WORDS WITH TWO PAIRS OF LIKE LETTERS

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Tucked away below the line in Webster's Second Edition is the word KJOEKKENMOEDDING, a Danish word from which kitchen midden is derived. This word is one of the very few beginning with the letters KJ which are listed by English dictionaries. Apart from this, the word is also notable for its two pairs of like letters, i.e. its pair of adjacent K's and its pair of adjacent D's.

KJOEKKENMOEDDING set us thinking. Would it perhaps be possible to find other words with two pairs of like letters in the hope that a list of words with all possible couplets of letter-pair combinations could be built up? Common words which could be included in this list and which occurred to us were BUCCANEER, FOOTBALL and RACCOON.

In all there are 351 different combinations of two letter-pairs (ranging from double A and double A through, for example, double D and double F, and all the way up to double Z and double Z). For how many of these 351 combinations can we find genuine words? Thinking more deeply about the problem, we realised that we would run into severe, possibly insurmountable, difficulties in searching for words containing double instances of the letters J, Q, V and X. We know of only three words possessing a double X -- and none of them has any other letter doubled. Thus it appears impossible to find twenty-six words which have a double X and some other letter doubled. The situation seems almost as impossible for words having a double J, Q or V.

Accordingly, we decided to limit the scope of our initial investigation. If we completely ignore the letters J, Q, V and X and concentrate on the twenty-two remaining letters, then there are 253 different combinations of two letter-pairs. How many of these 253 are conquerable? All those for which we have managed to find examples are indicated in the list below. The words in this list fall into four categories: (i) unhyphenated words (e.g. SWEETNESS), (ii) hyphenated words where a double letter occurrence is not interrupted by a hyphen (e.g. NARROW-HIPPED), (iii) hyphenated words where the hyphen does interrupt one of the letter-pairs (e.g. BETH-HACEREM), (iv) hyphenated words where the hyphen does interrupt two of the letter-pairs (e.g. NARROW-HACEREM).
(iv) multiply hyphenated words where hyphens obtrude in both letter-pairs (e.g. WAZ-ZA-AR-TAR). Words in groups (iii) and (iv) are imperfect examples and should be improved on by the reader if possible. We include them purely because we feel that an imperfect example is far superior to no example at all. The words in the list below are taken from six principal sources which are detailed at the end of this article. Additions and improvements to our list would be greatly welcomed.

aa-aa RAADZAAL
aa-bb JERUBBAAL
aa-cc OCCAANECHY
aa-dd ADDERLAAKE
aa-ee HEEMRAAD
aa-ff TAAFFEITE
aa-ff BAAMBRUGGE
aa-hh KIBROTHHATTAAVAH
aa-lb AALIE
aa-kk MARKKAAN
aa-ll DWAARKILL
aa-mm SAMMAA
aa-nn ANNAAS
aa-oo WAAHOO
aa-pp KOPPIESKRAAL
aa-rk KAARRE
aa-ss ASSBAA
aa-tt KIBROTHHATTAAVAH
aa-uu UUSIMAA
aa-ww
aa-yy PYYVAARA
aa-zz WAZ-ZA-AR-TAR
bb-bb GIBBLEGABBLER
bb-cc
bb-dd ODD-JOBBER
bb-ee CARIBBEE
bb-ff SUBBALLIFF
bb-ss OGGEBBIO
bb-ll
bb-kk SUBBOOKKEEPER
bb-ll DUMBHELL
bb-mm
bb-nn PINNATE-RIBBED
bb-oo Gobbledygook
bb-pp BABBERLIPPED
bb-rr CORROBBOREE
bb-ss ABBESS
bb-rt BABBITT
bb-uu
bb-wv
bb-yy
bb-zz ABBOZZO
cc-cc ACCIACCATURA
cc-dd
cc-ee BUCCANEER
cc-ff
cc-gg
cc-hh BETH-HACEREM
cc-ii BACCHII
cc-kk
cc-ll PICCALILLI
cc-mm ACCOMMODATE
cc-nn PICCANINNY
cc-oo RACCOON
cc-pp HICcupped
cc-qq OCCURRING
cc-ss ACCESS
cc-tt GNOCCHETTI
cc-uu
cc-ww
cc-yy
cc-zz FLACCIDEZZA
dd-dd FUDDY-DUDDY
dd-ee SADDUCEE
dd-ff OFFSADDLE
dd-gg STRADDE-LEGGED
dd-hh
dd-ll
dd-kk KJOEKKENMOEDDING
dd-ll MOLLYCODDLE
dd-mm FLUMMADIDDLE
dd-nn ODD-PINNATE
ee-ee
ee-ff
ee-gg
ee-hh
ee-ii
ee-kk
ee-ll
ee-nn
ee-oo
ee-pp
ee-rr
ee-ss
ee-tt
ee-uu
ee-ww
ee-yy
ee-zz
ff-ff
ff-gg
ff-hh
ff-ii
ff-kk
ff-ll
ff-mm
ff-nn
ff-oo
ff-pp
ff-rr
ff-ss
ff-tt
ff-uu
ff-ww
ff-yy
ff-zz
dd-oo PADDOCKSTOOL
dd-pp CHAPPAQUIDDICK
dd-rr CUDDINGWARRA
dd-ss GODDESS
dd-tt MUDDY-METTLLED
dd-uu
dd-ww
dd-yy
dd-zz

ee-ee TEEPEE
ee-ff COFFEE
ee-gg GEGGEE
ee-hh URHHEEN
ee-il
ee-kk THICKKNEE
ee-ll JEEWHILLIKENS
ee-mm RECOMMENDEE
ee-nn INNKEEPER
ee-oo COOEE
ee-pp TIPPEE
ee-rr INTERROGEE
ee-ss SWEETNESS
ee-uu AALSMEERERBUURT
ee-ww ARROWWEED
ee-yx QUIZZEE

ff -ff RIFFRAFF
ff -gg POGGENDORFF
ff -hh
ff -ii JEFFREYSIID
ff -kk KAFFERSHOEKKOP
ff -ll DAFFODILLY
ff -mm
ff -nn CAFFETANNIN
ff -oo BUFOON
ff -pp HIPPORIGFFF
ff -rr OVERRUFF
ff -ss SHERIFFESS
ff -tt SPITTELESTAFF
ff -uu
ff -ww SKEWWHIFF
ff -yy
ff -zz

gg-gg LUGGNAGG
gg-hh
gg-il
gg-kk
gg-ll GOLLIWOGG
gg-mm COMMESSAGGIO
gg-nn UNNAGGLING
gg-oo DAGGERPROOF
gg-pp APPOGGIATURA
gg-rr OVERRIGGED
gg-ss THUGGESS
gg-tt PETTIFOGGING
gg-uu
gg-ww
gg-yx JAGGAYYAPEATA
gg-zz FUZZY-LEGGED

hh-hh CHHECHH
hh-il
hh-kk
hh-ll RICHHILL
hh-mm
hh-nn CONNUGHHARIEGUGHHARIE
hh-oo FISHHOOK
hh-pp
hh-rr CHHARRA
hh-ss MASSENBACHHAUSEN
hh-tt KIBROTHHAATTAHAV
hh-uu
hh-ww
hh-yy
hh-zz POCHERETH-HAZZEAIRM

