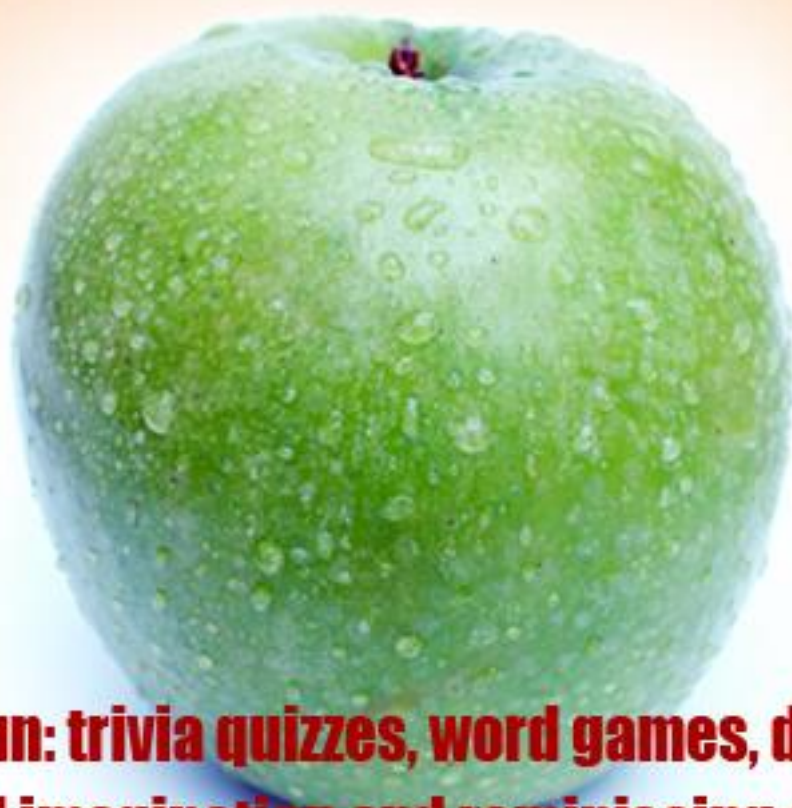


# MindPlay Connections™

# MUSIC

## TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD



**Brain teaser fun: trivia quizzes, word games, discussion questions, and imagination and reminiscing exercises**



# Welcome to Wiser Now's MindPlay Connections™

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Feel free to go beyond the suggested uses. For example, many of the exercises are likely to prompt reminiscences that can open up additional discussions.

If you have exercises, resources, or ideas you want to add, please feel free to email [Kathy@WiserNow.com](mailto:Kathy@WiserNow.com).

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

“**Music to Lighten the Mood**” will have you whistling a happy tune as you imagine yourself as a rock star, play Mondegreens, match quirky country music titles, and learn about “The Really Terrible Orchestra,” among other interesting performers. Music is a great way to bring people together, to build warm feelings and rapport. I hope you will also take the opportunity to break into song whenever the mood hits you as you complete the exercises. And do check out the musical Internet references to enrich this experience.

This title is one of an ever expanding list of dozens that can be found at <http://shop.wisernow.com>. It makes a great accompaniment to other light-hearted publications such as:

- The Nifty 1950s
- Movie Nostalgia
- TV Nostalgia (2 parts)
- Literature Light

### The goal of MindPlay Connections™ is always twofold:

1) We want you to make playful new connections in your brain, because learning new information builds new brain pathways – as opposed to retrieving answers you already know, which merely deepens ruts.

2) We want you to strengthen your connections with others by sharing the exercises with a partner or group, because having strong social networks is one of the most important components of wellbeing at any age.

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## Word game: Quirky Country Music Title Time

In honor of Quirky Country Music Title Day (March 27), this word game asks you to match the quirky beginning to its quirky end. There are many titles that were too mean or too risqué to print. This is the family-rated version.

Sources: <http://www.spuripedia.co.uk/phpBB/viewtopic.php?p=6169>  
<http://www.zanyholidays.com/2008/03/quirky-country-music-song-titles-day.html>  
<http://www.downstream.sk.ca/country.htm>

### Part 1: Can you fill in the blanks from the endings below the beginnings?

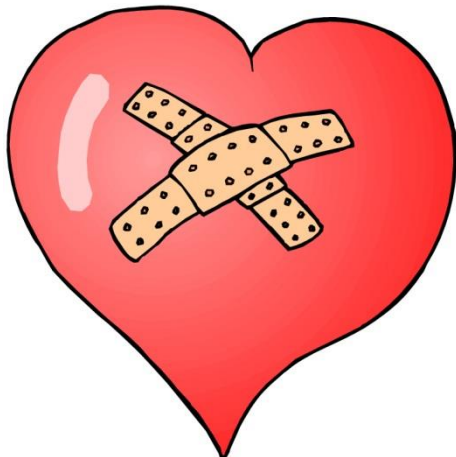
1. Am I Double Parked by \_\_\_\_
2. Billy Broke My Heart at Walgreens and \_\_\_\_
3. Going to Hell in \_\_\_\_
4. He's Got a Way with Women and \_\_\_\_
5. High Cost of \_\_\_\_
6. I Bought the Shoes That \_\_\_\_
7. I Changed Her Oil, \_\_\_\_
8. I Gave Her My Heart And A Diamond and \_\_\_\_
9. I Only Miss You On The Days That \_\_\_\_
10. I Went Out on a Limb and \_\_\_\_
11. I'd Rather Pass a Kidney Stone than \_\_\_\_
12. If Love Were Oil, \_\_\_\_



- a. Another Night with You
- b. End In " Y "
- c. Fell Off the Family Tree
- d. He Just Got Away with Mine
- e. I Cried All the Way to Sears
- f. I'd Be a Quart Low
- g. Just Walked Out on Me
- h. Low Living
- i. She Changed My Life
- j. She Clubbed Me With a Spade
- k. The Curbstone of Your Heart?
- l. Your Heavenly Arms

Part 2: Can you fill in the blanks from the endings below the beginnings?

