

KICKSHAWS

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Readers are invited to send kickshaws to the Associate Editor. Correspondents who wish a quick acknowledgement should enclose a self-addressed post card.

Morse Mishaps

Suppose a novice telegraph operator allows no more time interval between letters than he does between dots and dashes in transmitting International Morse Code messages (look under "Morse Code" in Webster's Collegiate). His listeners are due for a lot of confusion, roughly of the same order as that induced by removing all the vowels from a fairly long passage of text. In the latter case, an enormous number of messages can be inferred; in the former an equally enormous number of letter sequences is possible. There are 30 ways of dividing the sequence ·-·-·- into International Morse letters, at least four of which are words (ax, ana, emu, wit). There are more than 100 ways of dividing ·-·-·-·- yielding leg, run, rig, rep, late, rime, LP and the standard abbreviation EDP (electronic data processing). No doubt other sequences of dots and dashes produce even more Collegiate Dictionary words. However, as the sequence becomes longer it is increasingly difficult to fashion any words at all. We are fascinated by the question: what is the highest possible word-to-symbol ratio, and what stream of dots and dashes provides it?

Look Alikes

This quiz consists of pairs of words that are quite different in meaning but are frequently confused with one another, e.g. LUXURIOUS and LUXURIANT, or PERSPICUOUS and PERSPICACIOUS. If you are able to determine as many as 8 of the 12 word pairs (no time limit), you will have beaten par.

1. a hospital for the treatment of chronic diseases; an institution for the promotion of health
2. to reveal; to depreciate
3. beggary; dishonesty
4. to command solemnly; to renounce
5. to irritate or scrape; to censure or reprimand
6. to rout; to make uneasy
7. corrupt; pardonable

8. to write or compose; to charge with a crime
9. self-pleased; pleasing to others
10. occurring every two years; occurring twice a year
11. swollen; muddled
12. to challenge or assail; to ascribe or attribute

Transmutation by Syllables

As a variant of Lewis Carroll's transmutation game in which one word is changed to another by successive steps, each introducing a new word by changing a letter of the previous one, consider the simpler version in which an entire syllable is changed. To begin with, let's limit attention to six-letter words that divide into pairs of three-letter syllables. For example, we can transmute DOCTOR to LAWYER via CAS-TOR CASTLE MANTLE MANGER SINGER SINFUL LAWFUL. For a color change, how about YELLOW PILLOW PILFER COFFER COFFIN MUFFIN MUFFLE TRIFLE TRIPLE PURPLE? If our readers can't get from YELLOW to PURPLE in fewer than nine steps, we'll be surprised. Perhaps one of you can transmute SECOND to MINUTE, a task that's proved too tough for us.

Readers who find the challenge involved in syllable transmutation too tame are invited to experiment with a much stricter version in which both the spelling and the sound of the syllable must be preserved. Thus, MANTLE may transmute to MANTIS, but not to MANGER, as above. We doubt not that under this stricter rule most of you will still be able to get from DOCTOR to LAWYER.

Those who find this project interesting are encouraged to experiment with generalizations. It is possible to change the length of the words involved, as in DONKEY WHISKEY WHISTLE. Can anyone out there transmute WHISKEY into VODKA?

Permuted Samples

From two two-letter words a sample letter is taken, and the two sample letters, when printed in the order of the two words, spells AS. Now the order of the two words is reversed, and sample letters are again taken, this time spelling out the word ON. Knowledge of the two sample words AS and ON mathematically determines (up to transposal) the original two words, which must have been AN (or NA) and SO (or OS).

Suppose that we seek to determine three three-letter words by this method (or, in general, n n -letter words). Given six sample words made up of letters selected in order from every possible permutation of the three mystery words, we know of no mathematically foolproof method for determining the mystery words, even though the information from the sample words appears to be far more than is necessary to do the job. Readers are invited to use their logical reasoning powers to find the mystery words in the following examples:

1. AIL APT PIG POT SPA TOY

2. APE COP FIR IRE ORE PEA
3. ATE HOT ORE RAT ROT TOO

In the next problem there are four mystery words of four letters to be discovered; the sample words arise from the 24 possible permutations:

4. ALAS ARAB ATOM BASE CAST COAT CORD CRAB EAST HALT
LENT LICE MALT MILE MOTH OATH RATE REAL ROAN SALE
TACT THAT TIME TONE

Putting a par number on this exercise is a little silly. Every guinea pig on whom these have been tried has scored either four or zero.

