REVERSE HOMOPHONIC CHARADES

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Pronunciation, as we know, varies widely, not only between the United Kingdom and the United States, but within the United Kingdom itself. From this article, you may correctly deduce that my roots lie in the north of England, rather than the south of England where I now live. Most of the unfamiliar words can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition.

In order to fully comprehend Reverse Homophonic Charades, it will be helpful to first take a look at Reversals, Homophones and Charades.

Reversals

The letters of certain words can be read in reverse order to make a different word called a reversal: are-era, buns-snub, Cam-Mac, dart-trad, evil-live, flow-wolf, gulp-plug, Harpo-Oprah, Igor-Rogi (in Russia), jar-Raj, klop-polk, Leon-Noel, map-Pam, now-won, owt-two, part-trap, Qus (in Egypt)-Suq (Suq ‘anan in Yemen), raw-war, straw-warts, trams-smart, ume (Japanese apricot)-emu, vug (crystal-lined rock cavity)-guv, way-yaw, Xin (Xin Bulag in China)-nix, yas (a young hawk in training)-say, zag-Gaz (in Iran).

Homophonic Reversals

A homophone is a word which sounds the same as another word but which is spelt differently and has a different meaning. WEIGH, WAY and WHEY are homophones, as are NOYES (surname of Alfred Noyes, English poet) and NOISE. So are CUE, KEW and QUEUE which, amazingly, all begin with a different letter of the alphabet.

Some words can be split into single letters, as in reversals, but this time read in reverse according to sound rather than spelling, to make a different word. Thus C.Y makes ICE and K.I.M makes MICK. It seems logical to call these homophonic reversals (HRs). From here on, I call the word which is split the source word. The splitting can occur anywhere in the word and is not confined to syllabic breaks. Thus single-syllable words, as well as multi-syllable words, can be split. The source words (CY, KIM) of HRs will obviously be short and indeed, with the exception of NIXON and VENUS, all the HR source words I found have four or fewer letters. In the following selection, foreign words are in italics and surnames are labeled (s). BARRA is an island in Scotland, EDALE is in Yorkshire, and Lt. Commander DAX appears in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.
A few HRs make apposite pairs: S.U.P is what a PUSS does; the S.K.I.N is subject to NICKS; if confronted by a S.C.U.D. missile, a man DUCKS!


Charades

The splitting of words, phrases or sentences into groups of letters so that they take on different meanings is called charades: ACORN-A CORN, THERAPIST-THE RAPIST, THINKING-THIN KING, and the somewhat belated advice after I DROWNED-I'D ROW NED! are all charades.

Reverse Charades

The splitting of words, phrases or sentences into groups of letters and reading those groups in reverse order so that they take on different meanings may logically be called reverse charades. In this way, P.O.SH makes SHOP, IN.CH-CHIN, TOR.NA.DO-DONATOR, GEN.TI.AN-ANTIGEN, D.A.R.W.IN-INWARD, and T.E.A.S.IMON?-I'M ON SEAT. The NIGHT.IN.GALE got its feathers dishevelled by the GALE IN NIGHT, and MAN.DY.RAN from the RANDY MAN (which is also a spoonerism).

Homophonic Charades

In homophonic charades (HCs), the source word or phrase it makes sound the same but the spelling is different, as is the meaning: AIR.BORNE-HEIR BORN, E.I.FEL-I FELL, CET.ACCEAN-SEAT ASIAN, DROO.PY-DREW PEA, CHAM.PAGNE-SHAM PAIN, FOR.FEIT, FOUR FIT, GOL.AN-GOAL ANNE, GRADE.A-GREY DAY, HOR.MONES-WHORE MOANS, PAST.EUR.ISE-PAST YOUR EYES, SCN.TILL. ATE-SIN TILL EIGHT, ZU.LU-ZOO LEW, I SEE.YUCY YEW, and I.M.EETING.A.S MARTY-I'M EATING A SMARTIE (M&M-like candy). In SUR.LY-SIR LEE, COURT.ENEA-CAUGHT KNEE and I.SCREAM-"ICE CREAM", the source word(s) can be linked to the word(s) made to produce a phrase.
Reverse Homophonic Charades

We have now seen how reverse homophonic charades (RHCs) evolve. Just as HRs are reversals based on sound rather than spelling, and HC are charades based on sound rather than spelling, so RHCs are reverse charades based on sound rather than spelling.

