Proverbs

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each proverb with its message.

1 Actions speak louder than words.	____	a need can inspire solutions
2 The early bird catches the worm.	____	b behaviour proves intention
3 You can't have your cake and eat it.	____	c a group depends on its weakest part
4 Every cloud has a silver lining.	____	d other people's lives may seem better
5 Too many cooks spoil the broth.	____	e acting promptly brings an advantage
6 A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.	____	f bad situations may contain something positive
7 Necessity is the mother of invention.	____	g incompatible advantages cannot both be kept
8 The grass is always greener on the other side.	____	h excessive involvement may ruin a task

2 Complete the proverb collocations.

actions | bird | chain | cloud | cooks | grass | mother | cake

1 _____ speak louder than words

2 the early _____ catches the worm

3 have your _____ and eat it

4 every _____ has a silver lining

5 too many _____ spoil the broth

6 a _____ is only as strong as its weakest link

7 necessity is the _____ of invention

8 the _____ is always greener on the other side

3 Choose the proverb that best interprets the situation.

1 Promises conflict with continued pollution: *Actions speak louder than words / Every cloud has a silver lining*.

2 Jo applies first and gets the place: *The early bird catches the worm / Too many cooks spoil the broth*.

3 Kai wants freedom and guaranteed support: *You can't have your cake and eat it / Necessity is the mother of invention*.

4 A lost job leads to a better career: *Every cloud has a silver lining / The grass is always greener*.

5 Six people keep changing one poster: *Too many cooks spoil the broth / Actions speak louder*.

6 One weak password exposes the network: *A chain is only as strong as its weakest link / The early bird catches the worm*.

7 A power cut inspires a hand charger: *Necessity is the mother of invention / You can't have your cake and eat it*.

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4 Complete the project reflection with words from the box.

actions | bird | cake | chain | cloud | cooks | grass | necessity

Our team learned that **1** _____ speak louder than words: progress mattered more than promises. The early **2** _____ caught the worm when we booked equipment first. We could not have our **3** _____ and eat it; quality required time. At first, too many **4** _____ spoiled the broth. Our **5** _____ was only as strong as its weakest link, so we supported new members. **6** _____ became the mother of invention when materials ran out. Every **7** _____ had a silver lining, and the **8** _____ was not always greener in another team.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Useful shorthand, imperfect logic

A proverb can summarise a viewpoint so efficiently that speakers treat it as a reason. Yet two proverbs may recommend opposite responses. Look before you leap favours caution, while He who hesitates is lost favours speed. The contradiction does not make either saying useless. It shows that proverbs are context-sensitive tools, not complete arguments. A thoughtful speaker identifies which features of the present situation make one lesson more relevant than another.

1 What can a proverb summarise? _____

2 How may speakers treat a proverb? _____

3 Which proverb favours caution? _____

4 Which one favours speed? _____

5 Are proverbs complete arguments? _____

6 What should a thoughtful speaker identify? _____

6 Rewrite using the proverb in capitals.

1 Her behaviour matters more than her promises. **ACTIONS** _

2 Too many people are managing the task. **COOKS** _____

3 The crisis inspired a new solution. **NECESSITY** _____

4 He idealises life in another country. **GRASS** _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a **100-120 word** response to a dilemma. Compare the advice offered by two different proverbs and justify your choice.

[ ] Use at least four proverbs. [ ] Explain their implications. [ ] Link your conclusion to the context.

ANSWER KEY

1 Proverbs and messages

1 **b** 2 **e** 3 **g** 4 **f** 5 **h** 6 **c** 7 **a** 8 **d**

2 Proverb collocations

1 **Actions** 2 **bird** 3 **cake** 4 **cloud** 5 **cooks** 6 **chain** 7 **mother** 8 **grass**

3 Contextual interpretation

1 **Actions speak louder than words** 2 **The early bird catches the worm** 3 **You can't have your cake and eat it** 4 **Every cloud has a silver lining**
5 **Too many cooks spoil the broth** 6 **A chain is only as strong as its weakest link** 7 **Necessity is the mother of invention**

4 Project reflection

1 **actions** 2 **bird** 3 **cake** 4 **cooks** 5 **chain** 6 **necessity** 7 **cloud** 8 **grass**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 A viewpoint. 2 As a reason. 3 **Look before you leap.** 4 **He who hesitates is lost.**
5 No. 6 Features that make one lesson more relevant.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 **Actions speak louder than words.** 2 **Too many cooks spoil the broth.** 3 **Necessity is the mother of invention.** 4 **The grass is always greener on the other side.**

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check contextual reasoning and a justified choice.