

The Art of Hurly-Burly, Fiddle-Faddle, and Pitter-Patter

The words above are examples of "reduplication", a process in which words are formed by starting with one word, copying it with one slight change, and then saying it again.

Words like hurly-burly, fiddle-faddle, and pitter-patter have been echoing around the English language for over 400 years. Here's a complete list with their associated meanings:

artsy-fartsy	artistic - but ironically, sarcastically meant
airy-fairy	over-idealistic
Bali belly	traveler's sickness in Indonesia)
blither-blather	stupid or unclear speaking
bibble babble	baby talk
bric-a-brac	bits and pieces
Cancun	a resort town in Mexico
chit chat	idle conversation
chitter chatter	idle conversation
clickety-clack	sound of Spanish castanets
clip clop	sound of a horse's hooves on a street
clippity-cloppity	sound of a horse's hooves on a street
criss cross	an interlacing pattern
dilly dally	to dawdle
ding dang	mild swear word
ding dong	sound of a bell; a fool
drip-drop	sound of water dripping
dust-buster	vacuum cleaner
eensy-weensy	very small
fancy-shmancy	fancy - but ironically, sarcastically meant
fiddle faddle	dismissive exclamation
flim flam	deception used to implement a fraud
flip flop	sandal; to reverse oneself
group grope	sex party
hee-haw	donkey sound
helter-skelter	uncontrolled movement
hip hop	a slightly less shrill version of rap
hippity hoppity	hopping movement
hodge-podge	chaotic mixture
Hong Kong	port city in China
I-Spy	children's game
itsy-bitsy	very tiny
the jim-jams	delirium tremens; the shakes; pajamas
jipajapa	a South American plant that looks like a palm
King Kong	Hollywood star

Kit Kat	a club name; a candy bar
kitty cat	cat; cat food
knick-knack	a curio or keepsake
Lib-Lab	an alliance between Liberal and Labour parties
mishmash	a formless mess
peg-leg	wooden leg
ping pong	table tennis
pitter patter	supposedly, the sound of little feet
poop-scoop	device for removing dog waste from pavement
pussy posse	the vice squad
queen of mean	nasty lady
riff raff	a disreputable group of people)
see-saw	playground device
sci-fi	science fiction genre
shilly shally	to dawdle
shim sham	a feeling of unease or fear
ship shape	in order; neat
sing song	group singing session
snail-mail	the Post
spit spot	fine, excellent
splish splash	imitation of splashing water sounds
teeny-weeny	very small
teensy-weensy	very small
teeter totter	children's amusement, a see saw
Tic Tac	candy
tic-tac-toe	game
tick tock	imitation of the sound of a clock
ticky tacky	vulgar and banal
tip top	first rate
tittle tattle	idle chatter; gossip
wiggle waggle	to sway from side to side
willy-nilly	here and there
wishy washy	indecisive
ying yang	eastern philosophy
zig zag	characterized by repeated changes in direction

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