

Here are the proverbs you need to know to play the games:
[GAME LINK](#). The games will help you to memorize the proverbs, and this commentary will help you to understand the meaning. There are no English translations here, and none of the games are in English; the idea is to appreciate the Latin for its own sake. There is, however, a version of the proverb written out in English word order below; Latin has much freer word order than English, and proverbs often take advantage of that for stylistic or rhetorical effect. If you want to write out your own English translation, you can do that; meanwhile, the games will help you to focus on the Latin only.

1. Aurora Musis amica.

Aurora [est] amica usis.

Comments: You can read about the [Muses](#), the goddesses of inspiration, and [Aurora](#), the goddess of dawn, at Wikipedia. The idea is that if you get up early, your work will be more inspired!

2. Ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius.

Mercurius non ex quovis ligno fit.

Comments: You can read about the carved herms dedicated to the god Mercury (Hermes) at [Wikipedia](#). The adjective *quovis* is a compound: *quo+vis*, meaning "whatever you like, any sort of." The word *fit* here has the meaning of "is made" (and the verb *fieri* is the passive form of *facere*).

3. Fortes Fortuna adiuvat.

Fortuna adiuvat fortes.

Comments: You can read about the goddess Fortuna at [Wikipedia](#). The words *fortes* and *Fortuna* have a nice sound

repetition, but they are from different roots. The word *fortis* is related to words like *firmus* and *forma* (and is a relative of the Sanskrit word *dharma*), while the word *fortuna* is related to the words *fors* and *sors*.

4. Fortuna favet fatuis.

Comments: This is another saying about the goddess Fortuna. The verb *favet* took a dative complement: *favet fatuis*.

5. Fortuna nimium quem fovet, stultum facit.

Fortuna facit stultum quem nimium fovet.

Comments: This is another saying about the goddess Fortuna. Compare the previous proverb about Fortune favoring fools; according to this proverb, Fortune actually makes people foolish.

6. Hecora quis nosset, si felix Troia fuisset?

Quis nosset Hecora, si Troia fuisset felix?

Comments: You can read about Hector, the Trojan hero, at [Wikipedia](#). The pluperfect subjunctives *nosset* and *fuisset* express a contrary to fact hypothetical statement about the past: if Troy had enjoyed a happy fate (it did not), then Hector would not have been famous (but he is).

7. Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra.

Peccatur intra Iliacos muros et extra [Iliacos muros].

Comments: You can read about the Trojan War at [Wikipedia](#). The word *Iliacus* refers to *Ilium*, one of the names of Troy. The idea is that crimes were committed on both sides of the war: Trojan and Greek.

8. Improbe Neptunum accusat, qui naufragium iterum facit.

Is, qui iterum facit naufragium, improbe accusat Neptunum.

Comments: You can read about Neptune (Poseidon), the god of the sea, at [Wikipedia](#). Compare the English proverb, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me."

9. Incidit in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim.

Cupiens vitare Charybdim, incidit in Scyllam.

Comments: You can read about Scylla and Charybdis at [Wikipedia](#). Compare the English saying, "Out of the frying pan, into the fire."

10. Iovis omnia plena.

Omnia [sunt] plena Iovis.

Comments: You can read about the god Jupiter (Zeus), the god of the sky, at [Wikipedia](#). The words come from Vergil's Eclogue 3.

11. Ipse Jupiter neque pluens omnibus placet neque abstinens.

Ipse Jupiter neque pluens neque abstinens placet omnibus.

Comments: This is another saying about Jupiter, this time as in the form of rain that comes from the sky. For a similar idea, see #15 below. There is an Aesop's fable about this paradox: a man had two daughters, one married to a potter and one married to a farmer; the farmer's wife wanted it to rain, while the potter's wife wanted dry weather, so the father could never be happy for both his daughters at once.

12. Latrantem curatne alta Diana canem?

Curatne alta Diana latrantem canem?

Comments: You can read about Diana (Artemis), goddess of the moon, at [Wikipedia](#). This refers to the way that dogs bark at the moon. The particle *ne* indicates that the statement is a question: does Diana care about barking dogs? (And the implied answer is, no, she does not, far away up there in the sky!)

13. Lubrici sunt Fortunae gressus.

Gressus Fortunae sunt lubrici.

Comments: This is another saying about the goddess Fortuna. The metaphor is about how unstable Fortune can be: her famous wheel goes up and down, and this saying asks us to imagine her gait swaying back and forth. The word *gressus* is nominative masculine plural.

14. Ne Hercules quidem contra duos.

Ne Hercules quidem [pugnat] contra duos.

Comments: You can read about the hero Hercules (Heracles) at [Wikipedia](#). The use of *ne* with *quidem* is equivalent to the English phrase "not even," i.e. *ne Hercules quidem*, "not even Hercules." The verb is implied: fights, confronts, does battle with, etc. For another example of *ne...quidem*, see the following proverb.

