

English binomials I: alliterative and rhyming pairs

Binomials are collocated pairs of words (for example, *odds and ends*), be they nouns, verbs, adverbs or adjectives, usually linked by a conjunction (most often *and*)

Here we focus on alliterative (*bits and bobs*) and rhyming (*odds and sods*) binomials

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me

Regular maintenance is **part and** _____ of owning a car
integral or essential to; that which must be done or accepted as part of something else

I won't be able to sleep until I know they've made it back home
safe and _____ .
safe from danger and free of injury or harm

I was only able to sleep **on and** _____ last night
intermittently

The **trials and** _____ of starting a new business.
difficult experiences, problems, etc.

They went to the country to have a break from the **hustle and**
_____ of the Big Smoke
large amount of activity and work, usually in a fast-paced noisy environment

Regular maintenance is **part and parcel** of owning a car
integral or essential to; that which must be done or accepted as part of something else

I won't be able to sleep until I know they've made it back home
safe and sound
safe from danger and free of injury or harm

I was only able to sleep **on and off** last night
intermittently

The **trials and tribulations** of starting a new business.
difficult experiences, problems, etc.

They went to the country to have a break from the **hustle and bustle** of the Big Smoke
large amount of activity and work, usually in a fast-paced noisy environment

His grandfather was **hale and** _____ to a ripe old age
healthy and strong

The action was **fast and** _____.

The jokes were flying **fast and** _____.

fast and forceful way; full of rapid action with one thing following another very quickly;

Don't worry, he'll **huff and** _____ for a while, but he'll calm down later

to show one is annoyed or angry

The city council **hemmed and** _____ for a year before deciding to build the new school

hesitate or take a long time before making a decision about what to do

His grandfather was **hale and hearty** to a ripe old age
healthy and strong

The action was **fast and furious**

The jokes were flying **fast and furious**

fast and forceful way; full of rapid action with one thing following another very quickly;

Don't worry, he'll **huff and puff** for a while, but he'll calm down later

to show one is annoyed or angry

The city council **hemmed and hawed** for a year before deciding to build the new school

hesitate or take a long time before making a decision about what to do

Every house succumbs to **wear and** ____ in time
the loss, injury, or stress to which something is subjected by or in the course of use - especially normal depreciation

I don't understand how anyone can afford to let a house go to **rack and** ____.
gradually deteriorate in condition because of neglect; fall into disrepair.

In the run-up to the election she was tirelessly **out and** ____
canvassing voters

He's currently a bit under the weather and all his friends and family hope to see him **out and** ____ again soon.
going to various places; engaging in normal activity after an illness

He won the election **fair and** ____.
in an honest and fair manner

Every house succumbs to **wear and tear** in time
*the loss, injury, or stress to which something is subjected by or in
the course of use - especially normal depreciation*

I don't understand how anyone can afford to let a house go to
rack and ruin.

*gradually deteriorate in condition because of neglect; fall into
disrepair.*

In the run-up to the election she was tirelessly **out and about**
canvassing voters

He's currently a bit under the weather and all his friends and
family hope to see him **out and about** again soon.

*going to various places; engaging in normal activity after an
illness*

He won the election **fair and square.**

in an honest and fair manner

No need to get all **high and** _____.

behaving as though one is more important than others.

These fine dining restaurants are a bit too **hoity-**_____ for my taste; I prefer down-to-earth pubs.

haughty or snobbish, marked by an air of assumed importance; (originally, thoughtlessly silly or frivolous -- hoit to play the fool)

These next few weeks will be **make or** _____ for many businesses

TV coverage of elections and governmental affairs can **make or** _____ a politician's career.

allowing no middle ground between success and failure

But **willy-**_____ one must, come hail or thunderstorm.

Politicians expanded spending programmes **willy-**_____

whether one likes it or not; without direction or planning, haphazardly. (Later spelling of will I, nill I 'I am willing, I am unwilling'.)

No need to get all **high and mighty**.

behaving as though one is more important than others.

These fine dining restaurants are a bit too **hoity-toity** for my taste; I prefer down-to-earth pubs.

haughty or snobbish, marked by an air of assumed importance; (originally, thoughtlessly silly or frivolous -- hoit to play the fool)

These next few weeks will be **make or break** for many businesses

TV coverage of elections and governmental affairs can **make or break** a politician's career.

allowing no middle ground between success and failure

But **willy-nilly** one must, come hail or thunderstorm.

