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## Vocabulary – Tautophrases

### Understanding Tautophrases – Matching Part 1

A **tautophrase** is an expression that repeats the same words, for example: **'It is what it is.'** They are a good way to end a conversation, because you are expressing an unanswerable truth. Your listener can't reply because they are unable to decide whether what they heard was incredibly profound or completely meaningless. Far from being 'nonsensical' or 'redundant', each tautophrase has its own distinct meaning, as seen in the **20 examples** below.

Print this page onto thin card, cut out the cards, mix them up, and ask students to match together each statement (left) with its tautophrase reply (right). Why not continue each exchange and create a **short role play**?

This hire car is terrible. What do you think?	<b>It is what it is.</b> We can't do much about it now.
Reverend Brown, you must apologise to your flock.	<b>I said what I said,</b> Gerald, and I'm afraid I'm not sorry.
Can you read the letter again. Maybe I was wrong.	No, you were right. <b>It says what it says.</b>
How can you believe her? It's just gossip!	Don't bother explaining – <b>I heard what I heard.</b>
Mum! What time is dinner? I'm starving!	Stop hassling me! <b>We'll eat when we eat.</b> OK?
I wish I hadn't played dirty. I really let the side down.	Don't worry! You won. <b>A win's a win,</b> you know.
Don't go to work today. Stay at home with me.	Well, as John Wayne said, <b>'A man's gotta do...'</b>
Look, I won't ever speak to Kevin again.	Why can't you just <b>let bygones be bygones?</b>
My hair is a disaster. I need to wash it again.	Hurry up and get ready. Leave it. <b>It looks like it looks.</b>
Can't you drive any faster? We'll miss the beginning.	Hey, chill out! <b>We get there when we get there.</b>
But it was only a pet goldfish.	Let me grieve for poor Goldie. <b>I feel what I feel.</b>
Do you think the artist meant anything by the pipe?	As Freud said, <b>'Sometimes a pipe is just a pipe.'</b>
We like you; you're a hard worker, but, er...	Why can't you <b>call a spade a spade?</b> I'm fired, right?
But what does that mean <i>in practice</i> , Charles?	What? <b>Brexit means Brexit!</b> It means leaving the EU.
You've got CDs by The Monkees and Mantovani...!	So what? I have eclectic tastes. <b>I like what I like.</b>
Robin was so unkind to me, mummy. I hate him!	There, there. Forget him. <b>What's done is done.</b>
How long will you keep the offer running?	Oh, not long. An' remember – <b>once it's gone it's gone.</b>
But it was wrong, Barbara. Can't you condemn him?	I know. But <b>he did what he did.</b> We have to move on.
Where are Scott and Tim? Still out clubbing?	I guess. Don't worry about it. <b>Boys will be boys.</b>
But you know that new phone is so expensive, Bob.	I don't care how much it is. <b>It costs what it costs.</b>