

BINOMIALS

Binomials or binomial pairs are the expressions containing two words usually joined by the conjunctions *and* or *or*.

For example

Black and white

Hot and cold

Ups and downs

Give or take

Make or break

Most of the binomials are irreversible and fixed and they happen to appear only in one order. These binomials are also sometimes called **Siamese twins** named after **Chang and Eng Bunker**, the conjoined twins from **Siam**.

For example

By and large

Pros and cons

Short and sweet

Sick and tired

Do or die

More or less

There are many binomials in English which I do not intend to include in the following list. But here, an effort has been made to provide you the binomials which are regularly used in our day to day life.

These binomials have been classified into five categories as:

- **Binomials with opposite words (antonyms)**
- **Binomials with related words (synonyms)**
- **Binomials with alliteration (similar sound)**
- **Binomials with rhyming words**
- **Binomials with repetitive words (reduplication)**

Binomials with opposite words (antonyms)

Words joined by the conjunction 'and'

<i>Assets and liabilities</i>	the two main elements of balance sheet
<i>Back and forth</i>	moving backward and forward; to-and-fro
<i>Black and white</i>	sharply defined; clear-cut
<i>Bride and groom</i>	woman and man getting married
<i>By and large</i>	on the whole; everything considered
<i>Cause and effect</i>	a combination of action and reaction
<i>Cops and robbers</i>	police trying to catch criminals (in movies)
<i>Come and go</i>	arrive and then depart again; move around freely
<i>Cowboys and Indians</i>	A game in which the players assume the traditional roles of cowboys and Indians
<i>Day and night</i>	all the time; continuously
<i>Dos and don'ts</i>	rules and regulations; detailed instructions
<i>Ebb and flow</i>	the situation that changes frequently
<i>First and last</i>	in all respects; fundamentally; on the whole
<i>Forward and backward</i>	in both directions alternately; to and fro
<i>Give and take</i>	the practice of making mutual concessions : compromise
<i>The great and small</i>	people of all ranks
<i>The haves and have-nots</i>	rich and poor people in the society
<i>Here and there</i>	in one place and another; in various places
<i>Hide and seek</i>	a children's game
<i>High and low</i>	in many different places; everywhere
<i>Hither and thither</i>	in various directions

<i>Hot and cold</i>	to change the mind a lot about whether to like someone or something
<i>In and out</i>	to the last detail; exhaustively; thoroughly
<i>Ladies and gentlemen</i>	used to address the audience
<i>Long and short</i>	The main idea or facts of something
<i>Lost and found</i>	a place where lost items are stored to await retrieval by their owners; a lost property
<i>Loud and clear</i>	clearly expressed and easy to understand
<i>Near and far</i>	from a very wide area
<i>Night and day</i>	all the time; constantly
<i>Now and then</i>	from time to time
<i>On and off</i>	intermittently
<i>Park and ride</i>	A transport system for reducing urban traffic congestion
<i>Pros and cons</i>	arguments for and against
<i>Rise and fall</i>	go to the top and down to the bottom, fluctuate
<i>Stop and go</i>	involving frequent stops
<i>Thick and thin</i>	every difficulty and obstacle - used especially in the phrase through thick and thin
<i>To and fro</i>	move constantly backwards and forwards
<i>Ups and downs</i>	alternating rise and fall especially in fortune
<i>Yes and no</i>	no definite answer
<i>Young and old</i>	of all ages

Words joined by different conjunctions or prepositions

<i>Beginning to end</i>	the start of a series of events that leads to the end; throughout
<i>Dusk till dawn</i>	from sunset to sunrise; night time
<i>Floor to ceiling</i>	used for describing things such as windows or pieces of furniture that are the full height of a wall
<i>Front to back</i>	with the front where the back should be; backwards
<i>Give or take</i>	plus or minus a small specified amount
<i>Life or death</i>	very important and crucial

<i>Make or break</i>	the thing which decides whether something succeeds or fails
<i>More or less</i>	approximately; almost
<i>North to south</i>	extending between the north and the south
<i>Rain or shine</i>	whether it rains or not; whatever the weather
<i>Start to finish</i>	from the beginning to the end
<i>Sooner or later</i>	at some future time; eventually
<i>Top to bottom</i>	in a very thorough way

Binomials with related words (synonyms)

Words joined by the conjunction 'and'

<i>Bits and pieces</i>	an assortment of small items
<i>Body and soul</i>	involving every aspect of a person; completely
<i>Clean and tidy</i>	Free from dirt or stain
<i>Dot the i's and cross the t's</i>	ensure that all details are correct
<i>Far and wide</i>	in every direction; everywhere
<i>First and foremost</i>	most importantly; more than anything else
<i>Head and shoulders</i>	beyond comparison; by far
<i>Heart and soul</i>	with complete sincerity and devotion
<i>House and home</i>	an emphatic form of home
<i>Leaps and bounds</i>	by very large degree; rapidly or in quick progress forward
<i>Nook and cranny</i>	Every possible place or part of something, down to the smallest ones
<i>Null and void</i>	having no legal force
<i>Pain and suffering</i>	mental or especially physical distress for which one may seek damages in a tort action
<i>Peace and quiet</i>	tranquility; freedom from stress or interruptions
<i>Pick and choose</i>	select only the best from a number of alternatives
<i>Plain and simple</i>	essentially or fundamentally so, without exaggeration or elaboration

<i>Short and sweet</i>	pleasantly brief; not lasting a long time or requiring a lot of time
<i>Sick and tired</i>	thoroughly fatigued or bored
<i>Skin and bone</i>	very thin in a way that is unattractive and unhealthy
<i>Skull and crossbones</i>	a symbol of a human skull with two long bones crossed below it