13. If The Phone Doesn't Ring, \_\_\_\_
14. If You Want to Keep the Beer Real Cold, \_\_\_\_
15. I'm the Only \_\_\_\_
16. I've Been Carrying a Torch for You So Long That \_\_\_\_
17. I've Got Red Eyes From Your White Lies and \_\_\_\_
18. I've Got a Funny Feeling \_\_\_\_
19. Messed Up In Mexico, \_\_\_\_
20. My Wife Ran Off With My Best Friend, and \_\_\_\_
21. Run for the Roundhouse, Nellie, \_\_\_\_
22. She Dropped Me in Denver So \_\_\_\_
23. Who's Makin' Time with the Time Keeper's Daughter, \_\_\_\_
24. You Changed Your Name From Brown to Jones, and \_\_\_\_



- a. He Can't Corner You There
- b. Hell Mama Ever Raised
- c. I Had a Whole Mile to Fall
- d. I Sure Do Miss Him
- e. I Won't Be Feeling Funny Very Long
- f. I'm Blue All The Time
- g. It's Burned a Great Big Hole in My Heart
- h. It's Me
- i. Living On Refried Dreams
- j. Mine From Brown to Blue
- k. Put It Next to My Ex-Wife's Heart
- l. When the Time Keeper's Keeping Time?

Answers:

- |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. k | 5. h | 9. b | 13.h | 17.f | 21.a |
| 2. e | 6. g | 10.c | 14.k | 18.e | 22.c |
| 3. l | 7. i | 11.a | 15.b | 19.i | 23.l |
| 4. d | 8. j | 12.f | 16.g | 20.d | 24.j |

## Word game: Quirky Country Music Title Time Redux

In honor of Quirky Country Music Title Day (March 27), the previous word quiz asked you to match quirky country music title beginnings and endings. Here is a second chance to take do the same using unusual metaphors to describe the singer's typical dire straits. (Sources: same as previous quiz)

### Part 1: Can you fill in the blanks from the endings below the beginnings?

1. I've Got Tears In My Ears \_\_\_\_
2. I Ran Over My Dog in My Pickup at the Train Station Comin' Back  
from My Mother's Funeral \_\_\_\_
3. I've Got Red Eyes from Your White Lies and \_\_\_\_
4. Noses Run \_\_\_\_
5. I've Got Hair Oil On My Ears And My Glasses Are Slipping Down \_\_\_\_
6. Since You Bought The Waterbed \_\_\_\_
7. Take Me To The Corn Field Honey And \_\_\_\_
8. Take Me To The Quarry And \_\_\_\_
  - a. After I Got Out Of Jail, In The Rain
  - b. But Baby I Can See Through You
  - c. From Lying On My Back While I Cry Over You
  - d. I'll Kiss You Between The Ears
  - e. I'll Get A Little Bolder
  - f. I'm Blue All The Time
  - g. In My Family
  - h. We've Slowly Drifted Apart



Part 2: Can you fill in the blanks from the endings below the beginnings?



1. Velcro Arms \_\_\_\_
2. You Can't Have Your \_\_\_\_
3. You Put Me on My Feet \_\_\_\_
4. You Were Only A Splinter \_\_\_\_
5. In the Footprints of Time \_\_\_\_
6. I'm the Only Hell \_\_\_\_
7. She Made Toothpicks \_\_\_\_

- a. As I Slid Down The Bannister Of Life
- b. I'm Just a Heel
- c. Kate And Edith Too
- d. Mama Ever Raised
- e. Of the Timber of My Heart
- f. Teflon Heart
- g. When You Took Her Off My Hands

Answers, Part 1:

1. c      2. a      3. f      4. g      5. b      6. h      7. d      8. e

Answers, Part 2:

1. f      2. c      3. g      4. a      5. b      6. d      7. e



I was born with music inside me.  
Music was one of my parts.  
Like my ribs, my kidneys, my liver, my heart.  
Like my blood.  
It was a force already within me when I arrived on the scene.  
It was a necessity for me – like food or water.  
~ Ray Charles

## Word game: Mondegreens

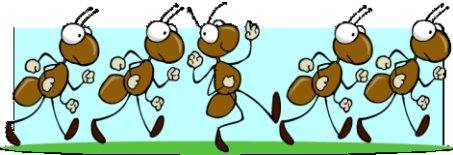
The American writer Sylvia Wright coined the term “**mondegreen**” for misunderstood lines of poetry and song in a 1954 essay for Harper's Magazine. She explained that as a child, her mother read old poetry to her, and one of her favorite ballads was the 17<sup>th</sup> century “Bonnie Earl O' Murray.” The first four lines as *she* heard them were:

Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands,  
Oh, where hae ye been?  
They hae slain the Earl Amurray, [sic]  
And Lady Mondegreen.

The actual fourth line is "And laid him on the green," but even when she learned the truth, Ms. Wright felt her interpretation was better.

Here are some other misunderstood lines from songs. Can you figure out what the original line was?

1. Jose, can you see? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Through the night, with the light from a bulb \_\_\_\_\_
3. Oh my darling lemon pie \_\_\_\_\_
4. You have lost your gum forever, dreadful sorry, Clementine



5. The ants are my friends; they're blowing in the wind \_\_\_\_\_
6. The girl with colitis goes by \_\_\_\_\_
7. Then I saw her face, now I'm gonna leave her \_\_\_\_\_
8. You made the rice, I made the gravy \_\_\_\_\_
9. All my luggage, I will send to you \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are you going to starve an old friend? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Bringing in the sheets \_\_\_\_\_
12. Donuts make my brown eyes blue \_\_\_\_\_
13. Goin' to the Jack-O-Lantern, gonna get married \_\_\_\_\_
14. Got a lot of lucky peanuts \_\_\_\_\_
15. I'll never leave your pizza burning \_\_\_\_\_

16. I'm 264 my shirt, 264 my shirt, 264 \_\_\_\_\_
17. Looks like tomatoes \_\_\_\_\_
18. She's got a chicken to ride *or* She's got a tick in her eye.