Double Shiftwords

Tom Pulliam has supplied us with enough double shiftwords to satiate even the greediest logologist. A double shiftword, such as ABAC, forms new words as a result of transferring either the initial letter to the right end, as BACA, or the terminal letter to the left end, as CABA. Here is the rest of Tom's list of previously-undiscovered forms; read it and marvel.

abes	amel	azam	etam	kana	name	achar
acop	amir	dama	eten	kati	nona	achen
arad	anal	dara	evel	lama	nowe	along
adew	anam	dare	even	lame	obed	amass
agar	anat	data	ever	lane	obol	amiss
ager	anem	doli	evil	leno	oded	apast
ahoy	arad	dora	ewer	lode	oket	athar
ahum	aram	eath	eyed	lura	oman	dorea
airm	asak	ebon	eyer	mala	omen	eared
ajar	asar	edam	hait	mana	omer	egall
alam	aser	eden	hank	mara	oral	emend
alan	asin	eder	hart	maro	palo	etern
alas	atap	eker	heat	mela	rada	ether
alen	atar	elam	heit	mina	rama	lathe
alim	ater	elef	idas	mira	rami	mania
amal	athe	erin	idem	mite	rane	massa
aman	avel	eris	ides	mona	rice	norna
amar	aven	eros	iram	nala	sana	racha
amay	aver	eser	isel	nama	thea	

Two Sequences

Here are two different word sequences, courtesy of Mary Youngquist. You are invited to discover the logic behind each of them. Why are the words of each sequence presented in the order in which they appear? Your task has been made easier by having two sequences, since the keys to them are very similar, though not identical. If you give up, consult Answers and Solutions.

1. horse time ring poster finger pack up ball pin strike
2. lady nature rail down column sense heaven note inning
rate hour night

Curtailment and Beheadment

Since Ralph Beaman introduced the topic in "Word Torture" in the August 1974 Word Ways, readers have been intrigued with the challenge of finding Websterian words which continue to be Websterian words when a letter is dropped either from the initial or terminal position -- all the way down to the one-letter level. Since the progressive letter deletions can be any mixture of beheadments and curtailments, quite a number of spin-off words must be confirmed in order to establish a word as impervious to beheadment and/or curtailment. For example, using *Webb 2* as our authority, we may call the word SHAD impervious, since all possible results of fore and aft mutilation, viz. HAD, SHA, AD, HA, SH, S, H, A and D appear therein. Several five-letter and six-letter impervious words have appeared since Ralph's article, but, as Tom Pulliam remarks, "The ultimate pinnacle seems to be a seven-letter combination that is totally Websterian throughout".

Small wonder that no impervious seven-letter word has yet surfaced. Ignoring the one-letter words, qualification of such a word involves confirming 20 shorter words as Websterian. Ralph's GUNITES and ETAMINE are remarkable in having only two gaps apiece and, as Tom Pulliam points out, Ralph's MORALES is itself not listed in Webster's, only implied. Tom submits his own candidate for the "closest and cleanest" approximation to an impervious seven-letter Websterian word: SHEAVES, missing only the letter-sequence EAV. (Tom wonders how Noah could have overlooked this one.)

If you find the ultimate pinnacle, please let us know.

Rhyme Quiz

Suppose you're translating a poem from a foreign language into English and you want to preserve the rhyme scheme on a word-by-word basis (not very practical, but we had to think of some scenario for this quiz). Suppose, then, four rhyming words had the following meanings in English: sedentary, utensil, grinder, grapple. If you were looking for rhyming synonyms, you could hardly do better than with sessile, vessel, pestle, wrestle. That's the general idea. Par, as achieved by the Word Herd on the twelve offerings following, was ten. For our answers, turn to Answers and Solutions. Alternate solutions (if you find any) get double credit. Each answer group consists of words that rhyme and have the same number of syllables.