Politicians expanded spending programmes **willy-nilly**

whether one likes it or not; without direction or planning,

haphazardly. (Later spelling of will I, nill I 'I am willing, I am unwilling'.)

Aches and _____ only seem to grow worse year by year
minor pains

I'll have my thesis **done and** _____ by the end of the semester
completely finished or ready

I won't go further than that, and I'll keep it **short and** _____
brief but pleasant or relevant

She likes keeping the kitchen **spick and** _____
fresh, clean and well looked after

In the end, it is the taxpayer who will have to foot the bill if small fishing communities are left **high and** _____.
without resources or help (literally, stranded)

Aches and pains only seem to grow worse year by year
minor pains

I'll have my thesis **done and dusted** by the end of the semester
completely finished or ready

I won't go further than that, and I'll keep it **short and sweet**
brief but pleasant or relevant

She likes keeping the kitchen **spick and span**
fresh, clean and well looked after

In the end, it is the taxpayer who will have to foot the bill if small fishing communities are left **high and dry**.
without resources or help (literally, stranded)

This film has so many **twists and** _____ you will either be on the edge of your seat or be totally confused
complicated dealings or circumstances, surprising changes

A **rough and** _____ approach is often more effective than one that is finely conceived

The Old Town, in its heyday, was apparently a teeming place, **rough and** _____ and full of humanity with all its flaws, vices and passion.

crude but effective; unsophisticated or unrefined

He promised me he'd stick with me through **thick and** _____ but he upped sticks as soon as troubles came.

under all circumstances, no matter how difficult.

I thought I could trust him... Oh well, you **live and** _____

used to acknowledge that you've learned something from experience, usually surprising or unpleasant

This film has so many **twists and turns** you will either be on the edge of your seat or be totally confused
complicated dealings or circumstances, surprising changes

A **rough and ready** approach is often more effective than one that is finely conceived

The Old Town, in its heyday, was apparently a teeming place, **rough and ready** and full of humanity with all its flaws, vices and passion.

crude but effective; unsophisticated or unrefined

He promised me he'd stick with me through **thick and thin** but he upped sticks as soon as troubles came.

under all circumstances, no matter how difficult.

I thought I could trust him... Oh well, you **live and learn**

used to acknowledge that you've learned something from experience, usually surprising or unpleasant

It's **now or _____** for his generation of republicans.
conveying urgency

Corruption has become the most effective short cut in the journey from **rags to _____**
rise from a state of extreme poverty to one of great wealth

The cycle of **tit for _____** reprisals seems unbreakable.
an equivalent given in return (as for an injury): retaliation in kind. (Originally, tip (blow) for tap.)

All sorts of **odds and _____** turned up at the demonstration.
There are a couple of other **odds and _____** to deal with.
miscellaneous people or articles

I found some interesting **bits and _____** at the flea market
assortment of small items

It's **now or never** for his generation of republicans.

conveying urgency

Corruption has become the most effective short cut in the journey from **rags to riches**

rise from a state of extreme poverty to one of great wealth

The cycle of **tit for tat** reprisals seems unbreakable.

an equivalent given in return (as for an injury): retaliation in kind. (Originally, tip (blow) for tap.)

All sorts of **odds and sods** turned up at the demonstration.

There are a couple of other **odds and sods** to deal with.

miscellaneous people or articles

I found some interesting **bits and bobs** at the flea market

assortment of small items

safe and sound
tried and tested
done and dusted
aches and pains
part and parcel
slip and slide
toss and turn
spick and span
rough and ready
cheap and cheerful
like it or loathe it
(no) rhyme or reason
born and bred
black-and-blue
(come) hell or high water

(through) thick and thin
live and learn
now or never
on and off
(go to) rack and ruin
rags to riches
tit for tat
trick or treat
dos and don'ts
mix and match
sink or swim
by fair means or foul

huff and puff
hem and haw
bigger and better
bread and butter
wear and tear
out and about
fair and square
high and mighty
high and dry
hoity toity
hustle and bustle
wine and dine
wheeling and dealing
by hook or by crook

make or break
willy-nilly
to and fro