Have you ever wondered about 7-letter words? Really wondered about them, we mean?

Let’s consider these “lucky” words in relation to vowels and consonants, their constituent elements. It is easy enough to find specimens consisting solely of vowels or exclusively of consonants. Thus, OIOUEAE is an all-vowel word. It is one of the tropes or Gregorian formulas for the close of the lesser doxology in church music, representing the vowels in “World without end, Amen.” The word is listed as a regular entry on Page 647 of the Music Lovers’ Encyclopedia compiled by Rupert Hughes and revised by Deems Taylor and Russell Kerr (Garden City Books, Garden City, New York, 1954). Similarly, we find that Joe BTFSPLK, the world’s worst jinx, is a consistently recurring character in one of the most popular of all comic strips, Al Capp’s Li’l Abner.

Much more difficult is the search for 7-letter words with only one or two vowels, the remaining five or six positions being occupied by consonants. Mathematically, the one or two vowels can occupy 28 different positions or combinations of positions, and no one has ever succeeded in putting together a list of 28 English words illustrative of all 28 cases. Our own attempt to solve the problem follows. The numeral or numerals preceding each word in the list indicate the position or positions in which the vowel or vowels are placed.

1 ............................... 15 ETCHING 35 SPINACH
2 LENGTHS 16 ENTHRAL 36 SWALLOW
3 PLIGHTS 17 ARCHSPY 37 THRIFTRY
4 THRONGS 23 HEIGHTS 45 STREAKS
5 SCHNAPS 24 RESENTS 46 STRIPED
6 ................................ 25 DISTORT 47 THIRSTY
7 ................................ 26 TINGLED 56 SCHNOK
1-2 EIGHTHS 27 FIFTHLY 57 SCHWEGE
1-3 ALIGHTS 34 BREADTH 67 SHTCHEE
1-4 IMPORTS

Most of the words are commonplace. However, for 5-7, we had to take SCHWEGE, the name of a town in West Germany, from the 1965 Edition of The Times Index-Gazetteer of the World (The Times Publishing Company, Ltd., London). For 6-7, we called SHTCHEE from Webster’s Second Edition. It is an alteration evidently.

More such examples:

Even more:

Again, 28 complete list of all:

1 ZOUAS
2 UKINE
3 ....
4 OUAL
5 EUAS
6 ....
7 AIAD
1-2 CHAG
1-3 SEQU
1-4 ROU

Most of the words uncommercial: the towns of Alpaca, Mian, and Frontiary (G. & C. Funk & Wagnalls). Mian is a sound in the Fu class (Funk & Wagnalls).

Three examples of word terms after the length, filling the gaps in our list:

Can any one replace...

It has always been the case, which word, with a dictionary that Webster’s Unabridged is fully complete of the dictionary.
SEVEN-LETTER WORDS

is an alternate spelling of STCHI, the name for a Russian cabbage soup. It has evidently fallen into political disfavor, as Webster's Third Edition omits it.

More seriously, there are three gaps in our list. We have not yet found examples for 1, 6, and 7. Can any of our readers come to our aid?

Even more difficult is the correlative search for 7-letter words using only one or two consonants, the remaining five or six positions being filled with vowels. Again, 28 different positions or combinations of positions exist. Again, no complete list of illustrative examples has ever been compiled. Our own list follows:

1 ZOUAOUA 1-5 RAOUYLIA 3-5 EULOGIA
2 UKIYOYE 1-6 SEA OOSE 3-6 AUREATE
3 OUAABIO 2-5 EN QUEUE 4-5 OOANGIA
4 EUAEMIA 2-4 EPIKEIA 4-6 OUAKARI
5 ........................................... ETAERIO 4-7 AEOLIAN
6 AIAIAIS 2-6 ELAEINE 5-6 .................
7 CHAOUIA 2-7 OOEO OIL 5-7 .................
1-8 SEQUOIA 3-7 AUDAEAN 6-7 AEALEANS
4 ROULEAU

Most of the words in this list, although in Webster's Second Edition, are very uncommon. ZOUAOUA is the name of a tribe of Berbers in the Jurjura Mountains of Algeria, mentioned only in the etymology of ZOUAVE. The inflectional form MIAOUED is explicitly shown only in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1949). EUAEMIA is a sound or healthy condition of the blood, listed as a variant of EUEMIA in the Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language (Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York and London, 1945).

Three entries in our list (SEA OOSE, EN QUEUE, and OLEO OIL) are two-word terms, for want of anything better. One entry, UKIYOYE, is questionable, for the letter Y is not a true vowel; it is only a semivowel. The number of gaps in our list has risen to four.

Can any one of our readers help us either by plugging the four holes or by replacing some of the inferior specimens in our list with first-rate words?

MISSING WORDS

It has always been a source of wonder to us how dictionary publishers decide which words to include and which ones to exclude in the process of compiling a dictionary. What raises the question just now is our discovery of the fact that Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged, lists and defines COULDN'T and SHOULDN'T, but omits the fully comparable WOULDN'T. Were the editors in a hurry to finish the text of the dictionary by the time they got into the W's?