

Fun with English proverbs

Let's move on to W, Y and Z.

Alice Leong

Wonders will never cease.

世事無奇不有

Things can happen unexpectedly.

Example: She is always late. Today, however, she was the first to arrive for the meeting. The chairman said sarcastically, 'Wonders will never cease.'

When the cat's away, the mice will play.

貓兒不在，老鼠自在

Mice are said to be afraid of cats and that is why some people keep a cat at home to drive mice away. When the cat is not around, the mice can enjoy their freedom. This is also true in real life. In the absence of the authorities, people are free to do what they want, even breaking the rules sometimes.

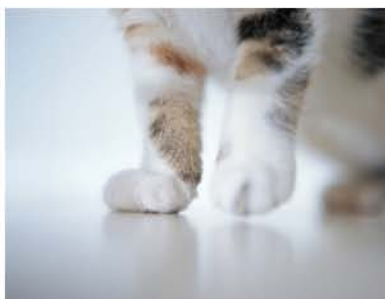
Example: When there are no class monitors to maintain discipline in between classes, the students become naughty. 'When the cat's away, the mice will play'.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

入鄉隨俗

Different countries have different cultures. When people move into another country, they have to adapt themselves to the local customs and lifestyle. This is a kind of racial respect.

Example: My sister is studying in Japan. Last year, when I visited her, I could not recognize her. She looked and acted like a Japanese lady. When asked why she had changed, she said, 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.'





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善意不足以成事

Some parents plan for their children's future. Though it may be a path to success, their children will not appreciate it if it is against their will.

Example: George's father is very angry with him because he is not following his footsteps as a businessman. The wife tells him, 'You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.'

You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

溫柔的說服比嚴厲的對抗更易獲得人心

It is easier to win a person to your side by gentle persuasion than by hostile confrontation.

Example: Before I go for an interview, my mother reminds me of my manners, saying that I can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

Zeal without knowledge is a runaway horse.

缺乏知識之熱誠如脫韁野馬

Some people are eager to do everything they can to achieve their aims even though they are not experienced or qualified. They will do more harm than good as a result.

Example: Peter suffered from a great loss in his investment as he had not got any experience in the financial field. Obviously, his zeal without knowledge is a runaway horse.