



## Common Spanish Proverbs

· 58 words · 2026-07-02

Proverb	Literal Meaning	Meaning	Example	Translation
A caballo regalado no le mires el diente	Do not look at the tooth of a gifted horse	Do not criticize a gift.	—¿Te dieron un libro usado? —Sí, y además gratis. A caballo regalado no le mires el diente.	"They gave you a used book?" "Yes, and free too. Don't criticize a gift."
Más vale tarde que nunca	Better late than never	It is better to do something late than not do it.	Llegó a la reunión cuando ya estaba terminando, pero al menos vino. Más vale tarde que nunca.	He arrived at the meeting when it was already ending, but at least he came. Better late than never.
No hay mal que por bien no venga	There is no bad thing from which good does not come	A bad situation can lead to something good.	Perdí el tren, pero en la estación me encontré con una amiga que no veía hace años. No hay mal que por bien no venga.	I missed the train, but at the station I ran into a friend I hadn't seen in years. A bad situation can lead to something good.
En boca cerrada no entran moscas	Flies do not enter a closed mouth	It is better to stay quiet sometimes.	No sabía la respuesta, así que no dije nada. En boca cerrada no entran moscas.	I didn't know the answer, so I said nothing. It's better to stay quiet sometimes.
A quien madruga, Dios le ayuda	God helps the one who gets up early	People who start early often do better.	Salí temprano de casa y terminé todo antes del mediodía. A quien madruga, Dios le ayuda.	I left home early and finished everything before noon. People who start early often do better.
El que mucho abarca, poco aprieta	Whoever covers too much, squeezes little	If you try to do too many things, you do none well.	Quería estudiar, trabajar y montar un negocio al mismo tiempo, pero no le daba la vida. El que mucho abarca, poco aprieta.	He wanted to study, work, and start a business at the same time, but there weren't enough hours in the day. If you try to do too many things, you do none well.
Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres	Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are	Your friends show what kind of person you are.	—Tus amigos siempre llegan tarde. —Ya ves. Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres.	"Your friends are always late." "Exactly. Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are."
Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente	Eyes that do not see, heart that does not feel	If you do not know about something, it hurts less.	No vi el mensaje hasta la mañana siguiente, así que no me preocupé. Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.	I didn't see the message until the next morning, so I didn't worry. If you don't know about something, it hurts less.
Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos	Raise crows and they will peck out your eyes	If you help bad people, they may hurt you later.	Le ayudó durante años, y al final lo traicionó. Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos.	He helped him for years, and in the end he betrayed him. If you help bad people, they may hurt you later.

