The Meaning of Proverbs

1) What is a proverb?
2) Do you have them in your language?
3) How important are proverbs to a country’s culture?
4) Do they have a place in today’s society or should they be left in the past, where they belong?

Irish Proverbs

'Seanfhocail' is the Irish word for proverbs, literally meaning 'old word'. Proverbs have been around for centuries. They were originally told in the Irish language, ‘Gaeilge’, but have since been translated and are still commonly used by Irish people today. They include wisdom and humour and are seen as a ‘guide to life’.
Read the following Irish proverbs and discuss the meaning of each one with your partner.

Match the meanings below to the four proverbs above:

1) To wish someone a good journey, with no obstacles to meet them on their way.
2) Sometimes it’s better to have a small amount of something than always desiring more.
3) A wish that our lives will improve and get better with each day.
4) You will be lucky in life and one step ahead of unfortunate events.
With your partner, match the sentences halves below to complete the Irish proverbs.

Can you work out the meaning of each one?

| 1. Success consists of getting up.. | a. than rich |
| 2. A companion.. | b. boil the kettle |
| 3. Beauty doesn’t.. | c. like your own |
| 4. Better to be fortunate… | d. has stories to tell |
| 5. Lose an hour in the morning.. | e. just one more time than you fall |
| 6. You can’t make a racehorse.. | f. shortens the road |
| 7. There’s no fireplace.. | g. out of a donkey |
| 8. He who travels… | h. and you'll be looking for it all day |

Write two proverbs from your language (and create a third one with your partner).

Can the other students guess which is fake?
Teachers Notes:

Match the meanings below the four proverbs

A. 4
B. 1
C. 2
D. 3

Match the sentences halves to complete the proverbs:

1. E
2. F
3. B
4. A
5. H
6. G
7. C
8. D

Write two proverbs:

In pairs, students write two proverbs from their own languages and add a third one which they must create together. The ‘fake’ one should sound real in order for the other students to guess which is the ‘fake’ one.

Once each pair has completed this part of the task, split them into different groups to play the ‘call my bluff’ game. You could also make this a little competitive by giving points for teams who guess the fake one correctly!