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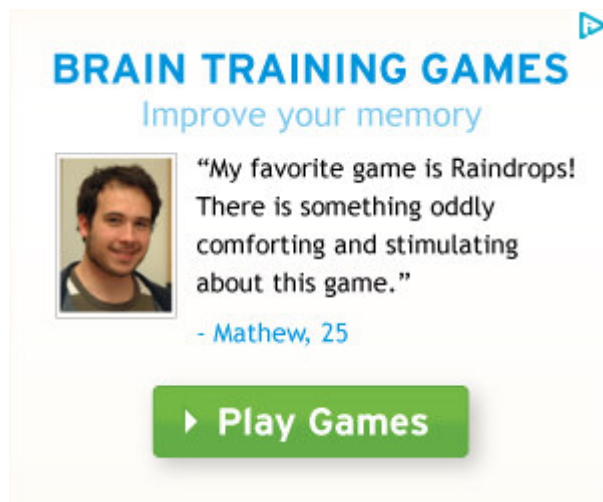
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Ethan's Oxymorons Page


An oxymoron is a contradictory word pair. George Carlin popularized Military Intelligence and Jumbo Shrimp in his stand-up comedy act, but there are many others. Following are all the oxymorons I've collected or devised myself, though admittedly some are not true oxymorons but just contradictory word pairs, like Truck Farm. If you have any oxymorons not in this list, please send them to me and I'll post them if they're good.

I don't often link to commercial sites, but this one sells T-shirts with oxymorons and is pretty cool: www.oxymoronix.com

Be sure to see Alan Marchand's list of ["I before E" Exceptions](#).



BRAIN TRAINING GAMES
Improve your memory

 "My favorite game is Raindrops! There is something oddly comforting and stimulating about this game."
- Mathew, 25

[▶ Play Games](#)

A 12-Ounce Pound Cake
 Accurate Horoscope
 Act Naturally
 Adult Children
 Advanced BASIC (programming language)
 African American (Italian American, Polish American, etc.)
 Agree to Disagree
 Airline Food
 Almost Done, Almost Exactly, Almost Ready
 Alone Together
 American Indian
 Amicable Divorce
 Anarchy Rules!
 Anxious Patient
 Appearance Hearing (court appearance)
 Approximately Equal
 Artificial Intelligence
 Assistant Supervisor

Auction Winner (you still have to *pay* for it!)

Audience Participation

Authentic Reproduction

Awfully Good

Awfully Nice

Baby Grand

Bad Health

Bad Luck

Bad Sex

Bad Sport

[Bald Wig](#)

Ball Club

[Beaver Moon](#) (think about it)

Benign Tumor

Bird Dog

Black Gold (slang for crude oil)

Black Light

Black Russian

Blue Bird of Happiness

Blue Green

Big Baby

Birthday Suit

Bitter Sweet

Boneless Ribs

Books on Tape

Bridegroom

Bright Night

Buffalo Wings

Bulldog

Business Ethics

Butt Head

Calm Storm

Cardinal Sin

Casual Dress

Catfish

Cautiously Optimistic

Charm Offensive

Chocolate 'Nilla Wafers

Christian Militia

Christian Scientist

Civil Disobedience

Civil Servant

Civil War

Classic Rock

Clean Coal, Clean Litter

Clearly Misunderstood

Clever Fool

Click the start button to shut down

Close Distance

Cold Fever, Cold Sweat

Comedic Tragedy

Commercial Art
Common Sense
Compassionate Conservative
Computer Jock
Concession Stand
Congressional Ethics
Conscious Sedation (hospital term)
Consensual Rape
Conservative Stock (as in the Stock Market)
Conservative Think Tank
Constant Change, Constant Variable
Constitutional Amendment to Ban Flag Burning
Conventional Wisdom
Couch Potato
Crash Landing
Creation Science
Criminal Justice
Criminal Mastermind
Crisis Management
Critical Acclaim
Cruel to be Kind
Cupboard
Current History
Damaged Goods (thanks to Stephan Bosch)
Dark Star
Date Rape
Deafening Silence
Death Benefits
Definite Maybe
Detailed Summary
Devout Atheist
Diet Ice Cream
Disinformation
Divided Loyalty
Dodge Ram
Doing Nothing
Domestic Violence
Double Solitaire
Down Escalator
Drink Responsibly (hypocritical tag line on liquor and beer commercials)
Drug War
Dry Gin, Dry Ice, Dry Lake, Dry Martini
Dull Knife
Economic Science
Educational TV
Elementary Calculus
Elevated Subway
Elevator Shoes
Evaporated Milk
Even Odds
Exact Estimate

