

Preface

BUMPER STICKERS have been a North American cultural phenomenon since the 1930's, soon after the bumper was invented and added to the Model A Ford. Since then they have been popular in the United States and Canada. They are also seen in other countries, but the bumper sticker sayings collected in this book are from North America. In many ways, they offer insights into the thinking, personality, and humor of the diverse people of our two nations.

Ray Clark, our editor and partner in Pro Lingua, came up with the idea of collecting bumper stickers to use as prompts for discussion in ESL classrooms. He was the prime mover on this fun project, and he started me and several friends collecting. Elise Burrows, Mike Jerald, David and Peggy Kehe, Ace Hood, and Sarah Egerer contributed finds. In 2007, after we had enough, we added a page of these sayings to our master resource, *The ESL Miscellany*. Since then I have continued collecting as I have traveled around the country with the idea of putting this book together.

I collected all kinds of sayings. One of the contributors to the Wikipedia "Bumper Stickers" article summarized the range of sayings this way: "Bumper stickers can be commercial, religious, secular, humorous, or in support of a sports team or other organization. They may promote or oppose a particular philosophical or political position. In some countries, such as the United States, bumper stickers are a popular way of showing support for a candidate for a government seat and become more common during election years." In putting this book together, I selected sayings in the secular, humorous, and philosophical range, thought provoking sayings that give the reader something to think, talk, and write about. I also looked for wit, slang, and idiomatic language.

Following this preface, I have included a brief introduction to bumper stickers for readers from other cultures. You may photocopy this, hand it out to your students, and discuss it, as a way of explaining the stickers in general and of putting this collection in context.

Ray Clark has once again become excited by the teaching potential of these bumper stickers as prompts for language practice, and he has kindly added a user's guide of fourteen techniques to engage your students in activities that will strengthen many of their language skills. Ray also developed a Bumper Sticker Index, which will help you find sayings on a specific topic, for example, Peace/War or Family.

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