Proverb	Literal Meaning	Meaning	Example	Translation
No todo lo que brilla es oro	Not everything that shines is gold	Things that look good are not always good.	La oferta parecía perfecta, pero al leer la letra pequeña vi que tenía muchas condiciones. No todo lo que brilla es oro.	The offer seemed perfect, but when I read the fine print, I saw it had many conditions. Things that look good are not always good.
Perro ladrador, poco mordedor	Barking dog, little biter	People who talk big are often not dangerous.	—No te preocupes por él; habla mucho, pero nunca hace nada. Es un perro ladrador, poco mordedor.	“Don’t worry about him; he talks a lot, but he never does anything. He’s all bark and no bite.”
A mal tiempo, buena cara	To bad weather, a good face	Stay positive in hard times.	Perdimos el partido, pero salimos del campo con buena actitud: a mal tiempo, buena cara.	We lost the game, but we left the field with a good attitude: in hard times, keep a positive face.
a río revuelto, ganancia de pescadores	In a stirred-up river, fishermen profit.	People can benefit from chaos.	Con la crisis, algunos compraron pisos muy baratos; a río revuelto, ganancia de pescadores.	With the crisis, some people bought apartments very cheaply; in chaos, some people profit.
cuando el río suena, agua lleva	When the river makes noise, it carries water.	Rumors usually have some truth.	Dicen que la tienda va a cerrar, y cuando el río suena, agua lleva.	They say the shop may close, and where there’s smoke, there’s fire.
a falta de pan, buenas son tortas	If there is no bread, cakes are good.	If you cannot get the best, accept a good alternative.	No había tren, así que fuimos en autobús; a falta de pan, buenas son tortas.	There was no train, so we went by bus; if you can’t get the best, a good alternative is fine.
más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo	The devil knows more because he is old than because he is the devil.	Old people often have more experience.	Mi abuela siempre me da buenos consejos; más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo.	My grandmother always gives me good advice; old age brings wisdom.
no por mucho madrugar amanece más temprano	Even if you wake up very early, dawn does not come earlier.	You cannot force things to happen faster.	No sirve de nada desvelarse: no por mucho madrugar amanece más temprano.	It’s no use staying up late: even if you wake up very early, dawn does not come earlier.
quien ríe último, ríe mejor	Who laughs last, laughs best.	The final result matters most.	Se burlaron de él cuando empezó, pero aprobó el examen con nota; quien ríe último, ríe mejor.	They made fun of him when he started, but he passed the exam with a great grade; who laughs last, laughs best.
el que la sigue, la consigue	Who keeps going gets it.	If you keep trying, you can succeed.	Buscó trabajo durante meses, y al final lo encontró; el que la sigue, la consigue.	He looked for work for months, and in the end he found it; if you keep trying, you can succeed.
no hay peor sordo que el que no quiere oír	There is no worse deaf person than one who does not want to hear.	Some people ignore the truth on purpose.	Le expliqué el problema tres veces, pero no quiso escucharme; no hay peor sordo que el que no quiere oír.	I explained the problem three times, but he didn’t want to listen to me; some people ignore the truth on purpose.
cada oveja con su pareja	Each sheep with its mate.	People with similar interests stay together.	En la fiesta, los niños se juntaron por grupos; ya	At the party, the children grouped together; you

Proverb	Literal Meaning	Meaning	Example	Translation
			sabes, cada oveja con su pareja.	know, birds of a feather flock together.
quien mucho duerme, poco aprende	Who sleeps a lot learns little.	Lazy people miss opportunities to learn.	Si no estudias para el examen, recuerda que quien mucho duerme, poco aprende.	If you don't study for the exam, remember that those who sleep too much learn little.
a otro perro con ese hueso	To another dog with that bone.	I do not believe your story.	¿Que se te perdió otra vez? A otro perro con ese hueso, no me lo creo.	You lost it again? Tell that to someone else; I don't believe it.
No dejes para mañana lo que puedas hacer hoy	Do not leave for tomorrow what you can do today	Do things now, not later.	Voy a terminar la tarea ahora mismo; no dejes para mañana lo que puedas hacer hoy.	I'm going to finish the homework right now; don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.
Quien siembra vientos, recoge tempestades	Whoever sows winds reaps storms	Bad actions can lead to bigger problems later.	Mintió tantas veces que al final todos le dieron la espalda; quien siembra vientos, recoge tempestades.	He lied so many times that in the end everyone turned their backs on him; you reap what you sow.
Al mal tiempo, buena cara	To bad weather, a good face	Stay positive in hard times.	Perdí el trabajo, pero intento mantenerme tranquilo: al mal tiempo, buena cara.	I lost my job, but I'm trying to stay calm: keep a positive attitude in hard times.
a palabras necias, oídos sordos	To foolish words, deaf ears	Ignore stupid comments.	No le hagas caso a ese comentario; a palabras necias, oídos sordos.	Don't pay attention to that comment; ignore foolish words.
quien mucho habla, mucho yerra	Who talks a lot, makes many mistakes	Talking too much can cause problems.	Habló sin pensar y se equivocó delante de todos; quien mucho habla, mucho yerra.	He spoke without thinking and made a mistake in front of everyone; the more you talk, the more mistakes you make.
más vale prevenir que lamentar	It is better to prevent than to regret	Be careful now to avoid problems later.	Llévate un paraguas, por si acaso; más vale prevenir que lamentar.	Take an umbrella just in case; better safe than sorry.
el que ríe último, ríe mejor	The one who laughs last, laughs best	The final result matters most.	Se burlaron de él al principio, pero aprobó el examen con la mejor nota; el que ríe último, ríe mejor.	They made fun of him at first, but he passed the exam with the best grade; the one who laughs last laughs best.
no hay peor ciego que el que no quiere ver	There is no worse blind person than the one who does not want to see	Some people ignore the truth on purpose.	Le enseñaron las pruebas, pero él siguió negándolo: no hay peor ciego que el que no quiere ver.	They showed him the evidence, but he kept denying it: there is no worse blind person than the one who does not want to see.
quien tiene boca, se equivoca	Who has a mouth, makes mistakes	Everyone can make a mistake when speaking.	Perdón, me equivoqué con tu nombre; quien tiene boca, se equivoca.	Sorry, I got your name wrong; everyone makes mistakes when speaking.
donde hubo fuego, cenizas quedan	Where there was fire, ashes remain	Old feelings can stay.	Ya no son pareja, pero todavía se escriben de vez en cuando; donde hubo fuego, cenizas quedan.	They are no longer a couple, but they still text each other from time to time; old feelings can stay.
a buen entendedor,	For a good listener, few	A smart person understands quickly.	No hace falta que me lo expliques otra vez; a	You do not need to explain it to me again; a smart person understands quickly.