Executive Assistant
Express Bus
Extended Limits
Extinct Life
Extra Time, Extra Money
Extra Virgin (the opposite of "A Little Pregnant")
Factory Air
Family Planning Association (you go there to *not* have a family!)
Family Vacation
Fast Subwoofer (silly audiophile term)
Fat-Free Ice Cream
Fatally Injured
Female Sperm Whale
Filter Cigarette
Final Draft
First Annual
Foreign National
Forward Lateral (football term)
Found Missing
Free Gift
Freezer Burn
Fresh Cheese
Fresh Frozen
Fresh Smelt
Friendly Argument
Friendly Fire
Front End
Fun Run
Functional Illiterate
Functioning Alcoholic (really?)
Fuzzy Logic
Gain Reduction (audio term)
Garage Apartment
Gentleman Bandit
Gentleman's Club
Gentle Turbulence
Girly Man
Global Village
Good Cigar
Good Grief
Good Loser
Good Riddance
Good Shit
Gourmet Pizza
Government Organization
Government Intelligence
Government Worker
Graduate Student
Graphic Language
Great Depression (what was so great about it?)
Greater Cleveland

Greater Evil
Group of Individuals
Grow Down (feathers on a duck)
Growing Smaller
Guest Host
Gun Safe
Half Full (or Half Empty)
Hamburger Steak
Happily Married (groan)
Hard Curve
Hard Liquor
Hard Pillow
Hard Roll
Hard Water
Haitian former President-for-life Jean-Claude Duvalier
Head Butt
Healthy Tan
Heavy Gas
Hermitage (where multiple hermits live)
Hell's Angels
High Minimum Wage
High-Speed Computer
Higher Ground
Highway Underpass
Holistic Healing
Hollow Point
Holy Crap
Holy War
Home Office
Homeopathic Medicine
[Honest Cheater](#) (click for proof)
Honest Crook
Hopelessly Optimistic
Horse Fly
Hot Chili
Hot Ice (stolen diamond)
Hot Water Heater
House Boat
House Plant
Humane Slaughter
Humble Opinion
Ice Water, Iced Coffee
Idiot Savant
Incredibly Convincing
Independent Financial Advisor
Industrial Park
Inexact Science
Inexpensive Car
Inside Out
Instant Classic
Internet Security

Invisible Ink
Irate Patient
Jet Lag
Jews for Jesus
Job Security
Jumbo Shrimp
Junk Food
Lamp Shade
Larger Half (ie: "We cut the cake in half, but my older brother always manages to get the larger half.")
Last Initial
Lean Pork
Least Favorite
Legal Brief
Legally Drunk
Legitimate Ruler
Liberal Bias
Liberal, Kansas (real city in a very conservative state)
Liberal Republican
Light Heavyweight
Light-Skinned Black
Limited Edition Print
Limited Lifetime Guarantee
Liquid Crystal
Liquid Gas
Little Giant
Live Recording
Living Dead, Living Will
Long Shorts
Loud Whisper
"Love to Hate"
Low Altitude
Man Child
Mandatory Elective
Mandatory Option
Marijuana Initiative
Medium Rare
Melted Ice
Mercy Killing
Metal Wood (golf club)
Microsoft Works
Mild Abrasive
Military Intelligence, Military Justice
Minor Disaster
Miracle Drug
Mobile Home
Mobile Station
Modern Classic
Modern History
Monopoly
Mournful Optimism