15. Ne Iupiter quidem omnibus placet.

Ne Iupiter quidem placet omnibus.

Comments: This is another saying about the god Jupiter. See the previous proverb for *ne...quidem* meaning "not even." For a similar idea about Jupiter, see #11 above.

16. Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo.

Neque Apollo semper tendit arcum.

Comments: You can read about the god Apollo, famed for his archery, at [Wikipedia](#). There is an Aesop's fable in which Aesop uses the metaphor of the bow in the same way: when someone makes fun of Aesop for playing with children, Aesop points to an unstrung bow, which is a symbol for taking time to relax. In this proverb, even Apollo needs to relax sometimes!

17. Nihil eripit Fortuna nisi quod et dedit.

Fortuna eripit nihil nisi [hoc] quod et dedit.

Comments: This is another saying about the goddess Fortuna. Compare a Biblical expression of the same idea: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away" (Book of Job).

18. O bona Fortuna, cur non es omnibus una?

O bona Fortuna, cur non es una omnibus?

Comments: This is another saying about the goddess Fortuna. The word *una* expresses the idea of "one and the same," with a dative complement: "the same for everybody." Note that this is a rhyming medieval proverb: Fortuna-una.

19. O mihi praeteritos referat si Iupiter annos!

O si Iupiter referat mihi praeteritos annos!

Comments: This is another saying about the god Jupiter. The implication is that even the king of the gods cannot bring back years that have passed.

20. Post nubila Phoebus.

Post nubila Phoebus [venit].

Comments: The title Phoebus refers specifically to Apollo as the god of the sun. The verb is implied: the sun comes out, returns, emerges, etc.

21. Procul a love, procul a fulmine.

Procul a love, procul a fulmine.

Comments: This is another saying about the god Jupiter, who was famous for the deadly power of his lightning bolt. For a similar idea, compare this saying about the tiger in [Latin Animal Proverbs 2](#): *Tigridis evita sodalitatem*.

22. Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.

Quandoque bonus Homerus dormitat.

Comments: You can read about the Greek epic poet Homer at [Wikipedia](#). The idea is that even a poet as great as Homer nods off every once in a while, i.e. some lines of poetry are not as nicely crafted as others.

23. Quem Iupiter vult perdere, dementat prius.

Iupiter prius dementat [eum] quem vult perdere.

Comments: This is another saying about the god Jupiter. Compare a similar saying about Fortuna making people foolish, #5 above.

24. Quisquis amat ranam, ranam putat esse Dianam.

Quisquis amat ranam, putat ranam esse Dianam.

Comments: This is another saying about the goddess Diana. This is another medieval rhyming proverb: ranam-Dianam. The idea is that the lover thinks the beloved is as beautiful as a goddess, and in this case the goddess is the goddess Diana for the sake of the

rhyme. The verb *putat* introduces indirect statement with an accusative subject, *ranam*, and an infinitive, *esse*, with the predicate also in the accusative: *Dianam*.

25. Saepe premente Deo, fert Deus alter opem.

Premente Deo, saepe alter Deus fert opem.

Comments: This saying is not about a particular god but about gods in general: when one god is against you, another god might turn out to be on your side. The phrase *premente Deo* is an ablative absolutely: when (one) god is oppressing you...

26. Sequitur superbos ultor a tergo Deus.

Deus, ultor, sequitur superbos a tergo.

Comments: Like the preceding saying, this is about divine power in general, and the divine vengeance that can creep up on people, unsuspecting, from behind. The word *ultor* is in apposition to *Deus*, "god (as an) avenger." The words come from the Roman playwright Seneca. Compare the Biblical notion of a vengeful god, e.g. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

27. Sero sapiunt Phryges.

Phryges sero sapiunt.

Comments: This is another saying about the Trojan War, specifically about the Trojan Horse which you can read about at [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trojan_Horse). The idea is that once the Trojans realized what was inside the Trojan Horse, it was too late, *sero*.

28. Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.

Venus friget sine Cerere et Baccho.

Comments: Wikipedia has articles about [Ceres](#) (Demeter), [Bacchus](#) (Dionysus) and [Venus](#) (Aphrodite). The gods are standing here for their respective domains: bread, wine, and love, respectively.

29. Spes ultima dea.

Spes [est] ultima dea.

Comments: You can read about the goddess Hope at [Wikipedia](#). The idea is that after all the other gods have abandoned you, the goddess Hope is still there at the last.

30. Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.

Timeo Danaos, et ferentes dona.

Comments: This is another saying about the Trojan Horse; the word *Danaos* here refers to the Greeks. These words were spoken by the Trojan priest Laocoon, attempting to warn his fellow Trojans about the danger of any gift from the Greeks. The word *et* here has the force of an adverb: "also when, even when."