

Famous African Proverbs:

1. Only a fool tests the depth of a river with both feet.
2. Knowledge is like a garden: if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested.
3. If you offend, ask for a pardon; if offended, forgive.
4. Don't set sail using someone else's star.
5. The best way to eat an elephant in your path is to cut him up into little pieces.
6. Restless feet may walk into a snake pit.
7. After a foolish deed comes remorse.
8. A man who pays respect to the great, paves the way for his own greatness.
9. He who does not know one thing, knows another.
10. A roaring lion kills no game.
11. When a king has good counselors, his reign is peaceful.
12. It takes a whole village to raise a child.
13. If a child washes his hands he could eat with kings.
14. Rain does not fall on one roof alone.
15. Life is like a shadow and a mist; it passes quickly by, and is no more.
16. Wherever a man goes to dwell, his character goes with him.
17. Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped.
18. An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb.
19. By the time the fool has learned the game, the players have dispersed.
20. Even though the old man is strong and hearty, he will not live forever.
21. A bird will always use another bird's feathers to feather its own nest.
22. A person is a person because of other persons.
23. Two small antelopes can beat a big one.
24. What is bad luck for one man is good luck for another.
25. Fire and gunpowder do not sleep together.
26. The mouth which eats does not talk.
27. He that digs up a grave for his enemy, may be digging it for himself.
28. If you are in hiding, don't light a fire.
29. If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything.
30. When the cock is drunk, he forgets about the hawk.
31. When the fool is told a proverb, its meaning has to be explained to him.
32. Only when you have crossed the river, can you say the crocodile has a lump on his snout.
33. Rain beats a leopard's skin, but it does not wash out the spots.
34. The sun will shine on those who stand, before it shines on those who kneel under them.
35. Those whose palm-kernels were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble.
36. When you follow in the path of your father, you learn to walk like him.
37. It is no shame at all to work for money.
38. It is the calm and silent water that drowns a man.
39. A wise man who knows proverbs, reconciles difficulties.
40. The ruin of a nation begins in the homes of its people.

41. A bad name is like a stigma.
42. When a woman is hungry, she says, "Roast something for the children that they might eat."
43. You must judge a man by the work of his hands.
44. There is no medicine to cure hatred.
45. People should not talk while they are eating or pepper may go down the wrong way.
46. It's a bad child who does not take advice.
47. One cannot both feast and become rich.
48. It is the fool's sheep that break loose twice.
49. One falsehood spoils a thousand truths.
50. By crawling, a child learns to stand.
51. The wise create proverbs for fools to learn, not to repeat.
52. The surface of the water is beautiful, but it is no good to sleep on.
53. Ears that do not listen to advice, accompany the head when it is chopped off.
54. He who refuses to obey cannot command.
55. The one who loves an unsightly person is the one who makes him beautiful.
56. If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.
57. A fight between grasshoppers is a joy to the crow.
58. Dogs do not actually prefer bones to meat; it is just that no one ever gives them meat.
59. Dine with a stranger but save your love for your family.
60. An army of sheep led by a lion can defeat an army of lions led by a sheep.
61. Instruction in youth is like engraving in stone.
62. He who fears the sun will not become chief.
63. The old woman looks after the child to grow its teeth, and the young one in turn looks after the old woman when she loses her teeth.
64. A large chair does not make a king.
65. You are beautiful, but learn to work, for you cannot eat your beauty.
66. He who thinks he is leading and has no one following him is only taking a walk.
67. Money is not the medicine against death.
68. When two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled.
69. A small house will hold a hundred friends.
70. If there is character, ugliness becomes beauty; if there is none, beauty becomes ugliness.
71. There can be no peace without understanding.
72. When there is peace in the country, the chief does not carry a shield.