\_\_\_\_\_

In a similar vein was the favorite children's song, which was actually written like this:

Maerzee dotes and dozee dotes and  
 little lamsee divey  
 a kiddie ee iveetoo, wouldn't you?



The gibberish song translates as "Mares eat oats and does (female deer) eat oats and little lambs eat ivy, A kid'll eat ivy too, wouldn't you?" It was meant to teach children to enunciate clearly. Do you remember it?

Answers:

1. O, Say can you see? ("The Star Spangled Banner")
2. Through the night, with the light from above ("God Bless America")
3. Oh my darling, Clementine (traditional song)
4. You are lost and gone forever, dreadful sorry, Clementine
5. The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind (Bob Dylan)
6. The girl with kaleidoscope eyes (Beatles)
7. Then I saw her face, now I'm a believer (The Monkees)
8. You may be right, I may be crazy (Billy Joel)
9. All my loving, I will send to you (Beatles)
10. Are you going to Scarborough Fair? (Simon & Garfunkel)
11. Bringing in the sheaves (Hymn)
12. Don't it make my brown eyes blue? (Crystal Gale)
13. Goin' to the chapel and we're gonna get married (Dixie Cups, "Chapel of Love")
14. Got a lot of love between us (Frankie Vallie and the Four Seasons)
15. I'll never be your beast of burden (Rolling Stones)
16. I'm too sexy for my shirt too sexy for my shirt (Right Said Fred "I'm Too Sexy")
17. Looks like we made it (Barry Mannilow)
18. She's got a ticket to ride (Beatles)

And to misquote Psalm 23, *May Good Mrs. Murphy* (goodness and mercy) *follow you all the days of your life!*

Major source for this exercise: <http://www.corsinet.com/braincandy/wrlyric.html>



## Discussion: Barbershop Quartet Day

April 11<sup>th</sup> is Barbershop Quartet Day to commemorate the day in 1938 when a group of men singing on a rooftop in Tulsa, Oklahoma formed the "Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America" (SPEBSQSA), but the roots of the close harmony singing go much further back. Certainly people have harmonized for centuries, but according to

<http://www.acappellafoundation.org/essay/bbshistory.html>, "The 'barbershop' style of music was

first associated with black southern quartets of the 1870s, such as The American Four and The Hamtown Students." Many of these groups did actually begin singing in barbershops, but they also performed in multiple venues.



In an NPR "Morning Edition" report Jim Wildman (<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/patc/barbershop/>) interviewed Gage Averill, chairman of the music department at New York University and author of a book on barbershop singing. Mr. Averill said that barbershop quartets became associated with white performers when the recorded version of the music became widely distributed. Thomas Edison's early phonograms spread to parlors around the country, "but they needed content," he said, "So they actively sought out groups to record. You couldn't bring an orchestra . . . or a chorus into the early studios. They were cramped and you had to sing right into the horn (microphone). So it favored small groups and these quartets were just perfect."

The singing style has lost some of its visibility and broad popularity since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but there are still thousands of enthusiasts among both men and women (frequently known as Sweet Adelines) in the U.S. and abroad. (Pictured here is the group the Great British Barbershop Boys.)

Making music is one of the best things you can do to both wake up and positively stimulate your brain, so lift up your voice and sing!

Talk about it:

- The last popular movie (by my recollection) that featured barbershop singing was "The Music Man" in 1962. Did you see and enjoy it?
- Have you ever gone to a live performance of barbershop singers or seen them at street fairs, in Disneyland and other places? What did you think?
- Do you enjoy close harmony singing as either a participant or listener? Talk about your experiences.

## Discussion: Whistling a Happy Tune

For most of us, whistling connotes happiness and a carefree spirit, but entrants to the International Whistlers Convention, in Louisburg, North Carolina (the world's whistling capital) held each April are serious competitors and seriously talented. Winners need to prove their adeptness at both classical and pop music and like other musicians, practice for hours a day. You can learn more at the official website <http://www.whistlingiwc.com/> and if you enjoy listening to whistling, check out <http://www.whistlersnet.com/> and <http://www.whistlingiwc.com/whistling-videos.html>.



Dave Morris (pictured here) is an international champion who gives a stunning rendition of Danny Boy at <http://www.whistlersnet.com/video/676513:Video:66>.

Chris Ullman, another winner of the international competition, gives this tip to would-be-competitors: "Kissing makes my lips mushy, which is bad for sustaining a pucker. I refrain from kissing 24 hours before a performance and 48 hours before a competition." And yes, he's serious.

If I hear a man whistling, I will follow him anywhere, because it is a sign for me of someone who is happy and at peace with himself. One of my all-time favorite pieces of music is the opening to "The Andy Griffith Show" which featured Andy and his son Opie walking along a dirt road on their way to a fishing pond. You can hear it on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IY7wdi0oTgk>.

Talk about whistling.



- Do you whistle? If so, what prompts you to whistle? Are you good at it?
- Do you have happy memories of someone whistling? Talk about them.
- Most whistlers seem to be male, but do you know women who whistle? Who? (The YouTube listing above features several amazing women.)
- Whistling conferences are attended (and won by) fabulous participants from India, China, Japan, Norway and other parts of the globe. Does that surprise you? Have you ever thought of whistling as a unifying language without words? Will you now?
- Although whistling almost always suggests happiness to me, some people can whistle a sad song (as with "Danny Boy" mentioned above). Have you ever heard someone whistle in a mournful way? What was the cause?

