

F₄

U₁

N₁

W₄

I₁

T₁

H₄

W₄

O₁

R₁

D₂

S₁

1. PALINDROMES

Palindromes are words or phrases that read the same in both directions, e.g. **EYE**, or **RACECAR**, or **MADAM I'M ADAM**. Here are a few good ones:

- **Do geese see God?**
- **Was it Eliot's toilet I saw?**
- **Murder for a jar of red rum.**
- **Some men interpret nine memos.**
- **Never odd or even.**

○ **Palindrome Word Squares**

2D Palindromes are **word squares** in which every row and column reads as a word in both directions:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| R | A | T | S |
| A | B | U | T |
| T | U | B | A |
| S | T | A | R |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| S | T | E | P |
| T | I | M | E |
| E | M | I | T |
| P | E | T | S |

There are relatively few possible 2D palindromic squares. But if you allow names and obsolete words it is possible to make squares of not only 3x3 and 4x4, but also 5x5 and 6x6 size.

- **King, are you glad you are king?**
- **Fall leaves after leaves fall.**
- **Says Mom, "What do you do?" – You do what Mom says.**
- **You know, I did little for you, for little did I know you.**
- **First Ladies rule the State, and state the rule: "ladies first."**
- **Please me by standing by me please.**
- **Blessed are they that believe they are blessed.**

- **Escher, drawing hands, drew hands drawing Escher.**
- **You can cage a swallow, can't you, but you can't swallow a cage, can you?**
- **Did I say you never say "never say never"? You say I did.**

Line-Unit Palindrome Poem

The following poem reads from the first line to the last as it does from the last to the first. It was written by James A. Lindon and was first published in Dmitri Borgmann's *Beyond Language* (1967).

Doppelgänger

**Entering the lonely house with my wife
I saw him for the first time
Peering furtively from behind a bush –
Blackness that moved,
A shape amid the shadows,
A momentary glimpse of gleaming eyes Revealed
in the ragged moon.
A closer look (he seemed to turn) might have
Put him to flight forever
– I dared not
(For reasons that I failed to understand),
Though I knew I should act at once.**

**I puzzled over it, hiding alone,
Watching the woman as she neared the gate.
He came, and I saw him crouching Night
after night.
Night after night
He came, and I saw him crouching,
Watching the woman as she neared the gate.**

**I puzzled over it, hiding alone – Though
I knew I should act at once,
For reasons that I failed to understand**

**I dared not
Put him to flight forever.**

**A closer look (he seemed to turn) might have
Revealed in the ragged moon
A momentary glimpse of gleaming eyes
A shape amid the shadows, Blackness
that moved.**

**Peering furtively from behind a bush,
I saw him, for the first time
Entering the lonely house with my wife.**

2. MNEMONICS

Mnemonics are devices to help us remember (**aide memoire** or **memory aide**). They come in many varieties and flavours, and can aid memorisation of many types of information. This section concentrates on **mnemonics** related to words and numbers.

Where there is something to remember, mnemonics can be put to use. You will find them in every discipline from music, medicine, biology, and electronics to spelling, physics, geography, and remembering telephone numbers!

Do You Recognise These Mnemonics?

Do you know what the following famous mnemonics are to aid the memory of?

- **Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants.**
- **Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain.**
- **Every Good Boy Deserves Favour.**
- **A Rat In The House May Eat The Ice Cream.**

- **High to Low; look out below. Low to High; clear blue sky.**
- **How I like a drink, alcoholic of course, after the heavy lectures involving quantum mechanics.**

ANSWERS:

BECAUSE

Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants

ARITHMETIC

A Rat In The House May Eat The Ice Cream

GEOGRAPHY

General Eisenhower's Oldest Girl Rode A Pony Home Yesterday

RHYTHM

Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move

NECESSARY

Not Every Cat Eats Sardines (Some Are Really Yummy)

ARGUMENT

A Rude Girl Undresses; My Eyes Need Taping!

OCEAN

Only Cats' Eyes Are Narrow

3. ETYMOLOGY: WORD ORIGINS

Where do **words** come from? How and when were they invented? Why are there so many different **languages**? Why do many **languages** share the same or similar **words** for the same things?

