

PIASTER RESISTANCE

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In "Is a Picture Worth 1000 Words?" in the November 1980 Word Ways, the editor presented a statistical argument that it might be possible to form 1000 words out of the letters of PIASTER. In what follows, I allow words from dictionaries or English-language gazetteers, including not only capitalized and hyphenated words, but also words found as part of multi-word terms. However, I do not allow abbreviations or acronymic nouns (usually all capitalized) like SP or STP in Webster's Third. I first carried out a fairly thorough search of the OED and located the following 717 words:

- 2 ae, ai, ar, as, at, ea, ei, er, es, et, ia, ie (under ieie, Addenda), ir, is, it, pa, pe, pi, ra, re, sa, se, si, st, ta, te, ti
- 3 aei (any), aer, aes, aet, air, ais, ait, ape, aps, apt, are, ars, art, ase, asp, ast, ate, atr (atter), ats (eats), ear, eas, eat, eir, eis (ease), eit (eat), eps, era, eri, ers, ert, esi, esp (asp), est, eta (Addenda), ets, ies, iet, ire, irs, ise, ist, ita (Addenda), ite (Addenda), its, pae (po), pai, par, pas, pat, pea, per, pes, pet, pia, pie, pir, pis, pit, pra, pri (pry), psa, pst, rae, rai, rap, ras, rat, rea, rei, rep, res, ret, ria, rie, rip, ris, rit, sae, sai, sap, sar, sat, sea, sei, sep, ser, set, sie, sip, sir, sit, spa, spe (spae), spi, sti, tae, tap, tar, tas, tea, tei, tep, ter, tes, tie, tip, tir, tis, tra, tre (tree), tri (try), tse (tsetse)
- 4 aeit (ait), aeps (asp), aers, aest, aets, aier (air), aire, airs, airt, aits, aper, apes, apse, apte (apt, 1526 quot.), apts, arep, ares, aret, aris, arse, arst, arte (art), arts, aser, aset, asie, asit, aspe (asp), ater (atter), ates, atir (atter), eais (ease), eait (eat), ears, eart, east, eats, eirs, eist, eits, eras, eria, eris (eri, Addenda), erst, erts, etar (eater), etas, iare, iasp (jasp, 1591 quot.), iesp (jasp), iest, iets, iert (jert, 1611 quot.), ipse, ires, irpe, itas, iter, ites, paes, paie, pair, pais, pait, pare, pars, part, pase, pasi (pass, vb) past, pate, pats, peai, pear, peas, peat, peir, peis, peit, peri, pers, pert, pest, peti (petty), pets, pias, piat, pier, pies, piet, pire, pirs, pisa, pise, pist, pita, pite, pits, prai, pras, prat, prea (pray), prei (prey), pres, pret, prie, pris, raep, raes, raet (rat), raie, raip, rais, rait, rape, raps, rapt, rase, rasp, rate, rats, reap, reas, reat, reis, reit, reps, rept, resp, rest, rets, rias, riep, ries, riet, ripa, ripe, rips, ript (rip, vb), rise, risp, rist, rite, rits, saep (soap), saer, saet (set, vb), saie, saip, sair, sait, sape, sapt (sap, vb. 1652 quot.), sare, sari, sarp, sart, sate, sati, seap (seep), sear, seat, seip, seir, seit, sept, sera,

seri, sert, seta, sier, siet (sit), sipe, sipt (sip, vb 1656 quot.),
 sire, sirt, site, spae, spai (spae), spar, spat, sper, spet, spie,
 spir, spit, spra (spray vb), stai (stay, vb), stap, star, step, ster,
 stie, stip, stir, stra, stre, taer (tear, vb), taes, taie (tay), tair,
 tais, tape, taps, tare, tars, tase, tasp, tear, teas, teir, teis, teps,
 terp, ters, tiar, tier, ties, tipe, tips, tire, tirs (tirr), trai (tray),
 trap, tras, trea, trei, tres, trie, trip, tris, tsar, tsia

