The Multiple-Letter Word Hunt

One of the many projects that has engaged the attention of serious-minded logologists has been the quest for words featuring one particular letter a substantial number of times. For instance, AMALGAMATED is a word with four A's; REFEREE uses four E's; and TUMULTUOUS includes four U's.

The challenge in this situation for the logologist is to find similar words for every letter of the alphabet. If possible, the words should be short and common, avoiding proper names and hyphenated words. The extent to which these goals have been achieved is reflected by the following list:


Let's review the list contemplatively.

MAHARAJA is a word derived from Hindi, a language beyond the pale of the Indo-European family. This detracts from its general excellence. BUBBYBUSH looks English and is certainly of Teutonic origin, but its specific meaning is not known to the average person. SCACCHIC means "pertaining to the game of chess." The game is common enough, and the word comes to us from one of the Romance languages, but it is unknown to most chess players, and does not appear in books about the game. DODDERED is a simple word, unobjectionable.

TEEPEE, like "maharaja," is a common word, but its derivation from the Sioux language casts a shadow over it. The word RIFFRAFF, structurally, is a second-order reduplication or tautonym, stamping it as an inferior sort of word.
GAGGING is an unobjectionable word. HIGH-THOUGHTED is a little too long to suit us, and is marred by the presence of a hyphen. VISIBLE would be an excellent word, if it were not a trifle too long.

JEJUNOJEJUNOSTOMY is a medical term for the operative formation of a passage between two portions of the jejunum (part of the small intestine). The word is much too long and much too uncommon for our purposes, but it is probably the only one in the whole language using four J’s. KNICKKNACK and PELLMELL are common words, but condemned to mediocrity as second-order reduplications. To construct a word by means of the reduplicative process is a characteristic of primitive peoples, and our plight is pitiful if we must draw on tautonyms.

MUMMYDOM and NONUNION are acceptable without reservation. By contrast, VOODOO owes its existence to Creole French, which took it from some West African language; a most questionable paternity. WHIPPERSNAPPER is simple, but much too long and reduplicative in nature.

There does not appear to be any dictionary word spelled with four Q’s, though there might be an Arabic place name with four Q’s recorded in some atlas. At any rate, we have taken the liberty of coining the word QUINQUEQUAQUAVERSAL, defining it as “sloping downward from the center, as does a geological formation, in all directions, but in five different ways (sharply, gradually, smoothly, roughly, and in some intermediate fashion).” If you have qualms about accepting a coined word, think of it as a derived word, drawn into the limelight out of the vast, unrecorded resources of our language.

RECURRER, ASSESS, and STATUETTE are unobjectionable words, though the last of these verges dangerously on the deplorably long—one letter more, and it would be over the brink. MUUMUU is the name for a loose, brightly-colored dress worn by Hawaiian women and imitated in the United States. Since the Hawaiian language does not belong to the Indo-European family, we must look askance at the word. It doesn’t sound English!

We have been unable to find any dictionary word employing—or deploying—four V’s. Accordingly, we offer you another homemade word, OVEROVOVIVIPAROUS, defined as “producing to excess eggs hatched within the body, as certain reptiles and fishes.” The word will have to do until something better turns up.

The WOW-WOW is both the silver gibbon of Java and the agile gibbon of Sumatra. The word is too uncommon, is hyphenated, and comes from the Sundanese language. Furthermore, it is a tautonym of the first order. It must be replaced at the earliest opportunity.

For the third time, we find no dictionary word using 4 X’s, though there is at least one with three of them—the chemical HEXAHYDROXECYCLOHEXANE, a member of the Vitamin B2 complex used to stave off baldness in mice (the well-groomed mouse does not wish to appear bald in public). Consequently, we offer you a contrived or coined term, MAXIXE-EXECUTRIX, designating a woman proficient in dancing or executing the maxixe, a round dance of Brazilian origin. The word is coined, too long, and hyphenated. It, too, must be replaced.

WORD WAYS
For the letter Y, we reach back into the glorious past of our language. From the pages of *The Century Dictionary*, we pluck the Middle English word FYRYRYN. In our own, decadent age, the term is spelled “fire iron.”

To wind up with a flourish, we show off RAZZMATAZZ. Of course, the word is a little too long, and is also based on reduplication, a practice frowned on in better circles.

Our list is a starting point. It needs a great deal in the way of improvement.

Help, won’t you?

A PRETTY NAME

The November 8, 1967 issue of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported the baptism of eight-month old Dawne N. Lee at a local church the previous Sunday.

The little girl’s middle name may be the longest Hawaiian name ever, spelled with exactly 100 letters:

NAPAUMOHALAEAENAMAKEAWEHIOUSAKUAHIWIAMEANKAPEWAKEHOOMAKEHAALAKEEANAAINAANIANIKAHAWEHAVAINAAAO.

Translated into English, the name means, “The fragrant abundant beautiful blossoms begin to fill the air of hills and valleys throughout the breadth and width of these glorious Hawaiian Islands at dawn.”

Note the tripled “I” near the end of the name.

POEM FOR A PALINDROME

I buy ten jugs of wine,  
They are a flaming scarlet hue;  
I set them in a line  
Along a wall of brownish-blue.

My artist friends recoil  
At such a flagrant color clash;  
They rant, and rave, and boil  
To make me change what they call “trash.”

Enraged, I seize a knife  
And stab each one right through the heart;  
So now, they haunt my life  
As ghosts, to make me change my “art.”

STOP, MURDERED ARTISTS! I TRADE RED RUM-POTS!

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