

When fiddle-faddle *and* hoity-toity are related to hocus-pocus *but* hocus-pocus is only related to deception, deceptiveness *and* trickery. A look at dictionary entries for reduplicated ideophones in English.

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Mumbo-jumbo and other gobbledygook...



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Outline of the talk

- Ideophones
 - vs reduplication vs repetition
- Dictionaries and dictionary entries
- Aims, materials and design
- Results
 - Categories and senses
 - Explanations
 - Synonyms and near-synonyms
 - Synonyms in the form of other reduplicated ideophones

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Ideophones

- Vocabulary items that are frequent in use and colourful and descriptive in nature, but which do not fit in the “usual” word classes.
 - Cf. *mimetics* in Japanese and Korean linguistics
- “A vivid representation of an idea in sound. A word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity.” (Doke, 1935, p 118).

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Ideophones

- Siwu (Dingemanse, 2012)
 - *mukumuku* ‘mouth movements of a toothless person eating’
 - *gbadara gbadara* ‘a drunkard’s wobbling gait’
- Basque (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2017)
 - *ttapa-ttapa* ‘walk with small steps’
 - *firristi-farrasta* ‘work carelessly’
- English (Inspector Grim, Thin Blue Line, The BBC)
 - “There’s far too much arty-farty, namby-pamby, hoity-toity, wishy-washy, lardy-dardy, sun-dried tomato eating, decaffeinated fanning about!”

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Ideophones

- “Marked words that depict sensory imagery” (Dingemanse, 2012).
 - At the same time: “conventionalized lexical items with specifiable meanings” (Dingemanse, 2012; 2018).
- Vocabulary items that “show rather than tell” (Dingemanse, 2018).
- “Dramaturgic performances” (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2017)
- “Iconic and mimetic performances” (Haiman, 2018)
 - To utter an ideophone is the equivalent to “speak[ing] the act” or to switching from “narrating a story to putting on a play” (Haiman, 2018).

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Image from @DingemanseMark (2021)



Mark Dingemanse
@DingemanseMark

Ideophones were made for this meme



10:16 AM - Feb 3, 2021 - Twitter Web App

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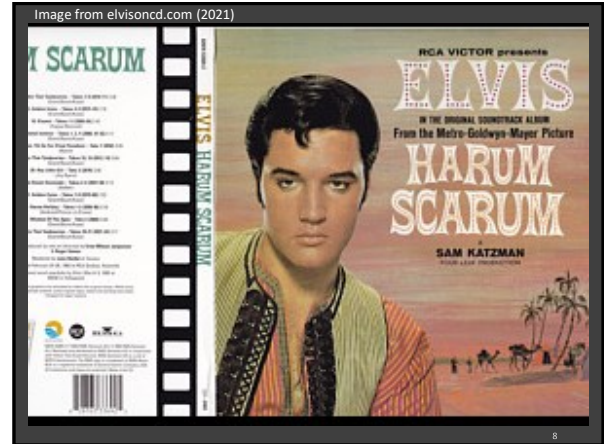
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Marked in terms of their...

- Phonetics and phonology
 - Speech sounds that are not common elsewhere in the language; speech sounds are elongated and stressed in exceptional ways; variations in pitch
- Forms
 - Word formation processes and affixes that are not used elsewhere in the language
- Syntax
 - Less flexible ↔ more flexible in terms of category
 - Fully integrated ↔ loosely integrated in sentence
 - Declarative and affirmative sentences only (maybe)
- Semantics
 - Depict, rather than describe; specific type of interpretations favoured
 - Highly iconic meanings
- Usage

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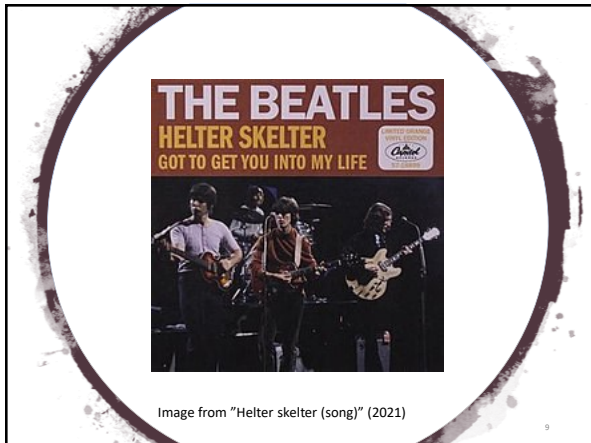


