

English binomials III: Repeated words & Reduplicatives

A few binomials simply repeat a word (*on and on, all in all*).

Reduplicatives are words formed of two parts, either identical (*pooh-pooh*), or just differing by a consonant (*teeny-weeny*), or just by a vowel (*riff-raff*).

Source for reduplicatives: <http://www.viviancook.uk/Words/reduplicatives.htm>

Most examples from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/> and
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>

Repeated words

That's all **b__ the b__**. Let's move on to the essentials.

in passing, by way of digression, by the way. (Orig. by the bye, bye = byway)

We'll get underway, **b__ and b__**.

before long, eventually, in the fullness of time

O__ by o__ they emerged from their hiding places.

separately and in succession, singly

A__ in a__, things might have been worse.

on the whole, generally

No need to go **o__ and o__** about it.

continually, at tedious length.

Repeated words

That's all **by the by**. Let's move on to the essentials.

in passing, by way of digression, by the way. (Orig. by the bye, bye = byway)

We'll get underway, **by and by**.

before long, eventually, in the fullness of time

One by one they emerged from their hiding places.

separately and in succession, singly

All in all, things might have been worse.

on the whole, generally

No need to go **on and on** about it.

continually, at tedious length.

Repeated words

B__ by b__ the truth started to emerge.

by degrees, gradually

It is a country to be discovered day by day, **l__ by l__**

by small degrees or amounts, gradually

I'll explain it to you **s__ by s__**

so as to progress gradually and carefully from one stage to the next.

The pressure for a full public inquiry is now growing **d__ by d__**.

on each successive day; gradually and steadily.

It's getting worse **d__ after d__**, and no one has been able to put an end to it.

for an indefinite or seemingly endless number of days (cf. "day in day out")

There's our **d__-to-d__** lives and there's our daydreams.

I seem to have no purpose beyond **d__-to-d__** survival.

Ordinary, everyday; short-term without consideration for the future

Repeated words

Bit by bit the truth started to emerge.

by degrees, gradually

It is a country to be discovered day by day, **little by little**

by small degrees or amounts, gradually

I'll explain it to you **step by step**

so as to progress gradually and carefully from one stage to the next.

The pressure for a full public inquiry is now growing **day by day**.

on each successive day; gradually and steadily.

It's getting worse **day after day**, and no one has been able to put an end to it.

for an indefinite or seemingly endless number of days (cf. "day in day out")

There's our **day-to-day** lives and there's our daydreams.

I seem to have no purpose beyond **day-to-day** survival.

Ordinary, everyday; short-term without consideration for the future

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
— To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing.

— *Macbeth* (V:5, lines 17-28)

Reduplicatives: without change

Hear the market crashing? You can wave **b__-b__** to that investment.
goodbye

Of course it was all kept **h__-h__**, because we did not want to let the Germans know that they had had been successful.
highly secret or confidential

The grass went from the doorstep to the horizon and the best box hedge in Derbyshire was dug up for the **h__-h__** so that the fools could pretend they were living in God's countryside. (Stoppard, *Arcadia*)
ditch with a wall on its inner side below ground level, forming a boundary to a park or garden without interrupting the view.

Tristram Shandy has no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy two **h__ h__**'s, three good things, and a garter. (Goldsmith on Sterne's novel).

H_-h__! he exclaimed, jumping out of the ha-ha. **H__ h__**, she responded, unimpressed.

jokes; exclamation expressing a laugh, often ironic or derisive; exclamation intended to take someone by surprise

Reduplicatives: without change

Hear the market crashing? You can wave **bye-bye** to that investment.
goodbye

Of course it was all kept **hush-hush**, because we did not want to let the Germans know that they had had been successful.
highly secret or confidential

The grass went from the doorstep to the horizon and the best box hedge in Derbyshire was dug up for the **ha-ha** so that the fools could pretend they were living in God's countryside. (Stoppard, *Arcadia*)
ditch with a wall on its inner side below ground level, forming a boundary to a park or garden without interrupting the view.

Tristram Shandy has no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy two **ha ha**'s, three good things, and a garter. (Goldsmith on Sterne's novel).