1. fasten, tripod, musk, shrub, fulcrum, square of turf
2. carouse, trace, tractable, bump, thrush
3. goblet, royal mansion, animus, unsympathetic
4. short time, harpsichord, feathery, finch
5. Carthaginian, magical, surcoat, castrato
6. rational, inclination, caustic
7. balanced, demon, celebration, incline
8. turning, secretary, devotee, club
9. expensive (of a victory), rhapsodic, tallowish

10. she-ass, stomach lining, trumpet call
11. red, menial, trull
12. carouse, mollusc, monastery

Trade Name Reversals

In case you thought the last word on trade names that appear to be inadvertent reversals of dictionary words was said in the previous issue, Dmitri Borgmann is here to disabuse you:

soft drink TAB, TEEM, SPOT	cosmetics AVON
soap TIDE, LAVA	coffee DECAF
cigarette KOOL, SALEM	canned meat SPAM
magazine TIME, MAD	powdered drink TANG
atlas publisher CRAM	automobile PACER
sleeping pill DORMIN	deodorant SECRET
throat lozenge SUCRETS	porcelain SEVRES

Since NOVA is also the name of an automobile, AVON and NOVA are a mutual pair of trade name reversals. SUCRETS is probably the most inadvertent trade name reversal in history -- the Latin word Stercus means dung!

Dmitri writes that no logo-list is worth compiling or reading unless it has an interlingual example. By a rare coincidence, he has provided one: the breath freshener SEN-SEN. The reversal, nesnes, is a Welsh word meaning nearer and nearer.

Certain examples must be disqualified because of the obvious advertence of the name-coiners: patent medicine SERUTAN, soft drink NED-LOG, headache remedy DARVON (the same company also manufactures NOVRAD). The most difficult item to classify is the tradename SETEBAID, a brand name for vitamin and mineral products. Registered in 1951, this appeared in numerous editions of the Trademark Register in the category "Medicines and Pharmaceutical Preparations", but vanished from it in 1974. How about it -- advertent or inadvertent? Dmitri, less skeptical than we are, is willing to allow the possibility that by pure coincidence the trademark was fashioned from some combination like (Vitamin) C + Tab (let) + Aid. We are unwilling to stretch the laws of probability this far; however, we concede that the reversal itself, diabetes, is an argument in favor of inadvertence (advertent names tend to be reversals of words that make the product attractive, such as ANIMATS). Perhaps the first nostrum offered by this outfit was a "cure" for diabetes and the name was coined as a deliberate reversal, but in time was applied to a more heterogeneous collection of patent remedies. Anybody's guess is equally good at this stage.

Pilfered Proverbs

No two dandruff flakes are exactly alike. If God had meant us to attend concerts, he would have provided us with tickets. Always carry a grapefruit.
(Philip M. Cohen)

Every time an idiot dies, your I. Q. goes down. Ant poison is extremely hazardous, especially to ants. Two can live as cheaply as one, but only half as long. (Bill Ballance)

There are two sides to every question; on the other hand, there are not two sides to every question. (Jack Margolis)

There is an exception to every rule ... except this one. Most people literally can't read. Isn't that incredible? You'd better believe it. (Leon Bankoff)

Websterian Curiosa

John Standish of Burial Hill, Plymouth, Mass. (with an assist from Darryl Francis) sends another quiz that will be insultingly easy for any reader who has read Webster's Dictionary from cover to cover a hundred or more times. If you're a normal reader, don't be embarrassed if you score a zero.

1. IJssel is a river in the Netherlands which starts with two capital letters. Give a word, also of six letters, starting with three capitals. (Hint: it's very new.)
2. Where can you find the all-capitalized boldface entry NEL?
3. SUCCESSLESSNESS and POSSESSIONLESSNESS both have four pairs of doubled letters. Give a third word having this property. (Hint: it doesn't have a doubled S.)
4. Where can you decipher the entry 700N -JLF ? (Hint: you're looking at the answer.)
5. Multiple entries are supposed to be separated by or or also. Give a pair separated by a comma.
6. Give a word of the form 121-121-121.
7. TOBIM and TOVIM are legitimate words, yet there is no entry for either. Why?
8. FO'C'SLE has the combination 'SL. This should help in finding two words having S'L.
9. No entry has the largest number of words. Why not?
10. Find an entry in the dictionary ending with the word D'.
11. What entry has its pronunciation given as / '(h)wich'sē / ?
12. Last chance. Give the two reduplicative reversals having the letter patterns 123123 and 321321.