TRANSFORMING ONE WORD INTO ANOTHER WORD

As well as relying on letters and groups of letters which sound the same, RHCs take advantage of silent letters such as the silent letter £ at the end of many words, and other silent letters such as the final B in B.O.M.B-M.O.B (a poem entitled "The Silent Alphabet" appears in Kicks). Some source words only differ from the word they make by a single letter. This may take the form of one letter in place of another, as in T.I.L.E.S-STYLE, or the gain or loss of a letter as in O.L.D-DOLE and A.L.L.E.R.G.E.N-GENERAL, respectively. More satisfying is a source word whose letters differ widely from those of the word it makes, as they do in O.R.CHID.S-SKIDDAW (a mountain in the Lake District). But such goodies are few and far between!

For each letter of the alphabet, the word pairs are arranged by the increasing length of their source words. CORFE is the name of a castle in Dorset, ERCOL is a make of furniture, MENAI is the strait between Wales and the Isle of Anglesey, CLUN is in Shropshire, the TYNE is a river in the north of England, John SURTEES was a world champion in motor cycle racing, LERWICK is in Scotland, and USK is in Monmouthshire.

A. a.i.m — may a.che - Kay a.wo.e - door a.skew- skua a.l.c.o.e - vocal
B. b.a.y — Abe b.oo.l - lobe b.a.dge - jab b.eau.t - tube B.u.r.m.a - amber
C. c.o.r - auk c.a.ge - Jake c.e.I - less c.o.sh - shock c.o.a.ch - choke
D. d.a.y — aid d.u.e - you'd c.o.l.l - less colo.n.e.e - lanker Call.i.sto - stoical
E. e.a.t - tee ee.I - Leigh e.a.t - tease ca.gle - gully ein.mal - malign
F. f.ii.y — life f.o.e - oaf f.i.a.t - Taffy Fi.del - Delphi f.u.nn.y - enough
G. g.le - league ga.ze - Sergai gar.ble - bulgar Gali.lee - legally goa.ding - dingo
H. haut.boy - boyo
I. i.r.k - cur(Kerr) is.lee - lie ink.lee - link ice.men - Menai's
J. j.a.y - age J.a.ck - cadge j.e.r.k.s - scourge ji.ffy - Fiji ja.mmer- merger
K. k.e.y - eke Kh.a.n - nark kn.o.w - own Ka.thy - theca kn.e.a.d - dene
Ker.sey(s) - seeker K.i.nn.o.ck(s) - conic kou.miss - miscue
But what about even better pairs? Below is a list of what, in my opinion, is the best example found for each letter of the alphabet. The pairs marked with an asterisk are the crème de la crème as they do not have any letters in common. They are rare.

au.k - corps*  bal.mi.er - amoeba  ca.stor - stalker  dee.per - Purdy  el.i.xir - cereal
fur.lough - loafer  ga.teau - Toga  hau.te - toe  ide.s - sighed  j.a.mb - Madge
kn.a.ve - vein  Le.one(Sierra) - only  Mi.lo - loamy  n.th - then  ou.ch - ciao
p.urr - Earp  q.uay(Sierra) - eke*  ro.gue - grow  see.saw - saucy  Tex.as - Aztecs
u.ke - queue  Ver.sailles - cipher  weight - twae  X.ma.s - smacks  ya.n.kee - Kenya
zom.bi - besom

Occasionally the two words form a meaningful pair:

What does an A.U.K. do but C.A.W.?
What is a T.U.R.D but D.I.R.T.?
Subject to R.A.P.E, you might P.R.A.Y.
A S.P.E.A.R would inevitably P.I.E.R.C.E.
The C.A.P.S. I.S.E of the boat was due to the I.C.E.C.A.P.S.
When it R.A.I.N.E.D it went down the D.R.A.I.N.
...and a R.E.G.E.N.T is certainly one of the G.E.N.T.R.Y.