Moving Target
Much Less
Music Business
Mutual Differences
Natural Makeup
Near Miss
Necessary Evil
Negative Growth (economic recession)
Negative Patient Health Outcome (hospital-speak for "you're dead")
New and Improved
"New Antiques arriving daily!"
New Classic
New Old Stock
New Tradition
Night Light
Non-Dairy Creamer
Non-Denominational Church
Non-Stop Flight
"Now, then"
Old Boy
Old News
One-man band
Only Choice
Open Marriage
Open Secret
Organized Mess
Original Copy
Oxymoron (oxy=sharp, moron=dull)
Paid Volunteer
Partial Victory
Partially Complete
Passive Aggressive
Passive Amplifier (ie: a megaphone)
Passive Preamp (an audio preamplifier is active by definition)
Peace Force, Peace Offensive, Peacemaker Missile
Perfect Idiot
Perfectly Awful
Permanent (as in hair treatment that has to be done regularly)
Pet Fish
Pianoforte
Plastic Cork (I opened a bottle of cheap wine just last night!)
Plastic Drop Cloth
Plastic Glasses, Plastic Silverware
Plastic Wood Blocks (percussion instrument)
Play Responsibly (tag line in lottery ads)
Political Science
Postal Service
Posthumous Conception (using sperm frozen before the donor died)
Preemptive Self-Defense
Preliminary Final
Press Release

Pretty Ugly
Primitive Technology (Aboriginal and other early crafts)
Private Community
Progressive Conservative
Public Opinion (opinions are unique)
Pure Evil
Quicksand (you sink into it very slowly)
Random Logic
Rap Artist
Rap Music, Military Music
Rarely Done
Razed (as in torn down)
Reagan Democrat
Reagan's Memoirs
Reality Television
Recent History
Red Licorice
Relaxation Exercise
Religious Education
Religious Right (because they're wrong)
Religious Tolerance
Resident Alien
Restless Sleep
Retired Worker
Rolling Stop
Rogue Cop
Rural Metro (ambulance service)
Rush Hour
RV Resort
[Safe Sex](#)
Safety Hazard
Same Difference
Sanitary Landfill
Sanitary Napkin
Science Fiction
Scientific Consensus
Second Best
Sadomasochism
See-Saw
Self-help Group
Self-rescue (wind-surfing term)
Self-taught
Sensitive Guy
Serious Clown
"Seriously, you need to lighten up."
Short Distance
Signing Off On something
Silent Alarm
Silent Scream
Single Diversity (a type of wireless microphone)
Singular Relationship

Sit Up
Slumber Party
Small Crowd
Small World
Social Outcast
Social Science
Soft Rock
Solo Concert
Sour Cream
Speed Limit
Spendthrift
Stand Down
Stock Modified (performance car term)
Stop Action (w/thanks to John Sweeney)
Stop Motion
Straight Hooks
String Cheese
Stripper's Dressing Room
Structured C Program
Student Teacher
Suicide Victim
Sure Bet
Sweet and Sour
Sweet Sorrow
Synthetic natural gas
Tabled Motion
Talk Show
Tax Free, Tax Relief, Tax Return
Tentative Decision
Terribly Nice
Terribly Pleased
Terrific Headache
Tight Slacks
Titanium woods (golf clubs)
Toll Free
Tough Love
Toxic Assets
Traffic Flow
Tragic Comedy
Truck Farm
Turned Up Missing
Unacceptable Solution
Unbiased Opinion
Uninvited Guest
United Independent (a real taxi company in Los Angeles)
United Nations
Unknown Identity
Up and Died
Upper Low (weather term)
Upside Down
Urban Cowboy

Useful Oxymoron
Vacation Bible School
Vibrating Ringtone
Victimless Crime
Virtual Reality
Virtually Identical
Wake (you wake up, yet at a wake you're dead)
War Games
Where the Truth Lies
White Chocolate
White Lie
Wicked Good
Wireless Cable (type of cable TV transmission)
Work Party
Working Vacation
Young Adult

Pam Carson sent me this: "I look for oxymorons in literature. In Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in Act III are several: damned saint, honorable villain, loyal deceit."

Bruce Mansbridge submitted these: "The NY Times had an editorial once where it described something as 'unusual, even odd.' A fast horse is one that's quick, unless it's fast (tied up). And colors that don't run are also fast."

Paul O'Brien sent me this gem: "Not quite an oxymoron but might be worth listing anyway - Starting to Stop - as when it's raining or snowing and someone says "It's starting to stop." BTW, what does one do with a tree after he cuts it down? He cuts it up. Ain't English Grand!"