## Reminisce About Another Sort of Music to the Ears

Another April “musical” event is Auctioneer Day (April 16<sup>th</sup>). The auctioneer’s rhythmic patter was first celebrated in song by champion auctioneer LeRoy VanDyke who says he wrote the song about a cousin, but he certainly could have been speaking for himself. You can see him in delightful action in a 1962 performance available on YouTube at



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2UTjWU4VoM&feature=related> Mr. Van Dyke has spent his whole life as a performer and auctioneer, and I guarantee you will be unable to resist smiling – or resist his smile. Furthermore, in case you thought only men were auctioneers, you will enjoy this YouTube performance which features women competing for the international championship title <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5G0TFyaaUs&feature=related>.

Talk about auctions.

- Have you ever attended one for livestock, a charity, or an estate sale, for example? What was being sold?
- Did you enjoy listening to the auctioneer?
- Did you buy anything? Did you mean to buy it? Do you still have the item?
- Is the auctioneer patter an art form worth preserving? Can you imitate it?



### Quick discussion: Singing Telegrams

July 28, 1933 the first ever singing telegram was sent by a fan to Rudy Vallee (then a famous Hollywood singing star himself,) in honor of his 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday and delivered over the phone by Western Union operator Lucille Lipps. (Appropriate name, don’t you think?) George Oslin was the Western Union public relations director who authorized it. He continued to promote the idea as a means of associating telegrams with happy, not just tragic events, but he was at first highly ridiculed. Most of the telegrams – which did indeed become popular – were delivered in person, because in those early years many people still didn’t have phones. The singing service was suspended in 1974 by Western Union, but is still carried on by private companies.

(Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singing\\_telegrams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singing_telegrams))

- Have you ever gotten a singing telegram or birthday card?

## Reminiscing About Your Musical Memories

All of us have grown up with some sort of musical memories, although for some people the memories are stronger than others. Use the spaces below to write your thoughts about the role of music in the family you grew up in, and its role more recently. Then share them!



What are some of the first songs you remember hearing and/or singing? For example: lullabies, children's songs ("Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"), or perhaps commercial jingles or hymns. Do you still enjoy singing them?

Was music played regularly in your household? If so, what kind of music? Did someone in your family regularly sing or whistle? Talk about your memories of the music you heard most often growing up and of the person who was most musical in your family.

Did anyone in your family play a musical instrument? If so, what instrument and in what context? (For example, some people played for their own enjoyment; others participated in city bands or symphonies which gave regular concerts.) What influence did this person have on you?

Did you sing or play an instrument growing up? Were you given lessons or did you learn on your own? Did you have to be reminded to practice or were you naturally drawn to doing so?



Were you part of a chorus or choir or school band? How did that experience influence you?

Music therapists will tell you that music from our teenage years – music we first fell in love to – tends to be music that resonates with us for the rest of our lives. (And we are often judgmental about the music preferred by later generations.) What music invokes nostalgia for you? Who are the artists? What are some of the songs?



Is there any music that you maybe weren't exposed to when you were young, but you learned to like later in life? If so, what kind of music? In what ways do you seek it out?

Many of us like many kinds of music – pop, rock, Broadway musicals, classical, country, jazz, folk music, and songs we learned at summer camp. What are all the types of music you enjoy and in what situations do you choose to listen to each?

Is there any form of music that you find irritating, hard to listen to? What kind?

If someone wanted to calm you with music, what would you find most soothing?





## Reminisce: Spring Showers

The movie musical “Singin’ in the Rain,” starring Gene Kelly, Donald O’Connor and Debbie Reynolds had its premiere in early spring: March 27, 1952. March is Umbrella Month and April showers follow quickly behind, so that prompted this topic of gifts from the sky.

In the movie, Gene Kelly famously bursts out, “I’m singing in the rain, just singing in the rain; what a wonderful feeling, I’m happy again.” (Lyrics by Arthur Freed)

How do you feel about rain? Do like to walk in the rain, feel it on your face, splash through puddles? Or when it rains do you prefer to curl up indoors with a good book and a cup of tea? Or . . . ?

Gene Kelly’s character sings in the rain because he is in love. Many people have written about romance in the rain. Do you have any romantic memories or fantasies about being in love in the rain? Write or share them.

Rain has both positive and negative metaphors tied to it. We talk about not letting anyone rain on our parade, but we also talk about rain’s ability to cleanse and refresh the world and to bring us rainbows. Which metaphors about rain suit your personality?



Imagination: Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella or  
Create an Umbrella to Make You Smile

Umbrellas were once black and dull, but parasols have always been fanciful, and umbrellas now come in reproductions of famous paintings and other colorful designs. I have one with blue sky and fluffy clouds on the inside. Use your imagination and decorate your own umbrella using the outline below.



*Don't let a man put anything over on you except an umbrella.*  
~ Mae West

## Imagination: Create a Complaint Choir Song

Several years ago in Helsinki, on a day cold enough to complain about, husband and wife artists Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen and Tellervo Kalleinen, were walking together when they began contemplating the Finnish expression, "Valituskuoro." It translates as "complaints choir" and describes situations when a lot of people are complaining simultaneously. They thought, "Wouldn't it be fantastic to literally organize a complaints choir?"



In 2005, they appeared with the first one at the Springhill Institute in Birmingham, England, where the makeshift choir sang in public squares and bars and complained about the price of beer. Since then dozens of choirs have performed in many countries.

What do they complain about? Virtually everything. Typically, complaints range from the ridiculous to the sublime: bad dates, people who chew gum too loudly, global warming and so on.

