

**BIANCA DABU**

---

**ENGLISH PROVERBS  
EXPLAINED**

supplemented with equal and opposite proverbs



**BIANCA DABU**

**ENGLISH PROVERBS  
EXPLAINED**

supplemented with equal and opposite proverbs



**Editura UNIVERSITARIA**

**Craiova, 2016**

Referenți științifici:

Conf. univ. dr. Adina Matrozi-Marin

Conf. univ. dr. Cristina Ungureanu

Copyright © 2016 Editura Universitaria

Toate drepturile sunt rezervate Editurii Universitaria

---

**Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României**  
**DABU, BIANCA**

**English proverbs explained** / Dabu Bianca. - Craiova :  
Universitaria, 2016

Conține bibliografie

ISBN 978-606-14-1061-3

821.111.09-84

*To my daughter, Teodora*

*The bird that can sing and won't sing should be made to sing.*  
*W. Mieder - A Dictionary of American Proverbs (1992: 726)*



## INTRODUCTION

### ***Structure ...***

The dictionary displays the proverbs in an alphabetical order followed by their sources. The main entries may have variants (or alterations by substitution with other words) in an alphabetical order.

**e.g. A bad workman always blames his tools.** (St., 2006: 39)  
(G.,1998: 147) (M. et al.,2007: 17) (S., S.,2009)

var. *A bad workman quarrels with his tools.*(M. et al.,2007: 17)  
(S., 2013: 3) (M. et al., 1992: 840)

*Bad workers often blame their tools.*(S., 2013: 4)

*Ill worker quarrels with his tools.*(L.A.,2006: 302)

Each proverb is given an explanation in order to better understand its meaning. Sometimes the explanation covers the basic usage within a context, other times the explanation is supplemented with a more general meaning applicable in additional contexts.

**e.g. A blind man's wife needs no paint.**

Visual enchantments are not made for those who cannot or will not see. By extention,there is no point in making efforts that are not appreciated.

Proverbs with similar and opposite meanings are intended to provide a wider perspective on connotations and metaphorical interpretations of the basic proverbs.

**e.g. A bad bird, a bad egg.**

syn. A bad tree does not yield good apples.

A wild goose never lays/laid a tame egg.

Bad grass does not make good hay.

The young pig grunts like the old sow.

What is bred in the bone will out of the flesh.

ant. Good seed makes a good crop.

Some of such proverbs are in their turn displayed as main proverbs enlarging the interpretation of the same proverb according to various contexts.

**e.g. The young pig grunts like the old sow.**

Children inherit their parents' character and physical resemblance, as well as behaviour patterns easily recognisable.

syn. Blood will tell.

That that comes of a cat will catch mice.

The apple never falls far from the tree.

The chips don't fall too far from the block.

### ***Alphabetical Index of Proverbs.....***

The index contains all proverbs and their identification number(s) in order to facilitate the access to them.

**e.g. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.** 3, 290, 326- means that the proverb occurs as a main or equivalent proverb at the numbers displayed.

*Bianca Dabu*

## ABBREVIATIONS

ant.– opposite meaning

(C.S., 2003) – The Book of Common and Uncommon Proverbs

(G., 2006) - Grammar Matters: Proverbs

(J.H.M., 2006: 3) – A Collection of Proverbs of All Nations on Bread and Baking

(K., 1999) - Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

(L.A., 2006) - Dictionary of Proverbs

(M.et al., 2007) – Facts on File Dictionary of Proverbs

(M.et al., 1992) - A Dictionary of American Proverbs

(Ra., 2011) - Oxford Treasury of Proverbs and Quotations

(S., 2013) – Concise Dictionary of European Proverbs

(S., 2015) - Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs

(S., S., 2009) - The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs (online ed.)

(St., 2006) - The Routledge Book of World Proverbs

syn.– similar meaning

var. – variant

(W., 1977) - Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases

(W., 1989) - Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases

