TWELVE-LETTER PAIR PYRAMID WORDS

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In any logological research one is required, consciously or unconsciously, to devise and follow a set of rules for inclusion. The far outermost limits of such rules have been discussed several times in Word Ways. But the basic, starting rules have been virtually ignored. Let us choose a subject and see how the "rules for inclusion" will alter our allowable stock of words.

Pair Pyramid words were introduced briefly in February, 1972, in "Brush Up Your Webster's" (page 26). A Pyramid word contains one of one letter, two of a second letter, three of a third letter, etc. A Pair Pyramid embraces two such sequences. For example (the only single twelve-letter word mentioned in the earlier article), the letters H-K-AA-WW-EEE-SSS are in WAWASKEESHES. These are devilishly difficult to find and recognize; for the pattern is fairly complex once one leaves the six-letter words of the form abcedd. The above example has the twelve-letter pattern abccddeeefff. The next level, twenty-letter words having the pattern abccddeeeffggghhh, I leave to the superexperts. Let us look for twelve-letter Pair Pyramid words.

The first rule is the authority. We'll start with a common and simple one: The Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary. The second rule could be one of many. Let us allow only initial boldface entries.

commencement rhododendron

There are, however, boldface "entries" listed as closely related words under the initial entry word, so-called "run-on entries". This adds two more:

divisiveness statistician

Words formed by adding a prefix having obvious meanings are sometimes found under that prefix. Under RE- is the additional boldface Pair Pyramid:

reappearance

Surely, the simple and usual inflectional forms are legitimate words. If we now allow these, our list grows:

condescended doggednesses efficiencies
The Pocket is based on Webster's Third Unabridged, containing ten times as many words. If we now allow it, can we multiply our hoard by ten? To simplify matters we will allow the expanded rules for inclusion.

There are a shade under seven times as many twelve-letter Pair Pyramid words in Webster's Third. New ones are:

- appropriator
- blossombills
- Chastacostas
- clinolimnion
- Coccidioides
- derrangedera
- dimmednesses
- diplococcoid
- engagingness
- finitenesses
- galloglasses
- glossolaljas
- glossologist
- Ggregarinaria
- gunslingsings
- handednesses
- hoodednesses
- horsescersers
- inclusiveness
- inconscience
- infiniteness
- insanitation
- insistencies

Note that a number of capitalized words are in the above formidable list. Decisions! Decisions! And compounded by Webster's use of subdivisions of capitalization: "usually", "often", and "sometimes".

May we now turn to a still larger store of words -- Webster's Second Unabridged, about 1 1/3 times more entries than the Third? Will Pair Pyramid words increase at the same rate? We compare results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pocket</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Second</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entries</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair Pyramids</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yield</td>
<td>0.031%</td>
<td>0.021%</td>
<td>0.031%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is little point in showing here the additional twelve-letter
Pair Pyramids from Webster's Second. Not that they are so exotic and arcane. Witness, PREADDRESSED might well have been in the Pocket.

Some of the Webster's Second words appear below the line. Damned line! Why do people, especially logologists, feel there is something inferior about these words? To quote from the explanatory section in Webster's, "these entries have exactly the same status as words in the upper section".

Conclusions are difficult. Surely, as one's stock of words goes up and one's rules for inclusion relax, then the potential is greater and so is the number of allowable words.

But suppose I had restricted myself to boldface initial entries all along? Or considered the Oxford English Dictionary?

To each his own. I hope you found nothing unintriguing about this article and its ramblings.

Come to think of it, I certainly hope you did find UNINTRIGUING.