Image from "Helter skelter (song)" (2021)

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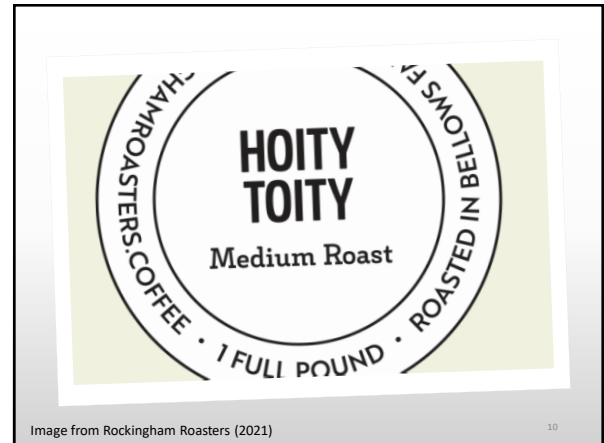


Image from Rockingham Roasters (2021)

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Image from Te Frossa (2021)

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Serves: 4		Skill: medium
Prep:	25 min	
Cooking:	40 min	

Nutrition per portion		RDA
Calories	725 kCal	36%
Fat	37.4g	53%
- Saturates	20.4g	102%
Carbohydrates	83.3g	36%

Image from Dady (2020)

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Ideophones vs reduplications

- Ideophones often have the form of reduplications
- What is the relation between ideophones and reduplications?
 - *cookbook, payday, toyboy, ...*
 - *pell-mell, hodge-podge, ...*
 - *goody-goody, pretty-pretty, ...*
 - *clink-clink/clank, tick-tick/tock, wiggle-waggle, ...*
 - *teeny-weeny/tiny, ...*
- Reduplication and repetition?
 - *goody-goody vs goody goody good*
 - *clink-clinked vs clink clink clinked vs clinked clinked clinked*
 - *teeny teeny tiny weeny*

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Reduplication vs repetition

- Reduplication
 - a morphological process where a word or a sub-part of word is repeated in full or partially, for a specific purpose - e.g., Haspelmath (2002), Crystal (2008), Inkelas & Downing (2015)
- Repetition
 - No consensus on what repetition is and what it does: has been discussed under labels like *imitation, echolalia, stuttering, cohesion* and *reiteration* (e.g., Aichison, 1994)
- Word-formatational or a syntactic process?
 - The end result is a word vs the end result is a sequence of words

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"Depictions of sensory imagery"

- Implicational hierarchy of ideophones (Dingemanse, 2012; Akita & Dingemanse, 2019):

SOUND < MOVEMENT < VISUAL PATTERNS <
OTHER SENSORY PERCEPTION < INNER
FEELINGS, COGNITIVE STATES

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"Conventionalized lexical items with specifiable meanings"

- If ideophones are words, we expect (many of) them to be listed in dictionaries
- **BUT:** How do dictionary definitions capture the fact that ideophones are meant to
 - "show rather than tell"
 - have a "dramaturgic" effect
 - qualify as "iconic and mimetic performances"
 - "put on a play"

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Dictionaries and dictionary entries

The Merriam-Webster

- 1a : a carnivorous mammal (*Felis catus*) long domesticated as a pet and for catching rats and mice
- b : any of a family (Felidae) of carnivorous usually solitary and nocturnal mammals (such as the domestic cat, lion, tiger, leopard, jaguar, cougar, wildcat, lynx, and cheetah)
- [...]

The OED

- 1. The animal.
- 1. a. A well-known carnivorous quadruped (*Felis domesticus*) which has long been domesticated, being kept to destroy mice, and as a house pet.
- [...]

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Dictionaries and dictionary entries

Cutlery (The OED)

- knives, forks, spoons, etc., used for eating or serving food; a set of table utensils of this kind

Marsupial (The M-W)

- any of an order (Marsupialia) of mammals comprising kangaroos, wombats, bandicoots, opossums, and related animals that do not develop a true placenta and that usually have a pouch on the abdomen of the female which covers the teats and serves to carry the young

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Dictionaries and dictionary entries

Wiggle-waggle, verb

- Reduplicated form combining wiggle v. and waggle v. (cf. Low German wigel-wageln vb.), emphasizing the alternation of movement.