Ha-hah! he exclaimed, jumping out of the ha-ha. **Ha ha**, she responded, unimpressed.

jokes; exclamation expressing a laugh, often ironic or derisive; interjection intended to take someone by surprise

Reduplicatives: without change

It manages to give sensible guidance without being prissy or **g____-g____**
exaggeratedly or affectedly girlish (derogatory)

I'll have to write my memoirs before I go too **g____**.

You'll either read it and go **g____** over it like anyone with any brains does
and want to make a movie out of it or you won't.

*no longer in possession of all one's mental faculties, especially on account of
old age;*

very enthusiastic and excited about someone or something

Until recently, this idea was **p____-p____** by the scientific community
dismiss (an idea or suggestion) as being foolish or impractical

And the rest is all **b____ b____ b____**

idle meaningless talk

Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, **y____ y____ y____**

*used to indicate that further details are predictable or contextually evident
from what has preceded, and so on and so forth*

Reduplicatives: without change

It manages to give sensible guidance without being prissy or **girly-girly**
exaggeratedly or affectedly girlish (derogatory)

I'll have to write my memoirs before I go too **gaga**.

You'll either read it and go **gaga** over it like anyone with any brains does and want to make a movie out of it or you won't.

no longer in possession of all one's mental faculties, especially on account of old age;

very enthusiastic and excited about someone or something

Until recently, this idea was **pooh-poohed** by the scientific community
dismiss (an idea or suggestion) as being foolish or impractical

And the rest is all **blah blah blah**

idle meaningless talk

Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, **yadda yadda yadda**

used to indicate that further details are predictable or contextually evident from what has preceded, and so on and so forth

Reduplicatives: change of vowel

Dress them down with sneakers or **f__-f__** or take them out on the town with heels.

His **f__-f__** on this issue makes him open to criticism.

a rubber sandal loosely fastened to the foot by a thong;

(N.Am.) a backward handspring; a sudden reversal (as of policy or strategy)

I know academics like to be provocative and have a good **d__-d__**

fierce argument or fight

A **m__-m__** of outmoded ideas.

a confused mixture

A long, painstaking restoration programme will bring it back to **t__-t__** condition

excellent, first-rate

The soothing **p____-p____** of rain on the window.

a sound like that of quick light steps or taps.

(NB patter also = empty chattering talk, or rapid-fire comedic talk)

The moors are **c____-c____** with sheep tracks.

form a pattern of intersecting lines or paths on (a place)

Reduplicatives: change of vowel

Dress them down with sneakers or **flip-flops** or take them out on the town with heels.

His **flip-flop** on this issue makes him open to criticism.

a rubber sandal loosely fastened to the foot by a thong;

(N.Am.) a backward handspring; a sudden reversal (as of policy or strategy)

I know academics like to be provocative and have a good **ding-dong**

fierce argument or fight

A **mish-mash** of outmoded ideas.

a confused mixture

A long, painstaking restoration programme will bring it back to **tip-top** condition

excellent, first-rate

The soothing **pitter-patter** of rain on the window.

a sound like that of quick light steps or taps.

(NB patter also = empty chattering talk, or rapid-fire comedic talk)

The moors are **criss-crossed** with sheep tracks.

form a pattern of intersecting lines or paths on (a place)

Reduplicatives: change of vowel

Why doesn't she learn not to lecture with that **s__-s__** voice?
(of a person's voice) having a repeated rising and falling rhythm.

Don't **d___-d___** too long now, will you?
waste time through aimless wandering or indecision. (dally = act or move slowly)

The government **s____-s____** about the matter
fail to act resolutely or decisively (duplication of "shall I?")

So my resultant thinking is the usual liberal **w____-w____** leftiness which tries to be fair to both sides..
feeble or insipid in quality, character or determination.

In these **s__-s__** markets, in whom, or what, do we trust?
a situation characterized by rapid, repeated changes from one state or condition to another.

While playing **p____-p____** they indulged in a **p__-p__** of absurdist dialogue
Table tennis; a series of usually verbal exchanges between two parties

Reduplicatives: change of vowel

Why doesn't she learn not to lecture with that **sing-song** voice?
(of a person's voice) having a repeated rising and falling rhythm.

Don't **dilly-dally** too long now, will you?
waste time through aimless wandering or indecision. (dally = act or move slowly)

The government **shilly-shallied** about the matter
fail to act resolutely or decisively (duplication of "shall I?")

So my resultant thinking is the usual liberal **wishy-washy** leftiness which tries to be fair to both sides..
feeble or insipid in quality, character or determination.