(Pictured: the Chicago Complaints Choir practicing at the School of the Art Institute, Oct. 27, 2007)

While my writing usually promotes positive thinking, Oliver says, "That's insane." He is devoted to the idea that it is healthier to belt gripes out in four-part harmony, and says it is therapeutic to acknowledge that things aren't as they should be. "When everyone's singing your complaint, it's very cathartic," said one member of the Chicago choir. "It's as if you have a lot of support for your complaint." (Many performances are now visible on YouTube. Click on "Complaint Choirs.")

If you want to form your own choir, the originators ask you to link with their website, ([www.complaintschoir.org](http://www.complaintschoir.org)) where there are a number of instructions for getting started, but for now, we simply encourage you to write your own complaint song.

Think of a pet peeve or a prime irritation, think of a song you might sing it to, and write your verses on the next page.

(If you need an idea to get started we've given an excerpt of a seasonal idea there, too.)

Resources:

[www.complaintschoir.org](http://www.complaintschoir.org)

[http://www.thehawkey.com/Story/i0529\\_BC\\_IL\\_ComplaintsChoir\\_11\\_04\\_0728](http://www.thehawkey.com/Story/i0529_BC_IL_ComplaintsChoir_11_04_0728)

Wichita Eagle and wire service sources. <http://www.kansas.com>

NPR interview





### A Sample

Phil Tufnell wrote the following ditty (to the tune of "Tis the Season to Be Jolly") noting as he did so that "to complain is a basic human right."  
([http://www.bbc.co.uk/theoneshow/article/2007/09/pt\\_complaints.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/theoneshow/article/2007/09/pt_complaints.shtml))

Christmas time is  
nowhere near  
It's too soon for festive cheer  
There's a whole third of the year  
'Till it's really here

...  
Save us from this retail folly  
Fa la la la lala la la  
T'aint the season to be jolly  
Fa la la la lala la la

That would start in mid-December  
Fa la la fa la la fa la la  
It's the first week of September  
Falalalala la la la la

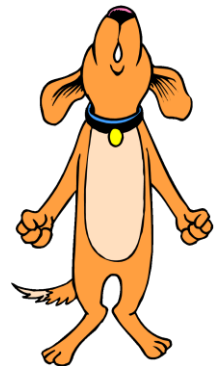
...  
If we go on with this trend  
Christmas time will never end  
And all year round we'll eat and spend  
'Til we go round the bend

Write your own:

### Quick Imagination: Come Up with Your Own Quirky Song Titles

Two previous word games asked you to match beginnings and endings of quirky song titles. Now it's your turn to think of your own. Take it from a real life situation or make something up. Here are a few quirky ideas to get your started:

- Compare your dog's howl to the sound of an instrument
- Compare your love life to boiling an egg
- Compare your lover's beauty to a tractor
- Compare your lover's personality to the rooms in a house
- What are the colors you see when you think of your guitar?



## Discussion: No Tiptoeing Through the Tulips

Sarah Lyall chose the above headline for her New York Times article ([http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/30/arts/music/30ukulele.html?\\_r=1&th&emc=th](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/30/arts/music/30ukulele.html?_r=1&th&emc=th)) about the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. If the very idea of a ukulele orchestra sets you snickering, you are not alone. Ms. Lyall opens with the observation, “If the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain exists partly to subvert expectations, then the first expectation it subverts is that it is going to be very, very bad.”



One of the orchestra members, Dave Suich, admits that “Relief is one of the major emotions of our audience.”

Many of us have had just two exposures to ukuleles: 1) The late and weird Tiny Tim accompanying himself on the instrument as he sang “Tiptoe through the Tulips” on the Johnny Carson show a few

decades back; and 2) As accompaniment to hula dancing at a cheesy tourist luau.

In England, throughout Europe, and in far-flung countries like New Zealand and Japan, however, the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain is deeply loved. One sign was its sold-out performance at the highly popular BBC Proms music festival at the Royal Albert Hall that won rave reviews.

The eight members all sing and play, and as Ms. Lyall writes, they extract “more than seems humanly possible from so small and so modest an instrument, with its four little strings.” The other part of their appeal is the “members’ deadpan sense of humor, in which they laugh at themselves as much as at the music.”

As Ms. Lyall writes, “Ukuleles are mildly humorous and kind of cute, particularly when deployed by adults dressed in black tie.” Orchestra member Will Grove-White says, “The minute that eight people walk onstage with ukes, you’re winning already.”

Ms. Lyall interviewed six of the members at once, all of whom are long-time friends. The band was “founded” more or less by George Hinchliffe, who loved the ukulele from childhood. In 1985 he bought a ukulele for his friend and fellow musician Kitty Lux, and others “gravitated toward the group over the years, relieved to find like-minded ukulele adherents,” according to Ms. Lyall.

They all generate ideas for new pieces and play around with novel ways of making them work. The idea is often to do things “that are not exactly normal,” Mr. Hinchliffe said, to get the ukuleles to produce noises that are nothing like ukulele noises at all.

“It’s good having this somewhat poxy instrument that can’t do much because there aren’t limitless options, and it forces you to think imaginatively about how to create sounds and rhythms,” Mr. Grove-White said.

Ms. Lyall does her best to describe their music, but there is no substitute for actually watching a performance. Check out <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3gp7B8WC4Q> and be patient – They really start playing about 90 seconds in. Also check out their website at [www.ukuleleorchestra.com](http://www.ukuleleorchestra.com) and listen to more clips at <http://www.ukuleleorchestra.com/main/ListClips.aspx?SessionKey>.

One of the orchestra members’ goals is always to mock pomposity. Mr. Hinchliffe noted, “In a way, it’s kind of interesting to observe that you can love something and find it risible at the same time.”