Wiggle-waggle, noun

- (a) the act of 'wiggle-wagging'; also, a children's game in which the players waggle their thumbs at a word of command; (b) (also wiggle-woggle)

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Dictionaries and dictionary entries

Wiggle-waggle, verb

- to move jerkily back and forth : wiggle and waggle from one thing to another : vacillate

Wiggle-waggle, noun

- something (as an amusement park contrivance) that wiggle-waggles

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The aims, materials and design of the present investigation

- How do dictionary explanations capture the fact that ideophones are meant to
 - "show rather than tell"
 - have a "dramaturgic" effect
 - qualify as "iconic and mimetic performances"
 - "put on a play"
- Do lexicographers make use of consistent strategies when providing explanations for ideophonic words?

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What we want to find out

- Lexical category
 - ideophones are often multi-categorial (extra-categorial, pre-categorial)
- Explanation
 - How are senses explained? (*intensional, extensional, or synthetic*)
 - Synonyms or longer descriptions or paraphrases
 - Additional entry information suggestive of framing the word as an "iconic and mimetic performance"?
 - Informal usage?
- Synonyms
 - Do entries contain possible synonyms and near-synonyms?
 - Are there other reduplications in synonym lists? Do these in turn have the entry word as a synonym? $A \rightarrow B = B \rightarrow A$?

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The dictionaries selected

- *Collins Online English Dictionary* (CED-D)
- *Collins Online English Thesaurus* (CED-T)
- *Merriam-Webster Online English Dictionary* (MW-D)
- *Merriam-Webster Online English Thesaurus* (MW-T)
- Available online
- Large general purpose dictionaries

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Reduplicated ideophones

- Form: Partial reduplications
 - Alliteration (e.g. *shilly-shally*)
 - Rhyming (e.g. *harum-scarum*)
- Targeted meanings:
 - INNER FEELINGS, COGNITIVE STATES
- Non-compositional:
 - not composed of two words that in combination can explain their meaning such as *whisky-frisky*

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Selecting items

- Thun (1963) *Reduplicative Words in English*
 - Contains lists of alliterating and rhyming reduplications
- ‘Higher-order categories’
 - SOUND < MOVEMENT < VISUAL PATTERNS < OTHER SENSORY PERCEPTION < INNER FEELINGS, COGNITIVE STATES
- Sense groups:
 - *Senselessness, worthlessness, inferiority*
 - *Mental instability and some other states of mind*
 - >300 reduplications

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Filtering items

- Included every 2nd alliterating and rhyming reduplication in Thun
- Excluded
 - ‘compositional’ reduplications (eg *whisky-frisky, wiggle-waggle, gibber-gabber*)
 - reduplications containing proper nouns (*screwton-newtons*)

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Corpus and dictionary searches

- *Intelligent Web-based Corpus* (iWeb)
 - 2017, 14 billion words
- *Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE)
 - 2012-2013, 1.9 billion words
- *Google Ngram Viewer*
 - Interval set to 2010-2019
- Removed all items not found in all three corpora
- Removed items not found in CED-D and MW-D

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Remaining items

- Alliterating reduplications:
 - *Dilly-dally, fiddle-faddle, flimflam, shilly-shally, wishy-washy*
- Rhyming reduplications:
 - *Harum-scarum, hoity-toity, humdrum, roly-poly, willy-nilly*

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Basic sense outline

Alliterating

<i>Dilly-dally</i>	‘to vacillate, dawdle or waste time’
<i>Fiddle-faddle</i>	‘nonsense’
<i>Flimflam</i>	‘nonsense’ ‘deception’
<i>Shilly-shally</i>	‘be irresolute or indecisive’
<i>Wishy-washy</i>	‘lacking in substance, character, quality, strength or flavour’

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Basic sense outline

Rhyming

<i>Harum-scarum</i>	‘reckless, irresponsible’
<i>Hoity-toity</i>	‘arrogant or haughty’ ‘thoughtlessly silly or frivolous’
<i>Humdrum</i>	‘ordinary, dull, monotonous’
<i>Roly-poly</i>	‘plump, buxom, chubby’
<i>Willy-nilly</i>	‘whether desired or not’ ‘haphazardly’

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Targeting the higher level?

