When reporting discoveries in recreational linguistics, the careful logologist always specifies the stockpile of words he has used. The most convenient and widely-available stockpiles of words are, of course, found in dictionaries. Unfortunately, dictionaries are not always easy to search through for words with certain characteristics, and various types of word lists have been compiled to make the task easier. One of the commonest ways to rearrange a dictionary is to list together all words of the same length. Within each length, words are then listed alphabetically; sometimes (in positional word lists) the alphabetization is done not only on the first letter, but on each of the letters in turn.

Using the New Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary, word lists of two through eight letters, both alphabetic and positional, have been compiled by a variety of sources: Robert Spence Publications (St. Petersburg, Florida), National Library Publications (Brooklyn, New York), Puzzle Solvers Handbook (Tucson, Arizona), and Word Builder's Handbook (Fort Worth, Texas). Although it might appear to be a trivial matter to extract seven lists totaling approximately eighteen thousand words from the Pocket Dictionary, such is not the case; not one of these publishers has succeeded in producing a completely accurate list.

The purpose of this article is to present as accurate a list as possible of Pocket Dictionary words of two to eight letters. More precisely, we define a word in the Pocket Dictionary as a boldface entry, excluding all prefixes, suffixes, words containing hyphens, words containing apostrophes, and words which appear solely as single words in multi-word terms. The number of words of each length is tabulated:

2-letter words: 38 4-letter words: 1849 7-letter words: 4601
3-letter words: 542 5-letter words: 2804 8-letter words: 4416
6-letter words: 4060

Rather than present yet another list with the inevitable omissions and misspellings, we build on the most accurate of the lists mentioned above -- The Word Builder's Handbook, available for $12 (sometimes for $9.90) from the Computer Puzzle Library, Box 5134, Fort Worth, Texas 76108. The corrections below have been given to the publisher; since the handbook is a computer-generated printout from cards or tape, it should be easy to incorporate these in future printings.
Words Omitted

3 letters noes
4 letters bled, bred, dies, nevi, noes, pooh
5 letters arose, auger, aught, bases, faker, ionic, villi, women
6 letters eighth, ensure, eureka, exottr, quiots, scaled, toiler, yclept
7 letters augment, cheater, cherubs, conches, croolly, enquirey, eyelids, hamburg, pottage, sheller, thinker, tighten
8 letters ardently, dietetic, humorous, pellagra, purplish, worthily

Words Listed in Error

5 letters amino (part of amino acid), casus (part of casus belli)
6 letters closed (part of closed circuit), fo'c'sle (actually fo'c'sle), ureka (misspelled eureka), yclept (misspelled yclept)
7 letters benzoic (part of benzoic acid), pelagra (misspelled pelagra)
8 letters inasmuch (part of inasmuch as), reversly (misspelled reversely), spherical (misspelled spherical), tighten (misspelled tighten), wagonett (misspelled wagonette)

The Puzzle Solver's Handbook is considerably less accurate; the number of words omitted, listed in error, and listed twice is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-letter words</th>
<th>4-letter words</th>
<th>5-letter words</th>
<th>6-letter words</th>
<th>7-letter words</th>
<th>8-letter words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-0-0</td>
<td>20-0-3</td>
<td>50-3-0</td>
<td>83-2-3</td>
<td>90-1-2</td>
<td>125-6-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A complete list of these words is available upon request from the author, 410 Avenue B West, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501.

The word NO-GOOD in the Pocket Dictionary presents a minor mystery; should it or should it not be included on the list? The word appears twice in the dictionary in boldface type, once as an adjective and once as a noun; the second time the word is hyphenated it is split between two different lines. The preface to the dictionary (page 5a) implies that in situations like this a double hyphen will be used if the hyphen is to be retained when the word is printed as one unit on the same line. Since NO-GOOD has only a single hyphen at the end of the line, this implies that NOGOOD is the legitimate form of the word. On the other hand, the hyphen that is used in the second NO-GOOD is longer and darker than the hyphen used, for example, to split the word NUTRITIONAL. It seems plausible that the noun and adjectival forms of the word are spelled the same, and that the dictionary-compiler neglected to insert the double hyphen; therefore, we have not included this as a correction to the word list. Nevertheless, this incident illustrates the difficulty of arriving at a word list commanding universal agreement among logologists.