



RHYMING REDUPLICATION

PRONUNCIATION LESSON



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There is no denying that rhyming is a key feature of English. We tend to enjoy a good rhyme because our brains love to hear rhyming patterns. In today's lesson, we will cover all there is to know about rhyming reduplication. *Okey-dokey*, let's get down to the *nitty-gritty* of rhyming!

important
details

OK

RHYMING REDUPLICATION EXPLAINED

One great aspect of English is the ability to manipulate the language by taking a serious-sounding word and making it sound light-hearted and fun. One way to do this is by using **rhyming reduplication**.

In rhyming reduplication, we alter the beginning of the word, and generally, this is a consonant or a consonant cluster.

bee's-knees

an idiom
meaning excellent

the two words **bee's** and **knees** are essentially a copy apart from the consonant sounds at the start of the words

Two-part expressions like this sound extremely informal and bring the register down to a fun level so that you won't sound *hoity-toity*.

behaving like you are
better than everyone else

RHYMING REDUPLICATION EXAMPLES

boogie-woogie	the act of dancing	Let's go to a disco next weekend and <u>boogie-woogie</u> !
fuddy-duddy	someone who is old-fashioned	Don't be such a <u>fuddy-duddy</u> and come out tonight!



silly billy	said to children/pets who aren't behaving in a sensible way	Oh, you are a <u>silly billy</u> , take that plate off your head!
hocus-pocus	silliness, or a magical activity, often used to trick someone	Just be honest and stop all this <u>hocus-pocus</u> !
lovey-dovey	describes people who show public displays of affection	Mum and dad are far too <u>lovey-dovey</u> !
helter-skelter	an adjective to describe hurrying and confusion	We had a <u>helter-skelter</u> journey to the show!
namby-pamby	an adjective meaning weak and excessively emotional	What a <u>namby-pamby</u> idea!
willy-nilly	an adverb to describe doing something in an irregular way	The new agency just sends its proposals <u>willy-nilly</u> .
jeepers creepers	an exclamation showing surprise or shock	<u>Jeepers creepers</u> , knock on the door before you just come in next time!
higgledy-piggledy	confused or jumbled	Our marketing at his point is all <u>higgledy-piggledy</u> .

RHYMING REDUPLICATION WITH NAMES

British people quite like assigning nicknames to each other, and we love them even more if they rhyme!

Here are a few of my own rhyming reduplication inventions:

Smiley Kylie

Handy Andy

Juicy Lucy

Steady Eddie

Merry Geri

In fact, anyone can make rhyming reduplications about anything.

This often happens by replacing the first consonant with /w/ in the reduplication. Beware, it often sounds very childlike:

My friend Jenny-wenny wrote a booky-wooky about a doggy-woggy.



SHM-REDUPLICATION

It's also common to hear people repeat a word but replace the first consonant or consonant cluster with 'shm'.

rhyming **shmyming!**



the word **rhyming** is repeated, but the consonant **r** was changed for **shm** to create **shmyming**

Shm-reduplication originated in Yiddish and is generally used to indicate irony, sarcasm, scepticism, be dismissive or as an interjection.

It really depends on the context and the intonation!

It is very informal—please don't use this in a job interview!

EXAMPLES:

money shm money	
potential meanings:	
money is not important	money is no object

homework shm omework
potential meaning:
there are better things to do than homework

bored shm ored
potential meaning:
a confrontational expression of disbelief: 'I don't believe you, you aren't bored'.



QUIZ!

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1) Which rhyme means confused?

- a. higgledy-piggledy
- b. okey-dokey
- c. lovey-dovey

2) Which rhyme means old-fashioned?

- a. jeepers-creeper
- b. hocus-pocus
- c. fuddy-duddy

3) Which rhyme involves movement?

- a. namby-pamby
- b. boogie-woogie
- c. bees-knees

4) What comes next: helter-?

- a. delter
- b. belter
- c. skelter

5) What comes next: silly-?

- a. pilly
- b. filly
- c. billy

6) What comes next: lovey-?

- a. roly
- b. dovey
- c. moly

7) What are the reasons for 'shm' reduplication?

- a. irony, sarcasm, scepticism, being dismissive, or as an intensifier
- b. professionalism, authority, using a higher register
- c. comparison, contrast, connecting ideas, conjunction

8) Can you use 'shm' reduplication at a job interview?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. it depends

The End!

1) a 2) c 3) b 4) c 5) c 6) b 7) a 8) b