- SOUND < MOVEMENT < VISUAL PATTERNS < OTHER SENSORY PERCEPTION < INNER FEELINGS, COGNITIVE STATES
- Not always and not always easy to determine
 - *Roly-poly* 'plump, buxom, chubby' – visual pattern or shape
 - *Fiddle-faddle* 'nonsense' – often said about an utterance – placement in scale?
 - *Shilly-shally* 'be irresolute or indecisive' – mental state

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Behaviour as mental state (Body as mind)

- *Mental state – through perception of observable associated behaviour or action*

Shilly-shally	Verb: -be irresolute or indecisive Adverb: -in an irresolute or undecided way Adjective: -irresolute, vacillating Noun: - a state of temporary inaction caused by irresolution or vacillation
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Taste and character

Wishy-washy	Adj: -lacking in substance, character, quality, strength or flavour
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Description of taste:
 Very disappointing. Very light in colour & cloudy as expected, tasted a little like weak orange, otherwise the **taste** was " **wishy-washy** " & probably could have improved with a proper wheat beer head & condition. (review of beer, iWeb)

Description of character of a person:
 Why would anybody want a bunch of **wishy-washy people** as opposed to one consistent person they could call theirs? (iWeb)

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Investigation of dictionary information

- **CATEGORY:** Lexical category and other possible morphological information
- **SENSES:** One or more sense is described for each syntactic category entry
- **EXPLANATION:** Definition, in the sense of an explanation, description or paraphrase
 - Incl. **USAGE:** Comments about usage, dialect, register, style
- **SYNONYMS:** Words that mean the same or almost the same; possible opposites

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Results

- Categories and senses
- Explanations
 - Incl. usage
- Synonyms and near synonyms
- Reduplicated ideophones that are synonyms of reduplicated ideophones

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Categories and senses

Alliterating	CED-D	CED-T	MW-D	MW-T
<i>Dilly-dally</i>	Verb (one sense)	Verb (one sense)	Verb (one sense)	Verb (two senses)
<i>Fiddle-faddle</i>	Noun, exclamation (one sense) Verb (one sense)	No entry	Noun (one sense) —often used as an interjection	Noun (one sense)
<i>Fimflam</i>	Noun (two senses) Verb (one sense)	No entry	Noun (two senses) Verb (one sense)	Noun (two senses) Verb (one sense)
<i>Shilly-shally</i>	Verb (one sense)	Verb (one sense)	Adverb (one sense) Adjective (one sense) Verb (two senses) Noun (one sense)	Verb (two senses) Noun (one sense) Adjective (one sense)
<i>Wishy-washy</i>	Adjective (two senses)	Adjective (three senses)	Adjective (two senses)	Adjective (two senses)

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Categories and senses

Rhyming	CED-D	CED-T	MW-D	MW-T
<i>Harum-scarum</i>	Adjective, Adverb (one sense) Noun (one sense)	Adjective (one sense)	Adjective (one sense)	Adjective (one sense) Adverb (one sense)
<i>Hoity-toity</i>	Adjective (one sense)	Adjective (one sense)	Noun (one sense) Adjective (two senses)	Adjective (one sense) Noun (one sense)
<i>Humdrum</i>	Adjective (one sense) Noun (one sense)	Adjective (one sense)	Adjective (one sense)	Adjective (one sense) Noun (one sense)
<i>Roly-poly</i>	Adjective (one sense) Noun (three senses)	Adjective (one sense)	Adjective (one sense) Noun (two senses)	Adjective (one sense)
<i>Willy-nilly</i>	Adverb (two senses) Adjective (two senses)	Adverb (two senses)	Adverb, adjective (two senses)	Adverb (one sense)

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Some observations

- No clear pattern of agreement between different sources
- More agreement on certain items: *dilly-dally* is always a verb and *wishy-washy* always an adjective
- The rest of the items have at least two syntactic categories listed by at least one of the sources
- The number of identified senses also differ
- Verb senses are only found in the alliterating group

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Different number of identified senses, two examples

<i>Willy-nilly</i>	CED-D Adverb: 'whether desired or not' 'haphazardly' (2 senses)	MW-T Adverb: 'without definite aim, direction, rule, or method' (1 sense)
<i>Wishy-washy</i>	CED-D Adjective: <i>informal</i> 'lacking in substance, force, colour, etc' 'watery; thin' (2 senses)	CED-T Adjective: (in the sense of feeble) lacking in character, force, or colour (in the sense of pale) lacking in character, force, or colour (in the sense of watery) No explanation (3 senses)

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Explanations – different conventions

Example: *Hoity-toity*

CED-D	CED-T	MW-D	MW-T
Adjective: <i>informal</i> - arrogant or haughty	Adjective: (in the sense of haughty) - arrogant or haughty (informal)	Adjective: - thoughtlessly silly or frivolous: lightly marked by an air of assumed importance: highfalutin	Adjective: - <i>informal</i> having or showing the insulting attitude of people who think that they are better, smarter, or more important than other people
Synonyms only	Synonyms only	Explanation + synonym	Explanation only