The answers to all these questions lie in the **study of** etymology. This concerns the **roots of words** and how the sounds and spellings, as well as the meanings, have evolved over time.

In this section of we concentrate mainly on surprising, interesting, and amusing **etymologies** of words used commonly in the English language today. To discover how a word came about often puts it in an entirely new light.

Discover where these words came from and what they originally meant:

- **Assassin**
- **Avocado (Pear)**
- **Hazard**
- **Malaria**
- **Pedigree**
- **Phony**
- **Quarantine**

Read about the history of each of these phrases and expressions:

- **To break the ice**
- **To make hay while the sun shines**
- **To throw the book at someone**
- **Raining cats and dogs**
- **Mad as a hatter**
- **Without rhyme or reason**
- **Crocodile tears**
- **To make no bones about**
- **To throw in the towel**

Assassin

n. Murderer, generally somewhat professional; esp. one who murders a prominent figure.

During the time of the Crusades the members of a certain secret Muslim sect engaged people to terrorise their Christian enemies by performing murders as a religious duty. These acts were carried out under the influence of **hashish**, and so the killers became known as **hashshashin**, meaning **eaters**

or smokers of hashish. Hashshashin evolved into the word **assassin**.

Avocado (Avocado Pear)

n. Pear-shaped fruit with dark green, leathery skin, a large stony seed, and greenish-yellow edible pulp. Also the tropical American tree on which this fruit grows.

Originally the Aztecs called this fruit **ahucatl** after their word for **testicle**. This is may be partly due to the fruit's resemblance to a testicle, but also because it was supposedly believed to be an aphrodisiac. To the Spaniards **ahucatl** sounded like avocado (= **advocate**, Spanish), and so the fruit came to Europe, via Spain, under that name. **Avocado pears** are also sometimes called **Alligator pears**. The etymology of this is far more obvious; the skin of these fruits is dark green, thick, leathery, and knobby, rather like that of an alligator.

Hazard

n. Danger; vb. To risk or expose to danger.

This term evolved from the Arabic **al zahr**, which means **the dice**. In Western Europe the term came to be associated with a number of games using dice, which were learned during the Crusades whilst in the Holy Land. The term eventually took on the connotation of danger because, from very early on, games using dice were associated with the risky business of gambling and con artists using corrupted dice.

Malaria

n. Infectious disease characterised by chills and fever and caused by the bite of an infected anopheles mosquito.

This word comes from the mediaeval Italian **mal** (= **bad**) and **aria** (= **air**), describing the miasma from the swamps around Rome. This '**bad air**' was believed to be the cause of the fever that often developed in those who spent time around the swamps. In fact the illness, now known as **malaria**, was due to certain protozoans present in the mosquitos that bred

around these swamps, and which caused recurring feverish symptoms in those they bit.

Pedigree

n. A line of ancestors; descent; lineage; genealogy; a register or record of a line of ancestors.

Believed to be derived from the French **ped de gru**, which meant crane's foot (the modern French equivalent is **ped de la grue**). The crane's foot is said to resemble the /|\ symbol on genealogical trees. It has also been suggested that it comes from **par degrés**, the French for **by degrees**. A pedigree chart records the relationship of families by degrees.

Phony (or Phoney) *adj. Something that is not genuine; a fake or imitation.*

British thieves and swindlers of old used many secret codewords. One such word was **fawney**, which referred to a **gilt ring**. They would sell these, saying that they were made of real gold. But the rings were not genuine gold, and the word **phony** – from **fawney** – came to be used for anything that is fake or not genuine.

Quarantine

n. Any forced stoppage of travel or communication on account of malignant, contagious disease, on land or by sea.

From the French **quarante** (=forty). Adding the suffix **-aine** to French numbers gives a degree of roughness to the figure (like **-ish** in English), so **quarantaine** means **about forty**. Originally when a ship arriving in port was suspected of being infected with a malignant, contagious disease, its cargo and crew were obliged to forego all contact with the shore for a period of around forty days. This term came to be known as period of **quarantine**.

