Golomb’s Gambits: Word Expansion

DECEMBER 2, 2009 | BY SOLOMON GOLOMB

A. It is often easy to add a letter inside a short word to form a very different new word. Thus CAT can be lengthened to CHAT or CART or CAST, etc. There are fewer choices, and often none at all, for lengthening a long word. In the following, you get a clue for the shorter word, the letter to be inserted, and a clue for the longer word. The shorter words gradually increase in length from six to 10 letters as you proceed. See how many you can discover.

1. Add C to "defective" to get a "mental capability."
2. Add R to "on a current subject" to get "like a hot region."
3. Add L to "looking intently" to get a type of "bird."
4. Add L to an "outsider" to get a type of "murderer."
5. Add R to a "male gland" to get "lying horizontally."
6. Add C to a "supplement" to get "causing dependence."
7. Add L to a "runs aground" to get a type of "bottom fish."
8. Add E to a "military rank" to get "having a physical body."
9. Add T to an "attempt to reach a settlement" to get "deep thought."
10. Add R to "leaving no will" to get a "major highway."
11. Add R to "not merited" to get "inadequately provided for."
12. Add T to "imitation" to get "arousal."

B. The same word can be tacked on to the end of each word in each of the following lists to form very different new words. The added word is different for each list. Find the words to be adjoined.

1. HE, IMP, RAMP, REST.
2. CAR, DAM, DO, STAG.
3. COOPER, DESIGN, LITER, PRIM.
4. CAST, GENE, MODE, PI.