56 Acronyms and Initialisms - mental_floss on YouTube (Ep.7)

List Show
https://youtube.com/watch?v=z1T98I_h4Jo
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/z1T98I_h4Jo

Hi, I'm John Green; welcome to my salon. This is mental_floss.

Today we're going to learn the real stories behind acronyms, initialisms, and initials that you've been waiting your entire life for someone to decipher.

[To his Highland Sextasy poster]
Hey, there, kilted Wil Wheaton. Felicia Day, always a pleasure to see you.

[intro music]

1. If you've ever been caught staring at your zipper and wondering what YKK stands for, it's "Yoshido Kogyo Kabushikikaisha", which roughly translates to "The Yoshido Company, Limited." Also, your fly is down.

2. TASER stands for Thomas A Swift's Electric Rifle. I know what you're wondering: Is Thomas Swift Taylor Swift's father?... No. But they do share the quality of being able to electrify their audiences!

3. The greatest name in the history of clothing and outdoor recreational equipment is Leon Leonwood Bean.

4. 3M is an abbreviation of Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing.

5. M&M's stands for Mars and Murrie's. (That is, Forrest Mars and Bruce Murrie.) Before you think that M&M's are some Confectionery American Dream, Mars and Murrie were the sons, respectively, of the Mars and Hershey fortunes. And while we're on the subject of chocolate brand named origins, the Three Musketeers originally included three smaller bars: one vanilla, one chocolate, and one strawberry, but when the ingredients became too expensive during World War Two, the Three Musketeers became all chocolate.

6. The "Q" in "Q-tips" stands for "Quality." They were originally called "Baby Gays."

7. BMW? Bavarian Motor Works.

8. Smart Car began as a collaboration between Swatch and Mercedes, and sounds better than "Swatch-Mercedes Art Car."

9. ASICS gets it's name from the Latin phrase "Anima Sana In Corpore Sano" - Mispronouncing things is my THING! - which means "A sound mind in a sound body." Which is pretty high-brow for shoes that look like THIS.

10. ADIDAS is not short for "All Day I Dream About Soccer." The name comes from founder Adi Dassler.

11. TCBY now means "The Country's Best Yogurt," but it once meant "This Can't Be Yogurt," until they were sued by rival frozen yogurt concern "I Can't Believe It's Yogurt." Of course, nobody goes to either of them now, because... Pinkberry.

12. The "A" and "W" of "A&W" are Roy Allen and Frank Wright.

13. Frederick August Otto Schwarz founded his famous toy store with his brothers, but then cut them out of the naming rights. In a related story, the vlogbrothers channel on YouTube shall now be know as "John Green is the greatest. Hank is poopy."

14. The "R" in "Toys R Us" isn't an initial; it's just bad grammar. However, the Toys R Us mascot, Geoffrey, pictured here, here, and here - God, we love giraffes on this show - used to be known as Doctor G. Raffe. And his liver looks like that!

15. The "K" in "K-mart" stands for Kresge, for founder Sebastian S. Kresge;

16. The "J.C." in "J.C. Penney" stands for James Cash, who was actually Johnny Cash's dad! is an example of a lie. However, at least from the looks of it, James Cash might be Nick Cage's father.

17. When you say you're going to the "ATM Machine" to type in your

18. "PIN Number," you are being redundant. Also, you are saying an unnecessary number of words.

19. Michael J. Fox's middle name? ...Andrew.

20. Wander over to your bookshelf and you'll find an alphabet soup of writers' initials. Like, before writing *Catcher in the Rye* and becoming all reclusive, Jerome David Salinger worked as an entertainer on a cruise ship.

21. Elwyn Brooks White, of *Charlotte's Web* fame, also the White behind Strunk&White, the famous English-language style guide.

22. The November 22nd, 1963 death of Clive Staples Lewis was overshadowed by the death of another famous person known by his initials: JFK [John Fitzgerald Kennedy].

23. Then there's Howard Phillips Lovecraft,

24. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien,

25. Pelham Grenville Wodehouse,

26. Thomas Stearns Eliot,

27. David Herbert Lawrence,

28. Herbert George Wells. No wonder these people went by their initials!

29. Lucy Maud Montgomery,

30. James Matthew Barrie,

31. Wystan Hugh Auden,

32. Alan Alexander Milne,

33. Phillip Dey Eastman,

34. Hunter Stockton Thompson,

35. and Phillip Kindred Dick. Let's just pause for a moment and thank Phillip K. Dick's parents. Good people.

36. All right, I'll do a couple more: Arthur Charles Clark,

37. Lafayette Ron Hubbard, and Edward Estlin Cummings.

38. Joanne Rowling didn't have a middle name, so when her publishers wanted another initial, she gave herself a "K" for "Kathleen," which was the name of her favorite grandma. By the way: Harry James Potter, Hermione Jean Granger, and Ginger Bilius Whatshisface.

39. If you want a career in politics, particularly a career in American presidential politics, you're gonna need a good middle initial, like James Knox Polk,

40. or Rutherford Birchard Hayes,

41. or Chester Alan Arthur,

42. or James Abram Garfield,

43. or Warren Gamaliel Harding.

44. The "M" in "Richard M. Nixon" stands for "Milhouse." Everything's coming up Milhouse.

45. And, as you might remember from our American Presidents video, Harry Truman's middle name? Just "S."

46. Someone worked extremely hard to make "USAPATRIOT Act" an acronym. It stands for "Uniting & Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept & Obstruct Terrorism."

47. The "ZIP" in "ZIP Code" is "Zone Improvement Plan."

48. GEICO was originally short for "Government Employees Insurance Company."

49. The speaker company JBL is named for founder James Bullough Lansing. Bullow? Bulluff? BullOG? Beuloff? I'm sure one of his descendants is going to let me know.

50. CVS originally stood for Consumer Value Stores; over time, it just became CVS.

51. H&M is Hennes & Mauritz.

52. The shipping company DHL is named for founders Adrian Dalsey, Larry Hillblom, and Robert Lynn.

53. The abrasive cleaning pad SOS means "Save Our Saucepans."

54. "SCUBA" means "Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus."

55. LASER means Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation.

56. And, lastly, DFTBA, of course, stands for "Darling, Fetch the Battle Axe." And "Don't Forget to Be Awesome."

Thanks for watching mental_floss, which is made with the help of all of these nice people. Every week, you ask questions and we endeavor to answer at least one of them.

Today's question comes from Sakura1Irving: "Does reading in the dark make your eyes worse?" No! It may cause some eye strain, and if you're reading in total darkness, then you... can't actually read. Unless you're reading Braille. But no.

If you have a question, please leave it in comments. Again, thanks for watching and DFTBA!