4. OXYMORONS

Ever noticed that it's **simply impossible** to find **seriously funny** oxymorons online? The **only choice** is to ask one of those **paid volunteers** at the library – the ones in the **longsleeved T-shirts** – for an **original copy** of some **obviously obscure** documents that were **found missing** amongst some paperwork **almost exactly** one hundred years ago.

Notice anything strange about the paragraph above? It makes some sort of sense, yet it's riddled with contradictions (in blue). These are **oxymorons**. Here are some more:

- **Jumbo Shrimp**
- **Same Difference**
- **Pretty Ugly**
- **Definite Maybe**

Perhaps you agree some of these could be **oxymorons** too!

- **Military Intelligence**
- **Microsoft Works**
- **Civil Engineer**

Shakespeare and Oxymorons

William Shakespeare loved to play with words. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Theseus speaks these oxymoronic words (Act V, Scene I):

"A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus And his love Thisby; very tragical mirth.' Merry and tragical! tedious and brief! That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow."

Anagrams are words or phrases made by mixing up the letters of other words or phrases, e.g. **THE EYES** is an anagram of **THEY SEE**. Here are some more good ones:

- **Debit card = Bad credit**
- **Halley's Comet = Shall yet come**

-
- **Punishment = Nine Thumps**
 - **Dormitory = Dirty room**
 - **Astronomer = Moon starrer**
 - **The Hurricanes = These churn air**
 - **Schoolmaster = The classroom**

5. NYM WORDS

- Words ending in **-nym** are often used to describe different classes of words, and the relationships between words. The **-nym** literally means **name**, from the Greek onoma meaning **name** or **word**. The Nym Dictionary below defines all the common **-nym** words, and many of the more unusual ones too.

Acronym

An abbreviation formed from the initial letters of a series of words; e.g. **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), **NASA** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).

- *From Greek **akros** (=point, tip).*
- *Also called **protogram**, **initialism**.*

Antonym

Either of a pair of words that have opposite (or near-opposite) meanings; e.g. **slow** and **fast** are antonyms of one another, also **dead** and **alive**, **wife** and **husband**.

- *From Greek **anti** (=against).*

Apronym

A person's name that matches it's owner's occupation or character very well (either in fiction or reality); e.g. arctic explorer **Will Snow**, hairdresser **Dan Druff**.

- *From **apt** (=suitable); coined by Franklin P. Adams.*

A word that can take two (or more) opposite meanings; e.g. **fast** means "moving quickly" or "fixed firmly in place", **overlook** means "to watch over carefully" or "to fail to notice".

Autoantonym

- From Greek **auto** (=self) + **anti** (=against).
- Often hyphenated as **auto-antonym**.
- Also called **contranym**, **contronym**, **antilogy**, **enantiodrome**, **Janus word**.

1. A word that describes itself; e.g. **noun** is a noun, **polysyllabic** is polysyllabic, **abbrv.** is an abbreviation, **word** is a word.
2. A person's real name; the opposite of **pseudonym**.

Autonym

3. A name by which a social group or race refers to itself.

- From Greek **auto** (=self).
- Also called **self-referential word**.
- Take care not to confuse with **antonym**, **autoantonym**.

Bacronym

The reverse of producing an acronym; taking a word which already exists and creating a phrase (usually humorous) using the letters of the word as initials: e.g. **Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anybody (BANANA)**, **Guaranteed Overnight Delivery (GOD)**.

- From **back**(wards) + **acronym**.

Capitonym

A word which changes its meaning and pronunciation when capitalised; e.g. **polish** and **Polish**, **august** and **August**, **concord** and **Concord**.

- From **capital** letter.

Contranym Another word for **autoantonym**.

Conronym Another word for **autoantonym**.

Eponym

A name from which another name or word is derived; e.g. **Romulus** giving rise to **Rome**, the word **sandwich** coming from the **Earl of Sandwich**.

- From Greek **epo** (=on).
- Take care not to confuse with **exonym**.

Exonym

A place name used by foreigners that differs from the name used by natives; e.g. **Londres** is the French exonym for **London**, **Germany** is an exonym because Germans call it **Deutschland**.

- From Greek **exo** (=outside).
- Take care not to confuse with **eponym**.