You might like to use reverse homophonic charades to change your name:
### Transforming a Single Word into a Phrase

Splitting a single source word may produce a phrase. Again, for each letter of the alphabet, the entries are arranged by the length of their source words. My favourite is the alphomic word AEGILOOP.S which becomes a SLOPPY EGG! CARRICK is in Scotland, RHETT Butler is in "Gone With the Wind", and VILENE is a proprietary name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.</th>
<th>as.pect - pecked ass</th>
<th>Ail. er. on - honour ale</th>
<th>A.l.r.igh.t - tyre law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>ba.sic - sick bay</td>
<td>B.lo.ssom - some lob</td>
<td>An.gle.sey - see gull Anne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>cu.tie - tea queue</td>
<td>C.o.r.in.th - thin rock</td>
<td>Cau.s.t.i.c - Kit’s core(corps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>d.e.but - you bayed(bade)</td>
<td>C.o.l.l.e.e.n - knee lock</td>
<td>Con.tour - talk on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>do.cent - sent dough</td>
<td>Col.on.ise - eyes on Col</td>
<td>C.ar.b.oni.ate - eight on bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>e.ye.la.sh - shall I?</td>
<td>C.ar.a.me.lise - I smell a car</td>
<td>Car.ic.at.ure - you’re at Carrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>for.t.e - ate four</td>
<td>Din.kie - keyed in</td>
<td>D.i.ox.an - an oxide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f.lo.ppy - peel of</td>
<td>Di.no.saur - saw no dye</td>
<td>Del.phi.ni.um - money Fidel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Gae.lic - lick Gay</td>
<td>Diver.tis.se.ment - Monty’s diver</td>
<td>El.ephant - Auntie fell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>Hy.rax - rack’s high</td>
<td>Eigh.t.e.e.n - neat eh?</td>
<td>F.loa.ty - tea loaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Is.l.a.m - malice</td>
<td>Eu.lo.gi.ser - Serg, I’ll owe you</td>
<td>F.ru.ga.l - lag roof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>Jui.cily - sily Jew</td>
<td>Flee.cy - sea flea</td>
<td>Grue.some - sum grew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.</td>
<td>Ke.to.ne - tone key.</td>
<td>F.ro-sty - steer off</td>
<td>Ice.boat - bow ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>Lu.do - dough Lew?</td>
<td>Fol.da.way - weighed a foal</td>
<td>L.i.n.e.ate - eighty nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lou.sily - silly owl</td>
<td>G.or.m.i.e.s - sell morgue</td>
<td>Mat.ador - a doormat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>men.u - you men!</td>
<td>Hym.nic - nick him</td>
<td>Mys.te.ry - Rita(Miss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mat.e.lot - lower Matt</td>
<td>I.d.eals - eels die</td>
<td>M.e.th.yla.ted - Teddy, lay them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.</td>
<td>na.ive - Eve nigh</td>
<td>J.our.n.a.li.st - still an urge</td>
<td>N.u.r.t.ure - your turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.</td>
<td>O.lym.pic - pick limo</td>
<td>Lam.p.rey - rape lamb</td>
<td>P.a.ni.a.c - canny aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M.a.hi.can - can he mow?</td>
<td>Mat.ador - a doormat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mar.zi.pan - Pansy ma</td>
<td>Mys.te.ry - Rita(Miss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M.i.l.ion.aire - ere yon limb</td>
<td>M.e.th.yla.ted - Teddy, lay them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nit.ri.fy - fiery night</td>
<td>N.u.r.t.ure - your turn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
P. phyla - I laugh
p.ro.t.on - knot rope
Phoe.nix - Nick’s fee
pea.co.cky - key copy
Q. qua.s.i - eyes wake
qua.terly - water leak
R. rad.ar - our raid
rum.in.ate - eight in room
S. si.lo - low sigh
Scor.pi.o - Opie’s(s) core
St.i.t.ion - not Lisszt(s)
T. Tri.cot - oak tree
th.im.ble - bull myth
U. u.se - sez you!
V. Vi.len - lean Vi
W. war.ty - tea war
X. X-ray.s - sex Ray
Y. yell.ow.ly - Leo yell
Z. z.o.n. - Al knows

P.lu.to - toe loop
p.an.t.i.le - light nap
Pi.scene - seen pie
phan.ta.sy - seat a fan
q.wer.ty - tea work
Q ua.ter.mass - master wake!
Rod.in(s) - Anne rowed
sh.an.ty - eat, gnash
sil.ki.ly - leaky sill
tri.ble - full right
th.ir.sty - eats earth
u.mi - teeny you
val.or.ise - I saw Val
was.ted - debts weigh
y.es.ter.day - data say

p.u.tty - eat up
ph.a.li.us - us laugh
poul.try - tree pole
q.ur.t.i.le - light walk
ra.chis - kiss Ray
sur.ure - your suit
sou.flé - flay Sue
t.ri.po.d - dry pot
t.rea.ure - yours Rhett

It was BUN.TY, of course, who ate the TEA BUN and, when her hear-
ing FAD.E.D, she bought a DEAF AID. And why did AUNT MAUD want to
die? Because she was a MORD.ANT!

