

A GUIDE TO BODY ENGLISH

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Whether you're a high- or low-brow, here's some knee-slapping, rib-tickling fun that you can really sink your teeth into. Try your hand at getting a leg up on some head-to-toe body language. I'm not speaking tongue-in-cheek when I say that, as a rule of thumb, all answers pertain to parts of the body and should be recognizable, inoffensive words.

1. Let's start with some really basic anatomy: name ten parts of the body that are spelled with three letters.

2. An anatononym is a body part that can act as a verb, such as "to head a committee." How many can you finger? More than three dozen repose in Answers and Solutions.

3. What do the following definitions have in common: last part of some books, architectural support, bovine infant, prison dwelling, storage container? Once you ascertain the pattern, come up with fifteen more.

4. What do these words have in common: hare, hart, heal? Once you ascertain the pattern, come up with a dozen more.

5. What do the following words have in common: are, barest, below, bole, booms? Once you ascertain the pattern, come up with thirty more.

6. A palindromic word reads the same forward and backward, as in level. Name one palindromic body part. (Two others may give offense.)

7. What are the only two parts of the body that become plural by changing their internal vowel sounds, in the manner of man-men?

8. With three different letters preceding it, the word arm becomes farm, harm and warm. What part of the body can be preceded by twelve different letters to form twelve different parts?

9. Add an E to the only common word in the English language that contains a silent P and a silent S, and you will come up with a word over my dead body.

10. Name a part of the body that contains six letters and in which the first three letters repeat themselves in order.

11. Name an internal organ that contains ten letters (including all six in order of the word in the previous question). The first five letters of this word appear in the second half but in a different order.

12. I'm sure I won't leave you redfaced if I ask you to list as many colorful body expressions as you can, i.e. body parts joined with colors.

Exploring the Lighter Side of Language

Language lovers everywhere will soon have a rich new source of word lore at hand as a result of a recently established partnership between Merriam-Webster and author Paul Dickson. In this relationship, Dickson becomes a consulting editor for Merriam-Webster, writing books about the lighter side of language: stories, legends, myths, and lore about slang, names and other language-related topics. He and Merriam-Webster will identify other authors to contribute titles to this series.

The first fruits will be seen in the fall of 1996: *Flappers* and *2 Rappers* by slang-master Tom Dalzell (an overview of the slang used by teenagers from the 1890s to the 1990s) and *What's in a Name?* by Paul Dickson (a collection of the stories behind names, everything from cars and hurricanes to companies and extraterrestrials).