

RHYMING TERMS

DARRYL FRANCIS

Mitcham, Surrey, England

Some while ago, we began to consider the whole class of words (and other dictionary items) where the first part rhymes with the second part. Many of the simplest examples are what are called second-order reduplications. In a second-order reduplication, the spelling of the first and second parts differ by only a single letter (for example, HOOTCHIE-KOOTCHIE). Not all second-order reduplications necessarily have the two halves rhyming (for example, MISHMASH and SENSED). Examples of rhyming second-order reduplications are these:

backpack	Hong Kong
boogie-woogie	jet set
bowwow	jingling
culture-vulture	killer-diller
fat cat	kiwi
hanky-panky	nitwit
hi-fi	payday
higgledy-piggledy	voodoo

CULTURE VULTURE is from A Dictionary of New English; JET SET is from 6000 Words: A Supplement to Webster's Third New International Dictionary; the remaining terms are all from Webster's Third.

The rhyming terms in the next batch of examples have common letter groups in their first and second parts causing them to rhyme, but otherwise have a more complicated structure than the second-order reduplications seen above. Sixteen examples:

backtrack	jeepers creepers
blackjack	la-di-da
claptrap	nitty-gritty
ding-a-ling	okeydokey
double-trouble	razzmatazz
grandstand	slim-jim
itsy-bitsy	true-blue
jai alai	tutti-frutti

NITTY-GRITTY is the only term not taken from the main body of Webster's Third; it comes from the 6000 Words supplement.

The third group of rhyming terms is composed of items where the rhyming parts are not represented by the same letters. Another sixteen examples for you to chew over:

eighter from Decatur	Eytie
even Stephen	go-slow

gruesome twosome	seabee
legal eagle	sky-high
near beer	sweetmeat
passion ration	wheeler-dealer
redhead	white light
roughstuff	zoot suit

WHEELER-DEALER is from 6000 Words; GRUESOME TWOSOME, LEGAL EAGLE and PASSION RATION are all from Wentworth and Flexner's Dictionary of American Slang; the others are from Webster's Third.

Interestingly, the Dictionary of American Slang contains a vast list of items such as the following:

actor-schmactor	sergeant-schmergeant
Chippendale-shmippendale	wax-schmax
Dixie-Schmixie	wonderful-schmunderful
megacycle-schmegacycle	zodiac-schmodiac

Would you care to try and find rhyming terms from major dictionaries which fall into the various groupings discussed here?

A HOMONYM AND HETERONYM DICTIONARY

Homonyms are the raw material of puns, as in the mythical cattle range named Focus: where the sons raise meat / sun's rays meet. In 1976, Dora Newhouse issued a dictionary of homonyms reviewed in the November 1978 *Word Ways*; this has now been joined by James B. Hobbs's *Homophones and Homographs* (McFarland & Co., 1986), available for \$25.95 from the publisher at Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640. Newhouse drew her homonyms from 12 dictionaries; Hobbs almost totally relies on Webster's Third, excluding obsolete and archaic words, regional words, slang, and most foreign placenames and coins. As can be seen from a comparison of their XYZ homonyms, the two books have similar but not identical coverage (N stands for Newhouse, H for Hobbs):

- X: xanthin-xanthine N, xenia-zinnia H, xiphoid-ziphoid H
 Y: yap-yapp HN, yar-yarr N, yawn-yon HN, yeld-yelde-yelled N, yew-you-ewe HN, yews-use-ewes HN, yoke-yolk N, you'll-Yule HN, your-you're-ewer-ure-(yore) HN, yucca-uca H
 Z: zein-zeine N, zinc-zink H, zilla-zillah N, zombie-zombi N

These books are the most comprehensive homonym dictionaries in print. Hobbs has also included a dictionary of heteronyms, words that are spelled alike but sounded differently, with all pronunciations given (pate is the only four-way example).

The two books agree on the largest homonymic group, but Newhouse creates more alternatives by using regional or archaic words excluded by Hobbs: air-are-e'er-ere-err-eyre-heir-(aire-Ayr-eir-eire-erre-eyr-ore).