People who attended the Proms concert were encouraged to bring their own ukuleles, and that produced the concert’s high point according to Ms. Lyall, who wrote that the orchestra invited those who brought their instruments to join in a group rendition of Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy,” which was “part of their aim to spread the joy of ukuleles among the populace. There were more than 1,000 audience ukuleles, by an official count, and even the obviously unschooled joined in by swaying and waving their ukuleles in the air, like blissed-out teenagers wielding lighters at a rock concert. And there it was, a critical mass, or as Mr. Hinchliffe announced happily from the stage: ‘a fragment of Beethoven for 1,008 ukuleles.’”



Talk about it.

- What is your impression of ukuleles? Have you ever owned or played one yourself?
  - Have you ever been to a Hawaiian luau where ukuleles were played? Did you like the sound?
  - Did you ever see Tiny Tim on the old Johnny Carson “Tonight Show”? What did you think?
- 
- Does this story make you want to hear this orchestra?
  - If you are able to play a YouTube rendition of their music, what did you think? Do you see that ukuleles have possibilities you hadn’t imagined before?
  - What do you think of the idea that what we find somewhat laughable can still be something we dearly love? Are there examples in your own life?

## Discussion: The Fun of Playing Badly

Author Alexander McCall Smith wrote an op-ed piece for the New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/09/opinion/09mccallsmith.html>) that was published March 9, 2008, called, "And the Band Played Badly." It opened like this:



WHY should real musicians — the ones who can actually play their instruments — have all the fun?

Some years ago, a group of frustrated people in Scotland decided that the pleasure of playing in an orchestra should not be limited to those who are good enough to do so, but should be available to the rankest of amateurs. So we founded the Really Terrible Orchestra, an inclusive orchestra for those who really want to play, but who cannot do so very well. Or cannot do so at all, in some cases.

My own playing set the standard. I play the bassoon, even if not quite the whole bassoon. I have never quite mastered C-sharp, and I am weak on the notes above the high D. In general, I leave these out if they crop up, and I find that the effect is not unpleasant. I am not entirely untutored, of course, having had a course of lessons in the instrument from a music student who looked quietly appalled while I played.

Mr. McCall Smith goes on to note that most of the other members of the orchestra have similar limitations. When the announcement of the orchestra's founding went out, he notes, it was followed by a great wave of applications. Apparently many other people who did not play their instruments well yearned to play in an orchestra. They did not have auditions, and there was no need to weed out anyone who was too good. As Mr. McCall Smith might have anticipated, "Nobody like that applied to join."

The orchestra members employed a professional conductor, which Mr. McCall Smith says is essential for anyone in another part of the world who is thinking of forming a similar group. "Find somebody who is tolerant and has a sense of humor. The conductor also has to be sufficiently confident to be associated with something called the Really Terrible Orchestra; after all, it does go on the résumé."

Once the orchestra had practiced a number of pieces ("mastered" is too strong a word) they staged a public concert. They decided against both charging admission and paying people to attend, but did settle on giving the audience free wine before the concert. "That, it transpired, helped a great deal."

The first concert was packed and they soon staged many more and developed a loyal following. Audiences love them. "Standing ovations are two-a-penny," wrote Mr. McCall



Smith. Music critics seem to insist on stating the obvious, he notes, calling their playing “dire” in one case, with another saying, “How these people presume to play in public is quite beyond me.”

Undaunted – after all, what do you expect from a group called The Really Terrible Orchestra? – Mr. McCall Smith notes that “Nowadays, when we give our annual concert at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the hall is full to capacity with hundreds of music-lovers.” It is hard to imagine it is quite music lovers who attend as much as people who delight in others who are having fun doing something they love to do, but then the group did make a CD, which to their “astonishment” sold. (How many copies was unclear.)

Mr. McCall Smith ends like this:

There is now no stopping us. . . . This is music as therapy, and many of us feel the better for trying. We remain really terrible, but what fun it is. . . . It does not matter that on more than one occasion members of the orchestra have actually been discovered to be playing different pieces of music, by different composers, at the same time. . . We persist. . . and we shall go on and on. Amateurs arise — make a noise.

Talk about it

- Do you play an instrument? Which one? Do you play it well? Do you play in public – recitals, concerts? Have you ever been part of a band or orchestra? Talk about your experiences.



- If you do not play your instrument well, have you ever wanted to play in an orchestra anyway? Does Alexander McCall Smith’s Really Terrible Orchestra sound appealing to you?
- If you don’t play an instrument at all, do you think it would be fun to attend a concert where everyone played badly but had a good time doing it? Would you go if there were a concert in your neighborhood?
- In modern society, the media’s focus on most entertainment and recreation seems to be related to competition: Dancers compete against other dancers, singers against other singers, skaters against other skaters, and football teams against other football teams. Do you think there is a place for doing things for pleasure, regardless of whether or not we are good at doing them?
- What do you enjoy doing purely for the fun of it? Do you do it often? Is it time to bring that pleasure back into your life?

## Imagine Being a Rock Star



Elvis Week ([www.elvisweek.com](http://www.elvisweek.com)) takes place each August in Memphis where Graceland, Elvis Presley's home, provides the hub for events ranging from galas (one nicely benefitting the Alzheimer's Association) to midnight breakfasts, bowling, trivia games, tours, tribute events and a whole lotta shakin'.

When I was still in grade school, opinion was already divided. Good girls liked Pat Boone; ones headed for danger liked Elvis. Whether your preferred performing idol preceded (Frank Sinatra? Tony Bennett?) or followed (somewhere between the Beatles and Lady Gaga) those two idols, here's your chance to imagine life in the spotlight.

If you could be a rock star or other famous musical performer, who would you be, or model yourself after, and why?

Do you have musical abilities that just need refining, or would becoming a performer require a major miracle? If the latter, exactly what sort of musical abilities do you wish for?

Would you like to play an instrument in addition to singing? If so, which instrument(s) and why? Are there specific musical numbers you would like to sing or play for the world? If so, what are they?

Imagine your back-up band, dancers, or orchestra, etc. Who would you want on stage with you and why?