TRANSFORMING ONE PHRASE INTO A DIFFERENT PHRASE

all. h.ai.l - lay haul
dai.sy. lay - lazy day
gar.de.n. ci.ty - teasin’ Edgar
g.ot ba.ck - cot bag
j.u.st n.ow - oust, nudge
Mari.s. Piper - pipers marry
p.eak ti.me - meak type
r.uns dow.n - nun’s dour
t.one dea.f - phone debt
ev.ery sligh.t - Terry’s live
your high.n.e.ss - señor, hi!
bow t.ie - I boat
dee.p f.ry - ripe feed
f.a.de aw.ay - aid a waif
hor.se. boy - boy’s haw
kn.ee. j.e.r.k - Kerr(Jean)
n.eap ti.de - deep Tyne
Q.uimn’s ha.t - twins back
s.ale roo.m - mail ruse
too.ler. wan.ted - Ted one, Earl two
war horse.s - swore, hoarse.
z.eros i.n - Nero’s is
Cor don. Bleu - bluerd encore
dee. r.ai.l - lay Reg
goo.d. p.o.st.ure - your stop Doug
L. sp.ar - pa’s eye
last.g a.sp - spat glass
old fa.ke - cold Fay
ra.d.ar. p.l.a.ne - nail padre
t.ea.m. rau.c.ous - suck raw meat
un.der t.ow - owed a ‘ton’
X-ray.s re.sult - sultry sex Ray

MARIS PIPER is a variety of potato. A longer example: A. TES.T O.N. M.Y.
O w.N-NO, I’M NOT TESSA.

COMPOSITE PHRASES

The phrases constructed in the previous two sections bear no mean-
ingful relationship to the source word or phrase from which they are
derived. However, meaningful phrases can sometimes be made by linking
the source word or phrase to the word or phrase it makes. Here are
some two-word phrases constructed in this manner. AINTREE is the home
of the Grand National Steeplechase, SLOUGH is in Berkshire, and BISTO is a brand name.

Here are some three-word phrases. NEELIX appears in Star Trek: Voyager.

Aarr.on on air exclu.de deck’s clue An.drew drew Anne c.o.st.l.y eel stock
li.on on isle Nee.lix licks knee fil.thy thief ill
val.i.ant Auntie Val p.u.ns.ter turns up S.UND. Herb soup

Phrases can also be made by siting the source word after the phrase it makes:

Anne sues Sus.an Bella is Is.a.bel Della, ‘tis c.i.t.a.del
fit for for.feit Jane checks ex.ch.an.ge mad as S.a.dd.a.m
men eh? A.men! Nellie sent sent.i.nel no Miss S.i.m.o.ne
phone ‘im nym.pho ran over Va.no.ra roll on Lohn.ro
seal loo, Lu.cille seal off F.lo.ssie see bay, Ba.sie(s)
see Kurt curt.sy see off F.o.ssey(s) seen Anne N.a.n.cy?
sells more mor.sels Sir saw sau.cer us folk foc.us
you lurk Herc.ule your Crete creat.ure

Here are some longer phrases and sentences:

Eigh.ty four for tea eh? I.ce. mai.d.en.s send May’s eye
I. saw sore eye T’.ve.fo.re.seen Scene Four Vi
Lee ate rye i.r.ate.ly Lee bid more mor.bid.ly
Russ saw the The.sau.rus Ru.th. ru.p.ee.s see Pru through
Sally’s. aun.t tans Lisa S.ly. N.i.x.o.n knocks in lies
upper cut cut ‘er up Wha.ler.s eh, sail away
RHYMING COUPLETS

NATTY TINA lost a KILO but kept it LOW KEY
She confided to DIANNE but not to ANDY

Did FORENsic tell the doctor what I SICKEN FOR?
Will CURACAO help? I hope SO, A CURE!