5 aeits, aiers, aires, airts, apers, apert, apsie, apter, aptes (apt, sb),
 areps, arest, arets, Aries, arise, arist, artes, artis (airt, al500 qt.),
 asier, asper, aspie, aspre (asper), aster, astir, astre, aters,
 atier (attire), atire, atirs, atise (attice), atrie (atry, 1330 quot.),
 atrip, earst, erast (erst), erias (Addenda), erist (arist), ertis
 (ert, cl400 quot.), estap, iaspe (jasp), ieast (jest), ierst (erst),
 ipast (pass, vb), irate, irpes, itase, iters, paier, paies, paire (pair),
 pairs, pairt, paise, paist (paste), paite (pate), paits, pares, paris,
 parse, parsi, parte, parti, parts, paste, pater, pates, patis, patre,
 peais, pears, peart, peats, peirs, peirt, peits, perai, peris, perit,
 perst (pierce, vb, 1526 quot.), perts, petar (petard), piast, piats,
 piers, pier, pieta, piets, pirat (pirate), pires, piste, pitas, pites,
 praet (prat), praie, prais, prase, prast, prate, prati, prats, preas,
 preis, presa, prest, prets, pries, prise, prist, raeps, raest (rest),
 raies, raipe, raips, raise, raits, rapes, rapte (rapt), rapt, raspe,
 rates, reaps, reapt (reap, vb), reast, reats, reist, reits, repas,
 repis (reap, sb, 1340 quot.), repit, resai, resat, retia (rete), rieps,
 riest (reest), riets, ripas, ripes, rispe (risp), riste, rites, saire
 (sure), saite, sarie, sarpe, satir (satire), seapt (sept), sepia, septa
 (septum), serai, siper, spaer, spair, spait, spare, spari (sparus),
 spart, spate, spear, speat, speir, speit, spert, spier, spiet (spite),
 spire, spirt, spite, sprae (spry), sprai (spray), sprat, spret, sprit,
 staer (stare), staie, stair, stape, stare, steap, stear, steip, steir,
 stepa (step, vb), steri, stiep, stier, stipe, stire, stirp, strae, strai,
 strap, strea, strep, stria, strie, strip, taers, taise, taper,
 tapes, tapis, tapre (taper), tares, tarie, taris, tarse, tarsi (tarsus),
 tears, teirs, terai, tiare (tiar), tiars, tiers, tipes, tires, tisar,
 traie, trais, trape, traps, treas, treip, treis, trias, tries, tripe,
 trips, trise

6 aerist, aprise, ariste, aspert, aspier, aspire, asteir (astir), astire
 (easter), atiers, atires, atries, esprit, iasper (jasper, 1555 quot.),
 iaspre (jasper), paiers, paires, pairs, paiste, paites, pareis,
 paresi, paries, pariet, parise, partes, partie (party), partis, paster,
 pastie (pasty), paters, patise, patres, patrie, perais, perits, pertis,
 petars, pietas, pirate, pirats, praets, praies, praise, prait (prate),
 prates, pratie, preast, preist, priest, priste, pteris, raipes, rapist,
 repast, repist (reap vb, 1382 quot.), repits, respit (respite), ripest,
 satire, septir, siper (sipeera), spaier, sparie (spare, vb), sperit,
 spetia, spiare, spirea (spiraea), sprait, sprate (sprat), spreath,
 spreit, sprite, staier (stair), staire (stair), steiar, sterap, stiper,
 stirap, stirpe (stirp), straie (stray), strape (strap), streap, striae
 (stria), stripe, tapeis (tapis), tapers, tapire (taper), tapirs,
 tapres, tapser, taries, terais, tersia (tarsia), tiares, traies,
 traise, trapes, trapse (trapes), treips, trepas, triples

7 paister (paster, 1737 quot.), pariets, parteis, parties, partise,

pastier, pastrie (pastry), patries, piaster, piastre, pirates, praites, praties, spirate, tapiro, tapiser (tapisser), traipse

Next I tried Webster's Second and came up with 58 additional words, bringing the total to 775:

- 2 ri
- 3 aie (ai), ati, epi, Ira, itr, psi, sia, sri, sta, tai
- 4 Apet, Apis, Arie, Asir, atis, epis, Itea, itrs, pari, pesa, Pira, rati, Reia, Rita, Sita, tari, tarp, teap
- 5 Aesir, apres, arite, Artie (Art), epris, Istar, iteas, parst, petri (dish), piest, ratis, Resia, retip, sarip, seira, septi, serta, sitar, stipa, tarps, teaps, teras, terap, Tiras
- 6 pe-tsai, pierst, retips, sirpea, teraps

On to Webster's Third Edition where 20 additional words turned up, making the total 795:

- 2 ps, rs, ts
- 3 ips, rsi, rta
- 4 peta, rtas, tepa
- 5 petas, preta, ritas, sapit, sirat, tepas, terps
- 6 air-set, patesi, Persia, pretas