Heteronym

One of two (or more) words that have the same spelling, but different meaning, and sometimes different pronunciation too. (Heteronyms that are pronounced differently are also **heterophones**.) E.g. **sewer**, **row**, **entrance**, **wind**. A heteronym is a kind of homonym.

- From Greek **hetero** (=other).
- Also called **heterograph**.

Homonym

One of two (or more) words that have the same pronunciation or spelling, but are different in meaning. (Homonyms which have the same spelling are also heteronyms; homonyms that have the same pronunciation, but different spelling and meaning, are also homophones; and homonyms that have the same spelling but are different in origin, meaning, and pronunciation are also homographs); e.g. **sewer, row, write** and **right, way** and **weigh**.

- From Greek **homo** (=same).
- Take care when using the following terms as their meanings are easily confusable: **homonym, homophone, heteronym, heterophone, homograph, heterograph**.

Hypernym

A word that has a more general meaning than another; e.g. in the relationship between chair and furniture, **furniture** is a hypernym; in the relationship between horse and animal, **animal** is a hypernym.

- From Greek **hyper** (=over).
- Also called **superordinate term, generic term**.
- Take care not to confuse with **hyponym**.

Hyperonym

Another word for **hypernym**.

Hyponym

A word that has a more specific meaning than another; e.g. in the relationship between chair and furniture, **chair** is a hyponym; in the relationship between horse and animal, **horse** is a hyponym.

- From Greek **hypo** (=under).
- Also called **subordinate term**.
- Take care not to confuse with **hypernym**.

Meronym

1. A word that refers to a part of what another word refers to; e.g. in the relationship between leg and ankle, **ankle** is a meronym; in the relationship between brim and hat, **brim** is a meronym.

2. A term midway between two opposites; e.g. **flat** between **convex** and **concave**, **present** between **past** and **future**.

- From Greek **meros** (=part).
- Take care not to confuse with **metonym**, **metronym**.

Metonym

A word designates something by the name of something associated with it; e.g. **the Crown** referring to the monarchy, **the bottle** referring to alcohol, **the White House** for the US executive branch.

- From Greek **meta** (=change).
- Take care not to confuse with **meronym**, **metronym**.

Metronym

A name derived from the name of one's mother, or another female ancestor.

- From Greek **metros** (=mother).
- Take care not to confuse with **meronym**, **metonym**.

Oronym

A string of words which is homophonic with another string of words; e.g. **ice cream** and **I scream**, **mint spy** and **mince pie**.

- From **oral** (=spoken).

Paronym

A word from the same root, and usually a similar pronunciation, as another; e.g.

beautiful and **beauteous**.

- From Greek **para** (=beside).
- Take care not to confuse with **patronym**.

Patronym

A name derived from the name of one's father, or another male ancestor.

- From Greek **pater** (=father).
- Take care not to confuse with **paronym**.

An assumed name, especially by an author;
e.g. Eric Arthur Blair wrote the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* under the pseudonym **George**

Pseudonym

Orwell.

- From Greek **pseudo** (=false).
 - Also called **pen name**.

An adjective-noun pairing generated by a change in the meaning of the base noun, usually as a result of technological advance; e.g. watch became **pocket watch** due to introduction of wrist watch, pen became **fountain pen** due to introduction of ball-point pen.

Retronym

- From Greek **retro** (=backward); coined by Frank Mankiewicz.

One of two (or more) words that have the same (or very similar) meaning; e.g. **big** and **large**, **error** and **mistake**, **run** and **sprint**.

Synonym

- From Greek **sun** (=together).

1. A word composed of two identical parts; e.g. **pawpaw**, **yo-yo**, **tutu**, **bye-bye**.

2. In biological nomenclature, a taxonomic name in which the genus and species names are identical; e.g. **puffinus puffinus** (manx shearwater), **apus apus** (common swift).

Tautonym

- From Greek **taut** (=same).

1. A place name; e.g. **London**, **Mount Everest**.

2. A word derived from a place name; e.g. **champagne** from Champagne in France, **cashmere** from Kashmir in India.

Toponym

- From Greek **topos** (=place)



Thank
You