II -ii IVANTIIRA
II -kk IKKA
II -ll BOUGAINVILLIIDAE
II -mm GRAMMYSIIDAE
II -nn BLENNIDI
II -oo RAMOOSII
II -pp APPENDICULARIIDAE
II -rr SARRIID
II -ss CROSSOPTERYGIII
II -tt TETTIGONIID
II -uu IIIRUU
II -ww
II -yy SIIPYY
II -zz
| kk-kl | VIKKKJOKK | nn-yy | BUDENNYY |
| kk-sl | BREKKUVELLIR | nn-zz | CANNIZZARO |
| kk-mm | KIRKKONUMMI | oo-oo | TOOLROOM |
| kk-nn | HANNUKKAH | oo-pp | WHIPPOORWILL |
| kk-oo | BOOKKEEPER | oo-pp | WHIPPOORWILL |
| kk-rr | BRAKKOPPIE | oo-ss | FOOLISHNESS |
| kk-ss | EKKASSA | oo-ss | VOULAKAR |
| kk-tt | AKKARAIPATTU | oo-uu | SUURKLOOFBERGE |
| kk-uu | KUSISIKOLAKI | oo-wv | BOWWOOD |
| kk-wv | BOOKKEEPER | oo-yy | MISTAKEN |
| kk-yv | AKKYYA | oo-zz | MUZZLEWOOD |
| kk-zz | WAW-GUN-NUK-KIZ-ZE | pp-pp | WHIPPERSNAPPER |
| ll-lt | HILBBILLY | pp-rv | NARROW-HIPPED |
| ll-mm | MAMMILLA | pp-ss | GRASSHOPPER |
| ll-nn | POLLYANNA | pp-tt | APPOMATTOC |
| ll-oo | FOOTBALL | pp-wv | APPOMATTOC |
| ll-pp | APALL | pp-yv | POYYAPPATTI |
| ll-rr | GUERRILLA | pp-zz | HAPPIZZE |
| ll-ss | MISSPELL | rr-mm | MILLIWATT |
| ll-tt | MILLIWA | rr-rr | TIWIRIR |
| ll-uu | HILLEGOMMERBUURT | rr-rv | EMBARRASS |
| ll-ww | HOLLOWWORT | rr-tt | ATERR |
| ll-yy | FUUZBALL | rr-uu | TUPAWARE |
| ll-zz | FUZZBALL | rr-vv | FARRAKSHIYAR |
| mm-mm | NIMMY-PIMMY | rr-ww | ARROWWORM |
| mm-nn | NINNYHAMMER | rr-yv | FARRAKSHIYAR |
| mm-oo | EMMERGOOSE | rr-zz | TERRAZZO |
| mm-pp | DOPPELKUMMEL | ss-ss | SENSELESSNESS |
| mm-rv | NARROW-RIMMED | ss-tt | TOTTERGRASS |
| mm-ss | COMMISSION | ss-uu | KILLWASSYE |
| mm-tt | COMMITTED | ss-wv | KOWWASSYE |
| mm-uu | HILLEGOMMERBUURT | ss-yy | PIAZZALESS |
| mm-wv | HILLEGOMMERBUURT | ss-zz | PIAZZALESS |
| mm-yv | OMAYAYAD | tt-tt | THROTTLEBOTTOM |
| mm-zz | OMAYAYAD | tt-uu | OATWAWWAWWUG |
| nn-nn | KINNIKINNICK | tt-yy | NEEYATTINKARA |
| nn-oo | PENNACOOK | tt-zz | GAZZETTA |
| nn-pp | APPUNN | uu-uu | MUUMUU |
| nn-rr | ANNERRE | uu-ww | UUSIKARLEPPYY |
| nn-ss | SENNEGRASS | uu-yv | UUSIKARLEPPYY |
| nn-tt | FLANNELETTE | uu-wv | BOWWETEGOWHENINNEWUG |
This list includes 19% of the 253 possible two letter-pairs. That is just over 77%. Don’t forget -- we are counting on you to up the figure.

Now let us return to those 98 two letter-pairs where at least one of the letter-pairs was a J, Q, V or X doubled. We feel that the search for words containing such letter-pairs could go on forever. All our searching only managed to uncover three examples, and one of these is defective because of the presence of a hyphen.

GJUVVIKFJELL, a mountain of Norway indicated in the Times Atlas of the World
HOOQQA, a variant spelling of HOOKAH, a pipe used for smoking, which is listed in the Oxford English Dictionary
DAQQ-I-HAJI-IS-HAQ, a salt desert of Iran shown in our copy of the Rand McNally Commercial Atlas & Marketing Guide

Until many more of these extremely rare words can be found, we suggest that coinages and derived words be used as examples for the 95 other J, Q, V or X words. We shall offer a few examples -- the reader will probably be able to think of others in profusion.

FOXX-LOBBED, thrown as if by Jimmy Foxx, the baseball player
FLIVVER-MUDDIED, made muddy by a Model T Ford
SKIVVY-LEGGED, possessing legs similar to those of a skivvy (a domestic servant)
JIJIN-SUNNED, sun-tanned by the especially fierce sun of Jijjin, Jordan
HAJJ-NECESSITATING, necessitating a certain type of pilgrimage
AQQABA-TANNED, sun-tanned by the incredibly fierce sun of Aqqaba, Jordan
NAXXAR-SKINNED, possessing that skin typical of Naxxar, Malta
RIQQ-TAPPING, tapping a kind of tambourine

The references used for the words in the main list in this article were the Second and Third Editions of Webster’s New International Dictionary, Funk & Wagnall’s New Standard Dictionary of the English Language, the Times Index Gazetteer of the World, the 1967 Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide, and Hodge’s Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico.