

# EROTIC ENGLISH

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English is the most widely spoken language in the history of our planet, used in some way by at least one out of every seven human beings around the globe. It is a language growing in popularity and gaining thousands of new speakers each year.

Nonetheless, it is now time to face the fact that English is one of the most erotic, sexy, and suggestive languages that has ever been procreated. Research into the origins of many English words uncovers all kinds of unmentionable objects, acts, and sexual body parts:

PUMPERNICKEL derives from the German *pumpfern*, "to break wind" and NICKEL, "devil, rascal". The idea, apparently, is that those who eat the heavy dark rye bread are likely to fart like the devil.

POPPYCOCK may mean just nonsense to you, but the word issues from the Dutch *pappekak*, "soft dung."

SEMINAL flows from the Latin *semen*, the figurative sense being that a seminal truth is as impregnative as human semen.

Some etymologists swear that TESTIMONY and TESTIFY come from the Latin *testis*, "testicle," because men once placed their hands on their precious gonads when swearing to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The name of the Grand Tetons, a mountain range in Wyoming, literally means Big Tits. Ardent feminists will not be happy to learn that the adjective IRASCIBLE comes from the Greek *oestrus*, "in heat," and HYSTERICAL from the Greek word for "womb." The ancients believed that the womb was an unfixed organ that, moving about in a woman's stomach, made her emotionally unstable. (Now you know why women get HYSterectomies and men get HERNias.)

Word study and wordplay reveal all manner of juicy facts about our erotic language. Is it just coincidence that there are three parts of the body that can be anagrammed into three other body parts, and all three rearrangements involve corporeal equipment that is not to be mentioned in polite company: SPINE to PENIS, ELBOW to BOWEL, EARS to ARSE?

One of the best (and truest) of palindromes is SEX AT NOON TAXES. And one of the most revealing of semordnilapic messages is that GOLF spelled backwards is FLOG. What, then, are we to make of the fact that EROS spelled backwards is SORE?

Start reading the names of commercial products semordnilapally,

and you'll discover surprising messages. EVIAN mineral water, for example, comes out as NAIVE, which makes you wonder if they're putting something over on us. Now take a backwards glance at DIAL soap, TUMS stomach pills, and TULSA gasoline. Voila! LAID, SMUT, and A SLUT.

No wonder that the poet T.ELIOT often wrote pessimistic poems. What would you do if your name were TOILET spelled backwards? Staying with famous names, SPIRO AGNEW has been onanistically recognized in the February 1991 "Poet's Corner" and actress Alice Faye (who was married to Phil Harris) has a name that is Pig Latin for PHALLUS.

Many a feminist would be surprised to learn that she has palindromic breasts: BOOB and TIT. A number have been increasingly concerned about the sexism of third-person singular pronouns in English. While I, YOU, WE, and THEY contain no sexual references, HE and SHE do. Some who feel that the issue is full of sound and fury signifying nothing suggest that we combine the third-person singular pronouns HE or SHE or IT into the compacted H'ORSH'IT.

Perhaps the most pervasive fount of new metaphors in the English language is the vocabulary of the computer. Have you hackers out there noticed how slyly suggestive are so many of the new computer terms: BANG, BAUD (bawd), BOX, TO COUPLE, TO ENTER, FLOPPY, TO GO DOWN, HARD, HEAD, JOYSTICK, MALE-FEMALE CONNECTOR, MASTER-SLAVE, RAPE and SLOT?

How come in England you can say things like "I'll come by in the morning and knock you up," and "Keep your pecker up" and not get slapped in the face? What do you make of the fact that the word THERAPIST is a joining of THE and RAPIST?

I save for last my favorite bit of erotic wordplay: the oxymoron FLAT BUSTED.