Imagine your costume (or several). What would you like to wear and in what way might your body need to change to get away with it?

Who would you want in your entourage and how would you like to travel?

Where would you like to perform and why? Name concert venues (Carnegie Hall, Super Bowl) and global cities. Where *wouldn't* you like to perform?

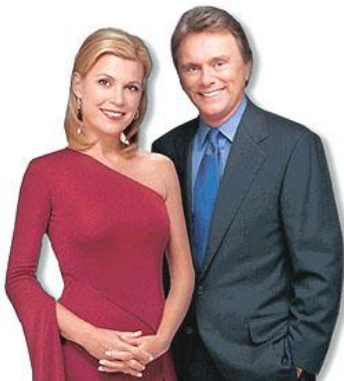
For fame and riches you would likely have to give up your privacy, as you would be constantly surrounded by paparazzi and screaming fans. Would you mind? What do you see as other advantages and disadvantages of stardom?





8.		L					B			O	U	
					B		A					

Need a clue? Think of a well-loved stuffed animal.



9.		R			U	R									R
					R				U						

Need a clue? This line was meant for the mailman.

10.			R			Y									
						M			T						T ?

Need a clue? Do you miss him in the evening?

11.		L				M						R		L				M
	R						R		L			M						

Need a clue? This was the chorus of one of his most famous slow songs.

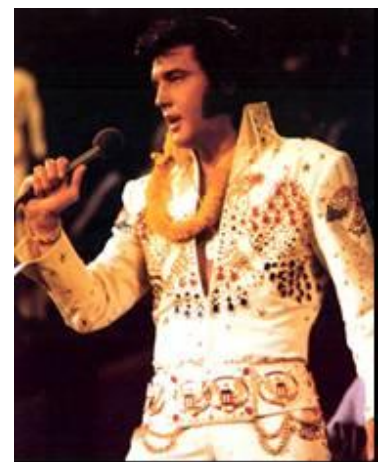
12.		Y				A												
						A					D		D					

Need a clue? Elvis Presley once sang this on the "Steve Allen Show" to a real animal.

*I was training to be an electrician.  
I suppose I got wired the wrong way round somewhere along the line.  
~ Elvis Presley*

Answers: Part 1:

1. All Shook Up
2. Jailhouse Rock
3. Viva Las Vegas
4. Heartbreak Hotel
5. Don't step on my blue suede shoes
6. Don't be cruel to a heart that's true
7. I can't help falling in love with you
8. Let Me Be Your Teddy Bear
9. Return to Sender, Address Unknown
10. Are You Lonesome Tonight?
11. Love me tender, love me true, never let me go
12. You ain't nothin' but a hound dog



## Word game: Fa-la-la-lah

This word game is perhaps most appropriate in December, the fa-la-la-lah time of year, but can be played anytime of year. It's a nonsense syllable word quiz based on music you don't actually need to know the words to. Part 1 below features choices from popular music. Note that we have left out lyrics like "Do wacka do wack do wacka do wacka do wack do" (Roger Miller) and "Ob La Di Ob La Da" (Beatles) because the nonsense lyrics are the same as the song title. Also, there isn't universal agreement about spelling. We've chosen what seems easiest to pronounce.

### Part 1: Can you match the lyrics to the song? (It helps to say them aloud.)

1. A-wimoweh, a-wimoweh \_\_\_\_
  2. A-wop-bom a-loo-mop a-lop-bam-boom \_\_\_\_
  3. Bo bincoln banana fana fo fincoln \_\_\_\_
  4. Bomp-ba-ba-bomp, ba-bom-ba-bom-bomp, ba-ba-bomp-ba-ba-bomp, a-dang-a-dang-dang, a-ding-a-dong-ding
  5. Cutchy-cutchy-cutchy-coo \_\_\_\_
  6. Do-wah-diddy-diddy-dum-diddy-doo \_\_\_\_
  7. Dom doobie doo dom-dom, comma comma \_\_\_\_
  8. Doo-lang, doo-lang doo-lang \_\_\_\_
  9. Goo goo goo joob \_\_\_\_
  10. Lah-dee-do lad-dee-doo-dah-day \_\_\_\_
  11. Ooh eeh ooh ah ah, ting tang, walla walla bing bang \_\_\_\_
  12. Ramma lamma lamma ka dinga da dinga dong \_\_\_\_
- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. "Blue Moon"                 | g. "The Name Game"            |
| b. "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do" | h. "Tutti-Frutti"             |
| c. "Has Anybody Seen My Girl?" | i. "Walking Down the Street"  |
| d. "He's So Fine"              | j. "We'll Always Be Together" |
| e. "I Am the Walrus"           | k. "Whistling Gypsy"          |
| f. "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"   | l. "The Witch Doctor"         |



Do any of these songs make you want to sing? Go for it!



## Part 2: Can you match the lyrics to the song?

Most of the songs in the previous section come from the traditions of jazz “Scat” singing begun in the 1920s and made famous by Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Leo Watson and others and the “Doo-wop” tradition begun by black singers decades later. There is also lots of nonsense in songs aimed at or sung by children. Disney movies, for example, have many songs with made-up words. We all know “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious,” but can you match the following songs to their films?

- |                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo" _____ | a. “Song of the South” |
| 2. "Chim Chim Cher-ee" _____   | b. “Cinderella”        |
| 3. "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah" _____   | c. “Mary Poppins”      |

Some songs that we learned as children are a mixture of sense and nonsense. Can you match these songs to their lyrics?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 4. “Git Along, Little Dogies”<br>_____ | a. And liddle lamzy divey. A kiddley<br>divey too, wouldn't you? |
| 5. “Give the Dog a Bone” _____         | b. Knick-knack paddy whack                                       |
| 6. “The Happy Wanderer” _____          | c. Val-deri, Val-dera, Val-deri, Val-<br>dera-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha     |
| 7. “Mairzy Doats” _____                | d. Whoopie Ti Yi Yo  |

Some songs are almost entirely nonsense. Can you match the song title to its next line?