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Verb senses (only found for alliterating)

- CED sources, mainly synonymous verbs or verb phrases
 - *flimflam* 'to deceive; trick; swindle; cheat' (CED-D)
 - *dilly-dally* 'to dawdle or waste time' (CED-T)
- MW sources, mainly complex verb phrases
 - *shilly-shally* 'to show uncertainty about the right course of action' (MW-T)
 - Occasionally circular: *flimflam* 'to subject to a flimflam' (MW-D)

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Noun senses (alliterating)

- CED sources, synonymous nouns or noun phrases
 - *Flimflam* 'nonsense; foolishness' (CED-D)
 - *Fiddle-faddle* 'trivial matter' (CED-D)
- M-W sources, range from synonymous nouns to sentence explanations
 - *Flimflam* 'deception, fraud' (MW-D)
 - *Flimflam* 'deceptive nonsense' (MW-D)
 - *Shilly-shally* 'a state or an instance of temporary inaction because of uncertainty about the right course of action' (MW-T)
 - *Fiddle-faddle* 'language, behavior, or ideas that are absurd and contrary to good sense' (MW-T)

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Noun senses (rhyming)

- Never explained with simple synonymous nouns, but instead with noun phrases
 - *Humdrum* 'a monotonous routine, task, or person' (CED-D)
 - *Humdrum* 'a tedious lack of variety' (MW-T)
- 'People' senses, sentence frame
 - A PERSON WHO IS *ADJECTIVE*
 - *harum-scarum* 'a person who is impetuous or rash' (CED-D).

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Adjective senses

- Mainly explained using adjective synonyms
 - *Harum-scarum* 'reckless' (CED-T)
 - *Harum-scarum* 'reckless, irresponsible' (MW-T)
 - *Humdrum* 'ordinary, dull, and uninteresting' (CED-T)
 - *Humdrum* 'monotonous, dull' (MW-D)
- Sometimes MW sources (esp. T) use longer descriptions
 - *harum-scarum* 'having or showing a lack of concern for the consequences of one's action' (MW-T)
 - *Humdrum* 'causing weariness, restlessness, or lack of interest' (MW-T)

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Adverb senses

- Explained using the IN A *ADJ* MANNER frame
 - *shilly-shally* 'in an irresolute, undecided, or hesitating manner' (MW-D)
 - *harum-scarum* 'in a confused and reckless manner' (MW-T)
 - *willy-nilly* 'in a haphazard or spontaneous manner' (MW-D)

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Summing up sense explanations

- The reduplications are explained using normal referring words or expressions, mostly of the same syntactic category as that of the explained sense
 - N sense → N or NP explanation, etc
- Some differences in conventions between the sources
 - More simple synonyms in CED sources, more phrase explanations in MW sources
- Overall very few signs signalling that these words are in any way special

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Other clues in the explanations?

- Marked as informal, by CED sources
 - *Dilly-dally, flimflam, shilly-shally, wishy-washy, hoity-toity*
 - *Hoity-toity* also by MW-T
- 'Showing' their meaning, in MW-T

	MW-T
<i>Shilly-shally</i>	Verb: - to show uncertainty about the right course of action
<i>Harum-scarum</i>	Adjective: - having or showing a lack of concern for the consequences of one's actions
<i>Hoity-toity</i>	Adjective: - informal having or showing the insulting attitude of people who think that they are better, smarter, or more important than other people

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Synonyms and near synonyms

- Synonyms are words that mean the same thing...?
- Lists of synonyms are ultimately lists of items that
 - explain the meaning of the original word
 - can be used in place of the original word
- Maybe they are. Maybe they aren't.
- If *taxi* is synonymous with *cab*, then *cab* should be synonymous with *taxi*...?

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Synonyms and near synonyms

- The two parts of the same source are not in agreement.
 - May list all the same synonyms, or different synonyms, or the same synonyms for different senses of meaning
- The two sources are not in agreement
 - May list (all/many/some of) the same synonyms, or different synonyms, or the same synonyms for different senses of meaning

(Is there another word for synonym, 2021)

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An example: the case of *fiddle-faddle*

The CED-D

(ˈfɪd̩l̩, fæd̩l̩) **NOUN, EXCLAMATION**

- trivial matter; nonsense

VERB

- (intransitive) to fuss or waste time, esp over trivial matters

The CED-T

Sorry, no results for "fiddle-faddle" in the English Thesaurus.