Proverb	Literal Meaning	Meaning	Example	Translation
pocas palabras bastan	words are enough		buen entendedor, pocas palabras bastan.	
quien mucho se despide, pocas ganas tiene de irse	Whoever says goodbye many times does not really want to leave	Someone is delaying a goodbye.	Son las once y sigue hablando en la puerta; quien mucho se despide, pocas ganas tiene de irse.	It is eleven o'clock and he is still talking at the door; someone who keeps saying goodbye does not really want to leave.
donde hay confianza, da asco	Where there is trust, it becomes disgusting	With too much trust, people can become rude.	No le hables así a tu hermana; donde hay confianza, da asco.	Do not talk to your sister like that; with too much trust, people can become rude.
cada uno sabe dónde le aprieta el zapato	Each person knows where the shoe pinches	Only each person knows their own problems.	No lo juzgues por haber dejado ese trabajo; cada uno sabe dónde le aprieta el zapato.	Do not judge him for leaving that job; only each person knows their own problems.
quien no arriesga, no gana	Whoever does not take risks, does not win	You need to take chances to get results.	Voy a mandar mi solicitud aunque me dé miedo; quien no arriesga, no gana.	I am going to send my application even though I am scared; you need to take chances to get results.
más se perdió en la guerra	More was lost in the war	This problem is not so bad.	Se me rompió un vaso, pero más se perdió en la guerra.	A glass broke, but this problem is not so bad.
el que busca, encuentra	Whoever looks, finds	If you search, you can find what you need.	Busqué mis llaves en el bolso y las encontré; el que busca, encuentra.	I looked for my keys in my bag and found them; if you search, you can find what you need.
no hay dos sin tres	There are not two without three	If something happens twice, it may happen a third time.	—Ya nos cancelaron el concierto dos veces. — Sí, no hay dos sin tres; mejor no nos hagamos muchas ilusiones.	"They've canceled the concert twice already." "Yes, if it happens twice, it may happen a third time; we shouldn't get our hopes up."
Más vale pájaro en mano que cien volando.	A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.	Better keep what you have.	Quería vender su coche para apostar en la bolsa, pero su hermana le dijo: «Más vale pájaro en mano que cien volando».	He wanted to sell his car to invest in the stock market, but his sister told him, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."
A quien madruga, Dios le ayuda.	The early bird catches the worm.	Early effort is rewarded.	Salimos a las seis de la mañana para llegar antes que todos; a quien madruga, Dios le ayuda.	We left at six in the morning to arrive before everyone else; the early bird gets the worm.
No hay mal que por bien no venga.	Every cloud has a silver lining.	Good can come from bad.	Perdió el trabajo, pero gracias a eso encontró uno mejor cerca de casa. No hay mal que por bien no venga.	He lost his job, but thanks to that he found a better one near home. Every cloud has a silver lining.
En boca cerrada no entran moscas.	Silence is golden.	Sometimes it is better not to speak.	Iba a quejarse delante del jefe, pero su amiga le susurró: «En boca cerrada no entran moscas».	She was about to complain in front of the boss, but her friend whispered, "Silence is golden."
Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres.	Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are.	Company reveals character.	—¿De verdad quieres salir con él? —Mira con quién anda y te diré quién es; sus amigos	"Do you really want to date him?" "Look at who he hangs out with and I'll tell you who he is; his friends

