

UNIT 1



ACTIVITY 1-6

Interpreting Proverbs - /

In Africa, the proverb has an important place in oral literature. Elders often use proverbs to teach young people the values and morals of their community.

Below are some proverbs used in East Africa. Read the proverbs carefully. Then, in the space provided, explain in your own words what you think each proverb means.

1. A roaring lion kills no game. _____

2. To stumble is not to fall down but to go forward. _____

3. A hungry man has no taboos. _____

4. Kiss the hand you cannot cut off. _____

5. One volunteer is better than ten forced men. _____



CHAPTER 5 ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY

Interpreting Proverbs - 2

The government of Kenya made Swahili the national language in 1970. The origins of Swahili, however, go back centuries to when Arabs traded goods along the eastern coast of Africa. Swahili combines not only Arabic and several Bantu languages but also words from English, Portuguese, and Urdu—a form of Hindustani, a language from India.

The proverbs below are translated from Swahili. Some proverbs, such as the one that refers to crops, hint at things that set the culture of East Africa apart from other cultures. Other proverbs reveal the universality of East Africans' wit and wisdom.

Directions Read the proverbs carefully. Then, in the space provided, explain in your own words what you think each proverb means.

1. When fortune knocks at the door, you have to open the door yourself.

2. Aiming is not the same as hitting.

3. Beauty and pride go to the grave.

4. He who cultivates millet [a type of grain] does not harvest beans.

5. Stretch your legs according to your bed.

6. Don't turn yourself into a washtable so that people want to do their laundry on you.

Source: Albert Scheven. *Swahili Proverbs*. University Press of America, Inc., 1981.