Words joined by different conjunctions or prepositions

<i>By hook or by crook</i>	by any possible means
<i>Like father, like son</i>	a son's character or behaviour can be expected to resemble that of his father
<i>Like mother, like daughter</i>	daughters resemble their mothers

Binomials with alliteration (initial sound similar)

Words joined by the conjunction 'and'

<i>Bag and baggage</i>	with all one's belongings
<i>Black and blue</i>	covered in livid bruises
<i>Bread and butter</i>	a person's livelihood or main source of income
<i>Cash and carry</i>	sold for cash payment and no delivery service
<i>Chalk and cheese</i>	used for saying that two people or things are completely different from each other
<i>Command and control</i>	the running of an armed force or other organization
<i>Deaf and dumb</i>	(of a person) both deaf and unable to speak
<i>(Between the) devil and the deep blue sea</i>	in a difficult situation where there are two equally unpleasant choices
<i>Dine and dash</i>	eating at a restaurant and leaving without paying
<i>Done and dusted</i>	(of a project) be completely finished or ready
<i>Down and dirty</i>	highly competitive or unprincipled

<i>Drink and drive</i>	drive a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol
<i>Fast and furious</i>	full of rapid action; lively and exciting
<i>Flora and fauna</i>	Plant life and wildlife, collectively
<i>Forgive and forget</i>	both pardon and hold no resentment concerning a past event.
<i>Kith and kin</i>	one's friends and relatives
<i>Life and limb</i>	life and all bodily faculties
<i>Mix and match</i>	to put different things (such as pieces of clothing) together in different ways
<i>Part and parcel</i>	An essential or fundamental part or aspect (of something)
<i>Rock and roll</i>	showing eagerness to do, or start something
<i>Rough and ready</i>	crude in nature, method, or manner but effective in action or use
<i>Safe and sound</i>	free from danger or injury
<i>Toss and turn</i>	you keep moving around in bed and cannot sleep properly
<i>Wash and wear</i>	(of a garment or fabric) easily washed, drying quickly, and not needing to be ironed

Words joined by different conjunctions and prepositions

<i>Feast or famine</i>	either too much of something or too little
<i>Flip-flop</i>	move with a flapping sound or motion
<i>Last but not least</i>	last in order of mention or occurrence but not of importance
<i>Pillar to post</i>	moving from one place to another with a little purpose
<i>Rags to riches</i>	used to describe a person's rise from a state of extreme poverty to one of great wealth
<i>Ready to rumble</i>	get ready to gang-fight
<i>Tit for tat</i>	an equivalent given in return (as for an injury); retaliation in kind
<i>Slowly but surely</i>	achieving the desired results gradually and reliably rather than quickly and spectacularly
<i>So far, so good</i>	progress has been satisfactory up to now

Binomials with rhyming words

Words joined by the conjunction 'and'

<i>Chalk and talk</i>	the traditional method of teaching, consisting mainly of talking and writing on a chalkboard
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<i>Flotsam and jetsam</i>	useless or unimportant items; odds and ends; homeless people
<i>Huff and puff</i>	to breathe loudly, usually after physical exercise
<i>Hustle and bustle</i>	a large amount of activity and work, usually in a noisy surrounding
<i>Meet and greet</i>	an occasion when people can meet each other
<i>Near and dear</i>	very close in relationship
<i>Out and about</i>	going to different places
<i>Wear and tear</i>	the damage that happens to an object in ordinary use during a period
<i>Wine and dine</i>	entertain someone with food and drink, esp. expensive food and drink

Words joined by different conjunctions or prepositions

<i>Double trouble</i>	a very troublesome thing or person
<i>Even Steven</i>	used in reference to fair and equal competition or distribution of resources
<i>Fender bender</i>	a road accident in which the vehicles involved are only slightly damaged
<i>My way or the highway</i>	used to say that people have to do what you say; otherwise, they will have to leave or quit the project
<i>Use it or lose it</i>	it means that if you don't continue to practice or use an ability, you might lose that ability

Binomials with repetitive words (reduplication)

Words joined by the conjunction 'and'

<i>Again and again</i>	repeatedly
<i>By and by</i>	after a short period; eventually
<i>More and more</i>	at a continually increasing rate
<i>Neck and neck</i>	level in a race or other competition
<i>On and on</i>	continually; at tedious length
<i>Out and out</i>	in every respect; absolute
<i>Over and over</i>	again and again
<i>So and so</i>	used instead of a particular name to refer to someone or something
<i>Such and such</i>	used for referring to something without saying exactly what it is

Words joined by different conjunctions or prepositions

<i>All in all</i>	on the whole
<i>Arm in arm</i>	(of two or more people) with arms linked
<i>Back to back</i>	facing in opposite directions, often with the backs touching
<i>Bumper to bumper</i>	very close together, as cars in a traffic jam
<i>Let bygones be bygones</i>	forget past offences or causes of conflict and be reconciled
<i>Day to day</i>	happening regularly every day
<i>Day by day</i>	on each successive day; gradually and steadily
<i>Four-by-four</i>	a vehicle equipped with four-wheel drive
<i>End to end</i>	in a row with the end of one object touching that of another
<i>Face to face</i>	(of two people) close together and facing each other
<i>Hand in hand</i>	closely associated or connected
<i>Hand to hand</i>	(of fighting) at close quarters
<i>Horror of horrors</i>	used to describe something as shocking or horrible
<i>Little by little</i>	by small degrees or amounts; gradually
<i>Shoulder to shoulder</i>	side by side
<i>Side by side</i>	together
<i>Step by step</i>	gradually
<i>Time to time</i>	at intervals; occasionally
<i>Tooth for a tooth</i>	the principle that a person who has injured another person is penalized to a similar degree; law of retaliation