Did you mean:
femme fatale
fiddled

fit as a fiddle

Ads by Google

Stop Search for Ads

Why Use AdP-B

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An example: the case of *fiddle-faddle*

The MW-D

fiddle-faddle noun

Save Word

fid-dle-fad-dle | \ ˈfɪ-dl̩-, fə-dl̩- \

Definition of fiddle-faddle

: NONSENSE —often used as an interjection

The MW-T

fiddle-faddle noun

Save Word

Synonyms & Antonyms of fiddle-faddle

language, behavior, or ideas that are absurd and contrary to good sense

- The explanation is followed by a list of over 60 synonyms for the word.
- The explanation is followed by the same list of over 60 synonyms.
- There is also a list of 26 related words

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Synonyms for *fiddle-faddle*

applesauce [slang], balderdash, baloney (also boloney), beans, bilge, blah (also blah-blah), blarney, blather, blatherskite, blither, bosh, bull [slang], bunk, bunkum (or buncombe), claptrap, codswallop [British], crapola [slang], crock, drivel, drool, fiddle, fiddlesticks, flannel [British], flapdoodle, folderol (also falderal), folly, foolishness, fudge, garbage, guff, hogwash, hokeypokey, hokum, hoodoo, hokey, horsefeathers [slang], humbug, humbuggery, jazz, malarkey (also malarky), moonshine, muck, nerts [slang], nonsense, nuts, piffle, poppycock, punk, rot, rubbish, senselessness, silliness, slush, stupidity, taradiddle (or tarradiddle), tommyrot, tosh, trash, trumpery, twaddle

Words Related to *fiddle-faddle*

absurdity, asininity, fatuity, foolery, idiocy, imbecility, inaneness, inanity, insanity, kookiness, lunacy

absurdness, craziness, madness, witlessness

hoity-toity, monkey business, monkeyshine(s), shenanigan(s), tomfoolery

gas, hot air, rigmarole (also rigamarole)

double-talk, greek, hocus-pocus

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3 language, behavior, or ideas that are absurd and contrary to good sense

// you're obviously no economist because what you're saying is absolute *rubbish*

Synonyms for *rubbish*

applesauce [slang], balderdash, baloney (also boloney), beans, bilge, blah (also blah-blah), blarney, blather, blatherskite, blither, bosh, bull [slang], bunk, bunkum (or buncombe), claptrap, codswallop [British], crapola [slang], crock, drivel, drool, fiddle, fiddle-faddle, fiddlesticks, flannel [British], flapdoodle, folderol (also falderal), folly, foolishness, fudge, garbage, guff, hogwash, hokeypokey, hokum, hoodoo, hokey, horsefeathers [slang], humbug, humbuggery, jazz, malarkey (also malarky), moonshine, muck, nerts [slang], nonsense, nuts, piffle, poppycock, punk, rot, senselessness, silliness, slush, stupidity, taradiddle (or tarradiddle), tommyrot, tosh, trash, trumpery, twaddle

Words Related to *rubbish*

absurdity, asininity, fatuity, foolery, idiocy, imbecility, inaneness, inanity, insanity, kookiness, lunacy

absurdness, craziness, madness, witlessness

hoity-toity, monkey business, monkeyshine(s), shenanigan(s), tomfoolery

gas, hot air, rigmarole (also rigamarole)

double-talk, greek, hocus-pocus

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Synonyms for *hoodoo*

applesauce [slang], balderdash, baloney (also boloney), beans, bilge, blah (also blah-blah), blarney, blather, blatherskite, blither, bosh, bull [slang], bunk, bunkum (or buncombe), claptrap, codswallop [British], crapola [slang], crock, drivel, drool, fiddle, fiddle-faddle, fiddlesticks, flannel [British], flapdoodle, folderol (also falderal), folly, foolishness, fudge, garbage, guff, hogwash, hokeypokey, hokum, hokey, horsefeathers [slang], humbug, humbuggery, jazz, malarkey (also malarky), moonshine, muck, nerts [slang], nonsense, nuts, piffle, poppycock, punk, rot, rubbish, senselessness, silliness, slush, stupidity, taradiddle (or tarradiddle), tommyrot, tosh, trash, trumpery, twaddle

