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Vocabulary – Tautophrase

Understanding Tautophrases – Matching Part 2

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**?

It looks like the project's gonna be way overdue.	 We are where we are, so let's try to finish it ASAP.
I still can't believe you fell over in the cafeteria!	OK – look – a joke's a joke. Let's forget it now.
Can't wait for my exam results. I really want a first.	Don't get your hopes up. If it happens it happens.
How much d'you reckon we'll make at the school fair?	I don't mind. You know – we make what we make.
What time are you going to rise? It's nearly noon!	I get up when I get up. Clear off – and close the door!
You can't win. Just walk away. Give up. Leave it!	No way! As Yogi Berra said: 'It ain't over till it's over.'
Is that all the pudding you're going to give me?	Hey – you get what you get! This diner ain't minted.
Darren doesn't like me because of my freckles.	Learn to accept yourself. You are who you are.
How long will we have to stay extra tonight?	I dunno. We gotta finish – it takes as long as it takes.
We got detention for playing football in the library.	Well, rules are rules and they should be respected.
Someone was rude about my photo on Facebook!	Don't worry about it. Haters gonna hate, and all that.
It was great working with Li and Tom. I really miss it.	Yes, but it was what it was. You'll find a better job.
I bet you're excited after the audition went so well...?	Huh? If I get the part, I get the part. If not, then not.
Er, but could you just give me my money back?	Sorry, pal. A deal is a deal is a deal. No refunds!
My mum doesn't think I should go to college.	You do you. Think for yourself, for a change.
How do you know that Collins is going to quit?	I can't give away my sources, but I know what I know.
I hope the cake gets here before the party begins.	If it gets here, it gets here. If it doesn't, it doesn't.
It's a shame we couldn't've won more on the lottery.	We won what we won, so I guess just be grateful?
I'm so worried about where we're going to live.	Whatever will be, will be. It's pointless to get upset.
Do I have to pay you? I haven't got a hundred quid.	Sorry, Barry – a bet's a bet.