proverb is recognisable as an imitation of the original. You can do this by changing only one half of the proverb, either the first half (see example 'e') or the second half (see examples 'a', 'b' and 'd'); or by changing only one or two key words (see example 'c').

6. Explain the meaning of each of your new proverbs.

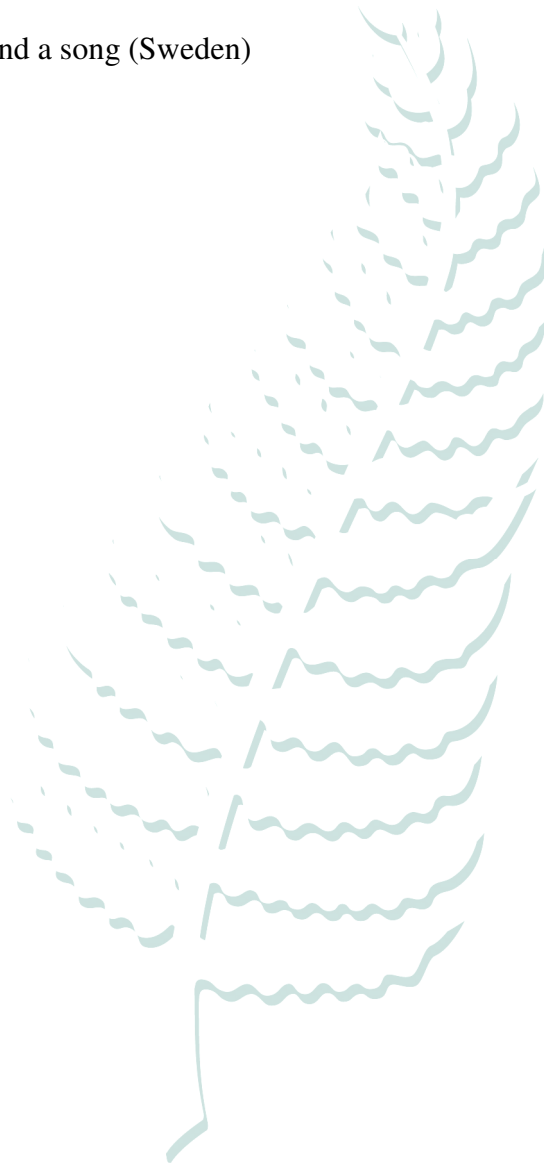
Terms from New Zealand English and te reo Māori can be sourced from:

- ❖ □ Bardsley, Dianne (ed.) (2006) *The New Zealand Oxford School Dictionary*
- ❖ □ Bardsley, Dianne (ed.) (2005) *The New Zealand Oxford School Thesaurus*
- ❖ □ Deverson, T and Kennedy, G (eds.) (2005) *The New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*
- ❖ □ Macalister, J (ed.) (2005) *A Dictionary of Maori Words in New Zealand English*
- ❖ □ Williams, H.W.(ed.) (2000) *A Dictionary of Maori Language*
  
- ❖ □ Orsman, W.H. (ed.) (1997) *The Dictionary of New Zealand English*
- ❖ □ Orsman, Elizabeth and Harry (eds.) (1994) *The New Zealand Dictionary*
- ❖ □ Ngata, H.M. (ed.) (1993) *English-Maori Dictionary*

## International Proverbs

- A little fire  
burns up a great deal of corn (Hebrew culture)
- A trout in the pot  
is better than a salmon in the sea (Ireland)
- A dog that barks all the time  
gets little attention (Argentina)
- A lazy boy and a warm bed  
are difficult to part (Denmark)
- A little axe  
can cut down a big tree (Jamaica)
- A roaring lion  
kills no game (Uganda)
- Do not mend your neighbour's fence  
before seeing to your own (Tanzania)
- Don't show me the palm tree,  
show me the dates (Afghanistan)
- Even though you know a thousand things,  
ask the man who knows one (Turkey)
- Great abilities  
produce great vices as well as virtues (Greece)
- Having a good discussion  
is like having riches (Kenya)
- He who goes with wolves  
learns to howl (Spain)
- He who lives without discipline  
dies without honour (Iceland)
- If you don't see the bottom,  
don't wade (Scotland)
- Life is a bridge.  
Cross over it, but build no house on it (India)

- The earth does not shake  
when the flea coughs (Austria)
- The early bird  
gets the worm (United States)
- The horse must graze  
where it is tethered (Belgium)
- There is no shame in not knowing,  
the shame lies in not finding out (Russia)
- those who wish to sing  
always find a song (Sweden)



- Three things give us hardy strength:  
    sleeping on hairy mattresses, breathing cold air, and eating dry food  
    (Wales)
- Turn your face to the sun  
    and the shadows fall behind you (New Zealand)
- You can only take out of a bag  
    what was already in it (Brazil)
- You can't see the whole sky  
    through a bamboo tube (Japan)