Proverb	Literal Meaning	Meaning	Example	Translation
			siempre están metidos en líos.	are always getting into trouble."
Camarón que se duerme se lo lleva la corriente.	You snooze, you lose.	Stay alert or miss opportunities.	No dejes para mañana la inscripción, porque camarón que se duerme se lo lleva la corriente y luego se acaban las plazas.	Don't leave the registration until tomorrow, because you snooze, you lose, and then the spots will be gone.
El que mucho abarca poco aprieta.	Jack of all trades, master of none.	Do not take on too much.	Quiere estudiar medicina, trabajar a tiempo completo y montar un negocio a la vez; el profesor le dijo que el que mucho abarca poco aprieta.	He wants to study medicine, work full-time, and start a business at the same time; the teacher told him that if you try to do too much, you end up doing none of it well.
Más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo.	With age comes wisdom.	Experience teaches more than cleverness.	No subestimes a tu abuelo; más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo, y él ya ha visto de todo.	Don't underestimate your grandfather; with age comes wisdom, and he's already seen everything.
A mal tiempo, buena cara.	Put on a brave face in hard times.	Stay positive in adversity.	Aunque el día salió fatal, ella sonrió y dijo: «A mal tiempo, buena cara».	Even though the day went terribly, she smiled and said, "Put on a brave face in hard times."
Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos.	You reap what you sow.	Bad deeds return to hurt you.	Le ayudó durante años y, cuando ella consiguió el puesto, lo dejó de lado; al final, cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos.	He helped her for years, and when she got the job, she pushed him aside; in the end, you reap what you sow.
Del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho.	Easier said than done.	Words are not actions.	—Voy a aprender francés en una semana. —Del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho; estudiar de verdad lleva tiempo.	"I'm going to learn French in a week." "Easier said than done; studying for real takes time."
Quien siembra vientos recoge tempestades.	You reap what you sow.	Actions have consequences.	Si sigues mintiendo en el trabajo, recuerda que quien siembra vientos recoge tempestades.	If you keep lying at work, remember that actions have consequences.
Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.	Out of sight, out of mind.	Absence reduces worry.	No quiero saber nada de la discusión de mis vecinos; ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.	I don't want to know anything about my neighbors' argument; out of sight, out of mind.
Más vale tarde que nunca.	Better late than never.	Late action beats none.	Llegó al cumpleaños con una semana de retraso, pero más vale tarde que nunca.	He arrived at the birthday party a week late, but better late than never.
A caballo regalado no se le mira el diente.	Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.	Accept gifts graciously.	No te quejes del regalo; a caballo regalado no se le mira el diente.	Don't complain about the gift; don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
Perro ladrador, poco mordedor.	His bark is worse than his bite.	Threat is worse than action.	Dice que va a demandarnos, pero no te preocupes: perro ladrador, poco mordedor.	He says he's going to sue us, but don't worry: his bark is worse than his bite.
Zapatero a tus zapatos.	Stick to your own trade.	Mind your own business.	Tú eres el experto en finanzas; zapatero a tus	You're the finance expert; stick to your own trade, and

Proverb	Literal Meaning	Meaning	Example	Translation
			zapatos, deja que yo me encargue de la cocina.	let me handle the kitchen.