In these **see-saw** markets, in whom, or what, do we trust?
a situation characterized by rapid, repeated changes from one state or condition to another.

While playing **ping-pong** they indulged in a **ping-pong** of absurdist dialogue
Table tennis; a series of usually verbal exchanges between two parties

Reduplicatives: change of consonant

A maze of legal **m**____ **j**____

language or ritual causing or intended to cause confusion or bewilderment.

Which only goes to show that there's nothing better than a bit of sexual hanky-panky to divert the public from more serious matters.

Suspensions of financial **h**____-**p**____ hung over the proceedings.

behaviour, in particular sexual or legally dubious behaviour, considered improper but not seriously so.

'By combining a **h**____ **p**____ of miscellaneous claims with no apparent context, the author has created a scary image of impending doom. A hodgepodge of styles

A confused or heterogeneous mixture (hotchpot = a mutton stew with mixed vegetables)

Doesn't he have a **t**____-**w**____ twinge of conscience?

very tiny

Reduplicatives: change of consonant

A maze of legal **mumbo jumbo**

language or ritual causing or intended to cause confusion or bewilderment.

Which only goes to show that there's nothing better than a bit of sexual hanky-panky to divert the public from more serious matters.

Suspensions of financial **hanky-panky** hung over the proceedings.

behaviour, in particular sexual or legally dubious behaviour, considered improper but not seriously so.

'By combining a **hodgepodge** of miscellaneous claims with no apparent context, the author has created a scary image of impending doom. A hodgepodge of styles

A confused or heterogeneous mixture (hotchpot = a mutton stew with mixed vegetables)

Doesn't he have a **teeny-weeny** twinge of conscience?

very tiny

Reduplicatives: change of consonant

Houses of pale limestone rise **h**_____ **-p**_____ from the harbour, connected by a labyrinth of stepped alleyways.

in confusion or disorder, randomly [rhyming jingle, probably with ref. to the irregular herding together of pigs]

some people still view psychology as a lot of **h**_____ **-p**_____

meaningless talk or activity, typically designed to trick someone or conceal the truth of a situation [from hax pax max Deus adimax, a pseudo-Latin phrase used as a magic formula by conjurors.]

But each issue should be taken on its merits. The search for a federal system that is supple enough to serve our economic and social needs today and into the future is far too important to be sacrificed to political **a**_____ **-b**_____.

After the obligatory **a**_____ **-b**_____ over the price they settled a deal.

noisy quarrelling or wrangling.

Reduplicatives: change of consonant

Houses of pale limestone rise **higgledy-piggledy** from the harbour, connected by a labyrinth of stepped alleyways.

in confusion or disorder, randomly [rhyming jingle, probably with ref. to the irregular herding together of pigs]

some people still view psychology as a lot of **hocus-pocus**

meaningless talk or activity, typically designed to trick someone or conceal the truth of a situation [from hax pax max Deus adimax, a pseudo-Latin phrase used as a magic formula by conjurors.]

But each issue should be taken on its merits. The search for a federal system that is supple enough to serve our economic and social needs today and into the future is far too important to be sacrificed to political **argy-bargy**.

After the obligatory **argy-bargy** over the price they settled a deal.

noisy quarrelling or wrangling.

Reduplicatives: baby talk

tum-tum

bow-wow

night-night

boo-hoo

wee-wee

neigh-neigh

moo-moo

baabaa

choo-choo

"The majority of...reduplicated forms involve a play on the rhyme of words. The result can be a combination of two existing words, like *flower-power* and *culture-vulture*, but more usually one of the elements is meaningless, as in *superduper*, or both, as in *namby-pamby*. Now, it struck me the other day that a large number of these nonsense jingles begin with 'h.' Think of *hoity-toity*, *higgledy-piggledy*, *hanky-panky*, *hokey-pokey*, *hob-nob*, *heebie-jeebies*, *hocus-pocus*, *hugger-mugger*, *hurly-burly*, *hodge-podge*, *hurdy-gurdy*, *hubbub*, *hullabaloo*, *harumscarum*, *helter-skelter*, *hurry-scurry*, and don't forget *Humpty Dumpty*. And these are just a few!"

— Kate Burridge, *Gift of the Gob: Morsels of English Language History*)