BELLY TRICKS are the forte of Miss TRIXIELBEL
Fiery like St. ELMO'S, she is partial to MOSELLE

She is so very old, yes EILEEN'S SENILE
And, surrounded by ILEX, she lives in EXILE

Off to the FUR SHOW drove her new CHAUFFEUR
No longer on the dole, he'd said FAREWELL to WELFARE

The gardener grows ORCHIDS up on Mount SKIDDAW
And sends them to MORTY, far away in TIMOR

Had she really LAID A MAN on the road to MANDALAY?
No! She'd driven along the A4 on a short FORAY

RITA did TARRY with GARY in RIGA
While CHRIS took the RISK of inviting CHERIE to Esher

ANN PARTIES, she's sociable, not at all PARTISAN
ANN SAYS she also likes paintings, especially CEZANNE

The VAGANTS had come to visit their dear AUNT'S GRAVE
Their VELLS showed respect, for each one had been her SLAVE

LUCY is subservient when she goes to SEE LEW
"Please I have my USES", but he says "SEZ YOU!"

MULTIPLES

The same source word or phrase, split in the same place(s), may make two or more reverse homophonic charade words or phrases. PINKIE, split between the N and K, makes both KEY PIN and KEEP IN. ANISEED makes four: SEEDY ANNE, SEE DIANNE, CD ANNE and SEE DEE, ANNE. NATTY CORPS makes CORTINA and CAUGHT IN.

On the other hand, when a common source word is split in different places, the results are non-homophonic. Some examples:

seis.mic-Mick sighs; Mick's eyes; Mix 'T's
seis.mic-Kim's eyes; Kim sighs; Kim's 'T's
A.nnie - Ina; Ena
   o.nly - Leno
   only - Leone (Sierra)

s.i.sal - Sal's eye; Sal's 'I'
   T.ery.lene - lean Rita

s.is.al - Al's eyes; Al sighs
   T.ery.lene - lean eater
   T.ery.lene - lean Terry

s.is.al - Izals
   T.ery.lene - kneel, Rita
   T.ery.lene - kneel, Terry

X.ray.s - say 'Rex'
   cour.tes.an - Auntie's corps (core)

X-ray.s - sex, Ray   
   cour.tes.an - Annie's caught

X-rays - raise X; Ray's 'ex'

cour.tes.an - Auntie's corps (core)

CHAINS

A word made from a source word can, in turn, itself be used as a source word, so making a RHC chain. A proviso is that none of the words in the chain are homophones: TRY-RIGHT-TYRE-RITE is not acceptable.

A.dele - D.e.ll.a - Aled
  b.oar.d - d.aub - orbed
B.c.o.p.s - S.pock - pox
  c.o.te.s - st.o.ke - coast
  c.ele.d - d.eel - lead
D.ry - r.y.de - dire
  c.ele.d - d.eel - lead
Gn.a.t.s - S.ta.n - aunts
  i.de.s - s.igh.ed - dice
K.eel - l.ea.k - clee
  L.i.oy.d - D.oyle(s) - oiled
  M.ai.d - d.ame - aimed
N.oe.l.'s - S.loane - loans
  P.e.a.t.s - st.ee.p - piste
  Q.uee.s - s.k.ew - ukes
  S.eqne.d - d.y.ne.s - snide
  S. ten - t.en.se - scent
  S.ew.n - no.se - s.now
  Us.k - c.u.ss - suck
  S.y - n.i.cc - sign
  Y.a.les - s.lay - ails
  Th.y.me - m.ight - item
  Wrapp.ed - t.ra.p - Pratt(s)
  Z.ea.l - lea.s - sleel

As.k - C.ass - s.ac - axe
  C.ert - t.ercse - er.st - stir
E.es.t - t.cea.se - c.ete - eats
  G.n.aw.s - s.orn - aw.n.s - snore
  I.c.e - s.ail - a.les - sleigh
K.iss.ed - s.t.ie - t.ick.s - skit
  L.o.o.k.s - s.kull - c.u.ll.s - sulk
  M.a.cs - s.am.e - ai.m.s - smeigh
  S.lew - l.ose - s.ool - oules
  S.na.ke - canc.es - s.k.ei.n - naiks
  T ile.s - s.t.y.le - light.s - sleight

S.ate - t.ays - a.ced - s.t.ey - eights
  C.a.st.k - c.a.ste - s.tack - cat.s - s.catt - t.ax - axed

THE CUT OFF

Finally, do you recall the Bobbitt saga of a few years ago? If so, you should have no difficulty in constructing a painfully descriptive RHC two-word phrase (given in Answers and Solutions).