Words Related to *hoodoo*

absurdity, asininity, fatuity, foolery, idiocy, imbecility, inaneness, inanity, insanity, kookiness, lunacy

absurdness, craziness, madness, witlessness

hoity-toity, monkey business, monkeyshine(s), shenanigan(s), tomfoolery

gas, hot air, rigmarole (also rigamarole)

double-talk, greek, hocus-pocus

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Synonyms for hokeypokey

applesauce [*slang*], balderdash, baloney (*also* boloney), beans, bilge, blah (*also* blah-blah), blarney, blather, blatherskite, blither, bosh, bull [*slang*], bunk, bunkum (*or* buncombe), claptrap, codswallop [*British*], crapola [*slang*], crock, drivel, drool, fiddle, fiddle-faddle, fiddlesticks, flannel [*British*], flapdoodle, folderol (*also* falderal), folly, foolishness, fudge, garbage, guff, hogwash, hokum, hoodoo, hokey, horsefeathers [*slang*], humbug, humbuggery, jazz, malarkey (*also* malarky), moonshine, muck, nerts [*slang*], nonsense, nuts, piffle, poppycock, punk, rot, rubbish, senselessness, silliness, slush, stupidity, taradiddle (*or* tarradiddle), tommyrot, tosh, trash, trumpery, twaddle

Words Related to hokeypokey

absurdity, asininity, fatuity, foolery, idiocy, imbecility, inaneness, inanity, insanity, kookiness, lunacy

absurdness, craziness, madness, witlessness

hoity-toity, monkey business, monkeyshine(s), shenanigan(s), tomfoolery

gas, hot air, rigmarole (*also* rigamarole)

double-talk, greek, hocus-pocus

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Synonyms for claptrap

applesauce [*slang*], balderdash, baloney (*also* boloney), beans, bilge, blah (*also* blah-blah), blarney, blather, blatherskite, blither, bosh, bull [*slang*], bunk, bunkum (*or* buncombe), codswallop [*British*], crapola [*slang*], crock, drivel, drool, fiddle, fiddle-faddle, fiddlesticks, flannel [*British*], flapdoodle, folderol (*also* falderal), folly, foolishness, fudge, garbage, guff, hogwash, hokeypokey, hokum, hoodoo, hokey, horsefeathers [*slang*], humbug, humbuggery, jazz, malarkey (*also* malarky), moonshine, muck, nerts [*slang*], nonsense, nuts, piffle, poppycock, punk, rot, rubbish, senselessness, silliness, slush, stupidity, taradiddle (*or* tarradiddle), tommyrot, tosh, trash, trumpery, twaddle

Words Related to claptrap

absurdity, asininity, fatuity, foolery, idiocy, imbecility, inaneness, inanity, insanity, kookiness, lunacy

absurdness, craziness, madness, witlessness

hoity-toity, monkey business, monkeyshine(s), shenanigan(s), tomfoolery

gas, hot air, rigmarole (*also* rigamarole)

double-talk, greek, hocus-pocus

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Synonyms & Near Synonyms for hoity-toity

monkey business, monkeyshine(s), shenanigan(s), tomfoolery

absurdness, craziness, madness, witlessness

gas, hot air, rigmarole (*also* rigamarole)

absurdity, asininity, fatuity, foolery, idiocy, imbecility, inaneness, inanity, insanity, kookiness, lunacy

double-talk, greek, hocus-pocus

applesauce [*slang*], balderdash, baloney (*also* boloney), beans, bilge, blah (*also* blah-blah), blarney, blather, blatherskite, blither, bosh, bull [*slang*], bunk, bunkum (*or* buncombe), claptrap, codswallop [*British*], crapola [*slang*], crock, drivel, drool, fiddle, fiddle-faddle, fiddlesticks, flannel [*British*], flapdoodle, folderol (*also* falderal), folly, foolishness, fudge, garbage, guff, hogwash, hokeypokey, hokum, hoodoo, hokey, horsefeathers [*slang*], humbug, humbuggery, jazz, malarkey (*also* malarky), moonshine, muck, nerts [*slang*], nonsense, nuts, piffle, poppycock, punk, rot, rubbish, senselessness, silliness, slush, stupidity, taradiddle (*or* tarradiddle), tommyrot, tosh, trash, trumpery, twaddle

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Thesaurus

hocus-pocus **noun**

Save Word

Synonyms of *hocus-pocus*

the art or skill of performing tricks or illusions for entertainment

// with some well-crafted *hocus-pocus*, the illusionist made the dove disappear from his hands

