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## Volume 9

Aomori Prefecture English Education Society

# REAL ENGLISH

GET ENGLISH USEFUL FOR YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE!

## 「はやっ」くちことば

「舌」がツイストする。そう早口言葉です。日本語でも多少の違いはあれども全国共通だったりして、話しにくい言葉を「かまない」ように一気に話す。「生麦生米生卵」、「赤巻紙青巻紙黄巻紙」... 誰が考えたのか。意味はなんなのだろう。しかしながら、不思議と自然にストレス無く何度も try してしまう、その達成感は、外国語を学ぶ上でとても重要な感覚では。今回はそういった観点から見ていきましょう。

### Tongue Twisters: Challenges in Pronunciation and Intonation

Using Tongue Twisters is a good way to improve the quality of your spoken English. Tongue Twisters can either be an *actual and meaningful sentence* or *a series of words that don't have any meaning or something that doesn't make sense*. In either case, the point of the Tongue Twister is that it is difficult to say because it includes combinations of sounds that make you *twist your tongue* in ways it usually doesn't have to. Children love Tongue Twisters both for their strange meanings (when they have a meaning) and for the challenge of saying a Tongue Twister **three times in a row as quickly as you can**. Let's challenge some Tongue Twisters.

An easy one for children is: I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream.

Now for some more difficult ones:

If two witches have to watch two watches, which witch would watch which watch?

You have to imagine that there are two watches (時計) and there are two witches (魔女) that have to watch (見る) the two watches (so that they are not stolen?) ... The question is: would 魔女 A watch 時計 A and 魔女 B watch 時計 B? Or vice versa—which means: would 魔女 A watch 時計 B and 魔女 B watch 時計 A? This Tongue Twister is good for the 'w' sound (obviously), but also for 'r' ... because you have to make a 「チュウ」 shape with your lips in order to do it ... think about a phrase like rotten red raspberry rice.

Sofia saw Sharon's shoes sitting on Shirley's sofa (couch).

But why was she so sure that the shoes she saw sitting on Shirley's sofa were surely Sharon's shoes?

Again ... you have to imagine a pair of shoes on a sofa ... Shirley's sofa ... and then imagine that Sofia sees them and thinks that – for sure – those shoes are Sharon's. The question is: why is she so sure?

Thirty-three thousand three-hundred and thirty-three thirsty thinkers think that  
Thursday the thirteenth is their thirty-third birthday.

With this Tongue Twister, you can have some fun with numbers using three:

33,333 thirsty thinkers, 木曜日の 13 日, 33 歳, and so on.

Everyone loves wonderful leather. Everyone wants wonderful leather.  
But which wonderful leather would you want?  
We have wonderful *red* leather and we have wonderful *orange* leather.  
*What a rich world of wonderfully luxurious colorful leather.*

This tongue twister mixes up three combinations: 'w' along with 'l' and 'r' ... Here you can also emphasize certain words to create dramatic effect—stressing 'loves,' 'wants,' or 'which,' or 'wonderful,' or 'would,' for example. Also ... try to say the final phrase quickly ... three times in a row, if you can:

*What a rich world of wonderfully luxurious colorful leather.*

Remember that there are no rules with Tongue Twisters ... the meaning can be nonsense ... and you can add or change anything you want ...

Twelve twin twirlers twirled twelve twisted twigs.  
The twelve twisted twigs that the twelve twin twirlers twirled were truly great.  
Twirling twisted twigs like the twelve twin twirlers twirled is tremendously difficult.

Of course, no one twirls twigs (*twigs are small branches from a tree –twirlers don't twirl twigs; twirlers twirl batons*), but anything is possible with our imagination. But the twigs are great and twirling them is difficult.

Sometimes the focus in a Tongue Twister should be on having fun rather than challenging a difficult pronunciation.

Zebras zig and zebras zag.  
Zigging zebras zip by zagging zebras.  
Zagging zebras zoom around Zigging zebras.  
In the end, all the zebras zig and zag and zip and zoom all the way back to the Zebra Zoo.

For this Tongue Twister, you have to know that **zig** and **zag** and **zoom** and **zip** mean to move about in a very random way... to 「ジグザグ」. The last challenge is not really a Tongue Twister as much as it is Word Play. The 'play' is with the word 'felt' ... both as 'to feel' (past tense and past participle: 'felt') and as a type of fabric: 「フェルト・羅紗」. In addition, this should be read in a very dramatic way, as an oration 「演説」.

When I first felt that felt hat's felt  
I felt that of all the felt I have ever felt,  
I had never felt a piece of felt  
which felt as fine as that felt hat's felt felt.

If you enjoy the challenge ... and the fun ... of Tongue Twisters, you can find many lists on the Internet: check out [www.esl4kids.net/tongue.html](http://www.esl4kids.net/tongue.html) or <https://www.ef.com/wwen/english-resources/tongue-twisters-english/>.

## Next REAL ENGLISH: JANUARY 2024!

◇先月から時間がとてつもなく早く過ぎていきます。まだ師走の前なのにと考えていたら、気づいたらもう走り出していました。個人的には、今年一年は仕事の面で常に誰かと一緒に走っていました。まさに「伴走」でした。一年間の振り返り月、12月、忘れたいこともありますが、ひたすら勉強になった年でした。みなさんはどうでしたか。また来年お会いしましょう。(文責 伴)

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