

# **G**AME 4: Talking About Anything: “Oral Essays”

This large-group game is especially appropriate for a formal or informal speech or other English language or culture course. The instructor or group leader counts out a number of matching “half proverb cards” equal to the number of participants in this speaking activity. Half the class or group will receive the beginnings of proverbs, and the other half will get the matching endings. When each person receives a card, he or she reads it for meaning. As fast as possible, players find the people with the matching halves. They write the full proverbs on the chalkboard, numbered—perhaps with their names following in parentheses.

Partners in pairs discuss their proverb with each other. It might help them to answer these questions about it:

- “What does the sentence mean?” (What are some examples of situations to explain its meaning.)
- “In your experience, is the statement always, often, sometimes, seldom, or never true? How or why?”
- “Do you know any sayings or quotes—from any culture—that are similar in meaning to this one? If so, what are they?”
- “Do you know any sayings or quotes with the opposite meaning? If so, what are they?”

In turn (in order of their numbers), the pairs of players tell the class or whole group about their proverb. They read it aloud, say what they think it means, and give a short but interesting cooperative “mini-speech” or “oral essay” about it. They encourage their listeners to react to their ideas.



*Our proverb is Number 39, “Birds of a feather flock together.” This means that people similar in background, age, culture, and all that stuff tend to get together—hang out, be friends, even get married, and all that. I for one don’t think this is necessarily true. For example, my friend here is not like me at all. Just look at the way we dress. But I still think he’s really cool, so ...*

## **G**AME 5: *Creative Proverbs*

Perhaps this game is best played before the class or whole group become familiar with the most common traditional proverbs in English. Each group of four to ten players receives a different set of proverb cards. Only the beginning cards (the first halves of the sayings) are used in this game. Each player needs a pile of small blank papers or cards—all of the same size and shape—to write on.

After shuffling the deck of twenty or fewer proverb beginning cards, the group leader reads aloud the beginning of the first proverb. While allowing time for the other players to make up and write down appropriate endings, the leader finds the real ending in the Answer Key at the end of this booklet or in the set of matching proverb endings. He or she copies it on a piece of paper or card.

The leader collects all the papers or cards, including his or her own. He or she shuffles them and reads them aloud one by one. Each person decides and tells which ending sounds the most authentic to him or her. After the leader has revealed the true ending, each player receives one point for a correct guess. Players also receive one point each time another person chooses *their* ending (in error) as the authentic one—because it *sounded* so real.

The group can also decide which of the creative endings sound the most profound, the funniest, etc. These can be read to the class or whole group after it reconvenes.

Of course, if most of the players already know the real endings to the proverbs, this game can become a creative brainstorming activity: participants work together to create “new” proverbs that make more sense in today’s world than the originals. In this version of the game, one leader reads aloud each proverb beginning to the class or whole group. Teams of players “brainstorm” to come up with good endings, the best of which they read to all the other groups.

Which is the authentic ending to this proverb?

Easier said ...

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...if you say it.

...in a soft voice.

...than done.

...in my language than in English.