I next searched the English Dialect Dictionary, which produced a surprisingly rich harvest -- 67 new words, making the total 862:

- 2 ap (hap), ep (hip), ip (hip)
- 3 arp (Addenda), erp, irp
- 4 aise, arps, aies (eye), erps iper, irps, iset, paet, prae, rast (Addenda), reip, riap, setr (setter sb 2), siep, sirp, spre (spree), Teri, tise, trae, trep
- 5 arpit, arpse (apse), arset (Addenda), ersit (Addenda), ipers, sater (comp. of 'sate', var. 'sart' - soft), sirpa, spine, staip, paets, peist, praes, raist, rapis (rappis), reips, riaps, tapie, Teris, tirse, traep, treps, treap (threap), traip (threap)
- 6 apiest, aister (astre), aistre (astre), eairts, paiser, paiter, pastre, pearts (part), pister, sapier (from 'sapy', var. 'sappy'), spræt (spret), steria, tapies, traeps, traips, treaps, tripse
- 7 paiters

Still a fair way short of the goal, I decided to make a trip to the nearest copy of the Times Index-Gazetteer, about 100 miles away. This proved most worthwhile, as 127 more words came to light. Many are part of a multi-word placename, as indicated by following brackets, e.g. Sra (Dhāka) means that Sra appears as part of Sra Dhāka. This effort brought the total up to 989, only eleven short of the target:

- 2 Rt (Kamenjak, Cape)
- 3 Api, Ari, Asi, Esa, Isa, Pré (St. Didier), Sra (Dhāka), Sre (Umbell), Tia
- 4 Aipe, Arit, Arti, Asti, Atri, Earp, Eira (Verde), Eita, Erap, Espa,

Etra, Ipat, Iret, Irsa, Irta, Isar (R), Itéa, Itsa, Pati, Pera, Piar, Psie (Pole), Rasi, Repa, Repi, Resi, Reti, Seia, Sepa, Sepi, Siar, Siat, Sipa, Sira, Stei, Stia, Tasr, Teia (Pta. della), Tepi (Estancia), Tias, Tira, Tisa (R), Tser (Tsaiga)

- 5 Apies (R), Arsie, Aspet, Aspit, Áspri (Pétra, Mt.), Eiras, Epira, Esira, Espir (I), Etais (la-Sauvin), Iates (Pt.), Ispra, Istra, Itare, Parit, Pasir, Patri, Peita (Ho, R), Peria, Petir, Petra, Piera, Pirae (District de), Pitar, Pitea, Pitre (I. au), Pitsa, Psári, Psira (I), Rapti (R), Reisa (R), Riesa, Ritsa, Sapri, Sapti, Sarpi, Separ, Serat (reg.), Seria, Serpa, Sipra (R), Siret, Sirte, Sitra (Oasis), Stari (Chal), Stapi, Stira, Strei (R), Tae-ri, Taipe, Taser (L), Tepsa, Tersa (R), Terip (Terip), Tierp, Tiesa (Mt.), Tipar, Tirap (Frontier Div.), Treia, Tsipa
 6 Arispe (Union), Arties, Espita, Pearis (Mt.), Petras (Mt.), Pietra (Ligure), Pitsea, Praest (Rees), Prieta (Sierra, Mts.), Ripats, Sparti, Teripa (R), Trepai, Tsepra

Two more turned up in the Times Atlas of the World:

- 5 Tresa (R)
 6 Petási (Stenon)

With only nine words required, I tried Webster's New Geographical Dictionary and discovered the following:

- 3 Pei, Tsi
 4 Iser, Seti
 5 Ister, Setia, Spira
 6 Pteria, Resita

So, PIASTER does indeed contain 1000 words, and probably considerably more. To add to my list, I suggest the following methods:

1. Given names such as Esta, Petr, Estra and Ireta , all found in Evelyn Wells' What to Name the Baby
2. Surnames -- e.g. Tiepa is fairly common in New Zealand
3. Other dictionaries, such as Funk & Wagnalls Unabridged, which gives tesa as a variant of teesa.
4. Use of obsolete inflectional endings, e.g. pairest, rapest, etc.
5. Foreign words as part of multi-word terms found in Webster's Second, e.g. amantium irae, ancora spei, Hsia Tsai
6. The one-letter words a,e,i,p,r,s,t
7. Undoubtedly the largest addition could be made by researching the Official Standard Names Gazetteers of all countries, quite a task!