Synonyms for *hocus-pocus*

conjuring, legerdemain, magic, prestidigitation

Words Related to *hocus-pocus*

deception, deceptiveness, trickery

Phrases Synonymous with *hocus-pocus*

sleight of hand

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hocus-pocus **noun**

Save Word

hə-ˈkʌs-ˈpɒ-kəs

Definition of *hocus-pocus* (Entry 1 of 2)

- : SLEIGHT OF HAND
- : nonsense or sham used especially to cloak deception

hocus-pocus **verb**

hocus-pocussed or hocus-pocused; hocus-pocussing or hocus-pocusing

Definition of *hocus-pocus* (Entry 2 of 2)

transitive verb

: to play tricks on

Synonyms for *hocus-pocus*

Synonyms: Noun

conjuring, legerdemain, magic, prestidigitation

Visit the Thesaurus for More

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Reduplicated ideophones where the synonyms are other reduplicated ideophones



Image from Manson (n.d.)

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Dilly-dally vs shilly-shally

	Relation:	Source:	Binary relation:
Dilly-dally →			
Shilly-shally	Synonym, Additional synonym	CED-T, MW-D, MW-T	Yes* for CED-T and MW-T No for MW-D
Shilly-shally →			
Yo-yo	Synonym	CED-T	No entry in CED-T
Seesaw	Synonym	CED-T	No
Dilly-dally	Synonym	CED-T, MW-T	Yes for both

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Dilly-dally vs shilly-shally in CED-T

dilly-dally

- Verb meaning and sense 'to dawdle or waste time'
 - *shilly-shally* is listed as **key synonym**
- Verb meaning and sense 'to dither / to be uncertain or indecisive'
 - *shilly-shally* is listed as **additional synonym**

Shilly-shally

- Verb meaning and sense 'be irresolute or indecisive / to be indecisive'
 - *dilly-dally* is listed as **key synonym**
- Verb meaning and sense 'dilly-dally / to dawdle or waste time'
 - *dilly-dally* is listed as **additional synonym**

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Dilly-dally vs shilly-shally in MW-D

Dilly-dally

- One verb meaning and sense 'to waste time by loitering or delaying : dawdle'.
 - *shilly-shally* is listed as synonym

Shilly-shally

- Can be adjective, adverb, verb (with two senses of meaning) and noun
- Verb1: 'to show hesitation or lack of decisiveness or resolution'
- Verb2: 'dawdle'
 - *dilly-dally* is **not** listed as synonym under **either** of these senses of meaning

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Dilly-dally vs shilly-shally in MW-T

Dilly-dally

- Two verb meaning and senses
- V1: 'to move or act slowly'
- V2: 'to spend time doing nothing'
 - *shilly-shally* is listed as synonym under **V1**, but not under V2.

Shilly-shally

- Can be verb (with two senses), noun and adjective
- V1: 'to show uncertainty about the right course of action'
- V2: 'to move or act slowly'
 - *dilly-dally* is listed as synonym under **V2** but not V1

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**NOT SURE IF HEAD IS ABOUT TO
EXPLODE FROM CONFUSION**

**OR BRAIN IS GETTING BIGGER FROM
KNOWLEDGE**

Image from Rockette (2017)

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One of our initial questions

- How can dictionary definitions capture the fact that ideophones are meant to
 - "show rather than tell"
 - have a "dramaturgic" effect
 - qualify as "iconic and mimetic performances"
 - "put on a play"
- Can we detect any specific practices / policies in the explanations of meaning / in how the entries are formed, in general?
 - Does confusion count as a policy...?

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Summary

- **Lexical category:**
 - ideophones are often multi-categorial (extra-categorial, pre-categorial)
- **Explanation:**
 - How are senses explained? (intensional, extensional, or synthetic)
 - Synonyms or longer descriptions or paraphrases
- **Synonyms and antonyms:**
 - Do entries contain possible synonyms and near-synonyms?
 - Are there other reduplications in synonym lists? Do these in turn have the entry word as a synonym? $A \rightarrow B = B \rightarrow A$??
- **Any other information suggestive of framing the word as an “iconic and mimetic performance”**
- **Informal usage?**

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Summary

- Many are multi-categorial
- No clear strategy used for marking these as special in dictionaries and thesauruses
 - ‘Normal’ dictionary explanations
 - Some marked as informal
 - Some described as ‘showing’ meaning
- Synonym lists shared by many of the items
- Reduplicated synonyms
 - In some cases (reduplications; senses; sources) the relationship is binary, in some it is not
- In sum – a complete mess

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