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 8. Ging Gang Gooly _____ | a. A-way-o, gooley gooley gooley gooley   |
| 9. Ram Sam Sam _____     | b. A doray-oh, A doray boomday-oh. A doray<br>boomday ret set set, ah say pa say oh.              |
| 10. Sarasponda _____     | c. Hey la, hey la shay la, hey la shay la hey<br>la ho. Shallawa, shallawa, shallawa,<br>shallawa |

Answers, Part 1:

- |      |      |      |      |       |        |
|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 1. f | 3. g | 5. c | 7. b | 9. e  | 11. l  |
| 2. h | 4. a | 6. i | 8. d | 10. k | 12. j* |

\*This number from the musical “Grease” seems to be a combination of syllables from songs by the Edsels (“Rama Lama Ding Dong”) and the G-Clefs (Ka-Ding-Dong).

Answers, Part 2:

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. a | 5. b | 7. a | 9. a  |
| 2. c | 4. d | 6. c | 8. c | 10. b |

## Last quick discussion: June Is Accordion Awareness Month

Accordions, also known as squeezeboxes and concertinas, are often given short shrift in a world where other instruments tend to be held in higher regard. Therefore, we thought it was time to share with you a list of a few famous people who play or have played the accordion (or some variation of it). Do any surprise you?

Drew Carey  
Charley Chaplin  
Valery Giscard d'Estaing  
Charles Dickens  
Mahatma Gandhi



John Lennon  
Richard Nixon  
H. Ross Perot  
Elvis Presley  
Jimmy Stewart

Resource: <http://www.klezmusic.com>

- Do you or does anyone you know play the accordion?
- Do you like the sound?
- Does its appeal depend on where it's being played? (The streets of Paris perhaps?) Or the particular music being played?

## Final thought: Noel Coward's Wit Lives On

Sir Noël Peirce Coward, was born December 16, 1899. An English playwright, composer, director, actor and singer, he was known for his wit, flamboyance, and what Time magazine called "a sense of personal style, a combination of cheek and chic, pose and poise". Here is the refrain to a song he wrote, called, "I Went to a Marvellous (sic) Party":

I went to a marvellous party.  
We played the most wonderful game,  
Maureen disappeared  
And came back in a beard  
And we all had to guess at her name!  
We talked about growing old gracefully  
And Elsie who's seventy-four  
Said, A, it's a question of being sincere,  
And B, if you're supple you've nothing to fear.  
Then she swung upside down from a glass chandelier,  
I couldn't have liked it more.



May you go to a marvelous party soon, too!

And may beautiful music follow you everywhere you go . . .

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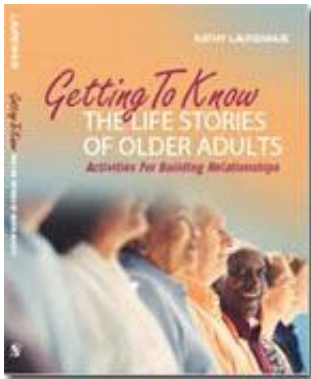
Two inherited traits inspire everything author Kathy Laenhue writes:

- 1) Wide-ranging curiosity from her father
- 2) From her mother, a light-hearted touch that seeks out what's amusing

With that in mind, and if you enjoyed this title, here are some other ideas:

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- Order Kathy's book, **Getting to Know the Life Stories of Older Adults, Activities for Building Relationships** also from Health Professions Press.
- Watch the video demos of two of her favorite activity ideas at [www.WiserNow.com](http://www.WiserNow.com).
- Visit her blog at [www.MindMusings.com](http://www.MindMusings.com).



### **Do you need a presenter of fun and stimulating brain exercises?**

Kathy would be delighted to comply. The programs described under “staff development” at [www.WiserNow.com](http://www.WiserNow.com) can be adapted for broad audiences.

### **Do you have staff development needs?**

- Under the name **Elder Care Conversations**, Kathy and her friend and colleague, David Troxel, co-author of “The Best Friends Approach™” books on Alzheimer's care, have created a 12-module, self-contained, downloadable series of audio files and print training materials on “**Amping Up Your Activity Programming.**” Order them individually or as a flash drive at <http://shop.WiserNow.com> and learn more at [www.ElderCareConversations.com](http://www.ElderCareConversations.com).
- Kathy gives **active aging and train-the-trainer workshops** to professionals in person or via webinar or teleseminar. Her topics include brain aerobics/mind play, life stories, creative training techniques, dementia care, and medical staff sensitivity.
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- Kathy has a master's degree in instructional technology and has developed multi-media curricula for corporate clients for more than 20 years. **Contact her to discuss your specific staff development needs.**



## ***Are you a caregiver?***

You will find both useful advice and compassionate reassurance at Kathy's website [www.WiserNowAlz.com](http://www.WiserNowAlz.com) and her blog [www.CaregiverCheer.com](http://www.CaregiverCheer.com). Check out the material there, including her very practical and upbeat **books on Alzheimer's caregiving**, which are also available on Kindle.

## ***Are you a media rep needing an interview subject/press release?***

### **Here are some of Kathy's topics:**

- Exercising Your Brain: What's Laughter Got to Do with It?
- The Top 10 List for Brain Health (#1 Will Surprise You)
- Variety Is Vital to a Vigorous Mind
- Humor in Dementia
- Alzheimer's Disease: Stop the Fear-Mongering
- The Logic Behind Illogical Behavior in People with Dementia

Kathy Laenhue can be reached by writing to [kathy@WiserNow.com](mailto:kathy@WiserNow.com) or calling 800-999-0795 (weekdays 9:00 – 5:00 Eastern time)

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