More Ambiguity

Re the topic of ambiguity, discussed in the May 1975 Kickshaws, the Logolog sends an example which is more likely to befuddle when spoken than when written, since punctuation should make the necessary distinction: JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER (,) JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.

Jack Carney contributed this intentionally ambiguous standard letter that Disraeli used to send to authors who sent him copies of their books: "Thank you for your latest volume. I shall lose no time in reading it." A fine solution to the eternal problem of cleaving to the truth without wounding. Say you are cornered by an untalented, unimaginative ac-

quaintance and asked what you think of xes new living room decor / driftwood sculpture / finger painting / antique bootjack / piano playing, etc. Think of the many ways our language offers to get you off the hook. You can reply with any of these zero-information responses:

Wow!	That's really something!
How about that?	Something else!
Incredible!	Way out!
Far out!	Out of sight!

Richard Field gave us another sentence with hidden ambiguity, again orally ambiguous only: The cannibals will eat (G/g)randmother tonight. With the upper case G, the sentence refers to some individual known as "Grandmother" to the speaker and the listener. With the lower case g, the generic term is being used -- in other words, the cannibals will be eating (somebody's) grandmother, instead of some other staple such as baby or adolescent. Dick asked us what we thought of his little gem and naturally we responded "Wow!"

A Cryptographic Problem

Walter Penney offers another of his challenging puzzles to Kickshaws readers. The pattern of a word can be represented by a sequence of numbers used in order to represent single and repeated letters; for example, the pattern of BOYCOTT is 1234255 and AFFABLE is 1221345 (note that numbers can represent different letters in different words). The patterns of two ten-letter words, forming a meaningful (but non-dictionary) phrase, each word containing seven different letters, are added with the result 2464870348. What are the words?

Updates

Mary Youngquist, author of "I Was Tossed Out Of Chem. Lab. Because They Didn't Like My Retorts", has supplied us with several additional No-Go Logos:

One man being hanged by an angry mob, two others being speared
 (Merrill Lynch, Pierce Fenner & Smith)
 Whole deer being roasted over a flame (Sears Roebuck)
 A four-star army officer lounging in a touring car (General Motors)
 A king with a heavy woollen scarf (Midas Mufflers)
 A chamber pot being hoisted to a flagpole sitter (Upjohn)

Philip Cohen updates the list of numerical prefixes printed in this department in February 1973. In addition to the prefix TERA- that was given for trillion, Webs 2 and 3 both list TREGA-. The prefix for quadrillion is given in Web 2 as QUEGA-, but ASTRA- is also used. Similarly, the non-dictionary-sanctified term NEBU- is used for quintillion. This brings macro up to date with micro, the old list having contained the entries PICO-, FEMTO- and ATTO-, respectively, for the reciprocals trillionth, quadrillionth, quintillionth.

Murray Pearce adds GRANDAM, GRANDMA to the list of synony-

mous anagrams. Furthermore, he has finally succeeded in topping Darryl Francis's long-standing hyper-hyphenation record, announced in the November 1970 Kickshaws. Darryl found two five-hyphen entries in Web 3: John-go-to-bed-at-noon and Kiss-me-over-the-garden-gate. True, Murray had to go to W. R. Cooper's Archaic Dictionary (1876) to find the seven-hyphen entry Har-U-Pu-Ka-Ka-Sharu-Sha-Bau, a mystical deity mentioned in the CLXVth chapter of the Ritual of The Dead. In the preface, the editor remarks that some ancient names are virtually unpronounceable without the aid of hyphens, implying the possibility that the hyphens in Har-U were arbitrarily inserted. Nevertheless, the entry is from a respectable (if venerable) dictionary. Murray writes that it is now up to Darryl to find an eight-hyphen entry. "Dash it all!" growls the Bloodhound of Hampton.

Etymological Musings

Harry Hazard of Princeton, N. J. calls attention to the interesting doublet CAVALIER and CHIVALROUS. They are cognate and at one time were similar in meaning when the former was used as an adjective. Although they are not quite antonyms yet, cavalier, by the frequent process of degeneration, seems to be destined one day to mean "unchivalrous". Harry offers also an excellent example of folk etymology: the phrase "Oh, my achin' head" derives from Edmund Akenhead, crossword editor of the London Times. Always be skeptical of word derivations, even by authorities such as the Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology. James Beard may be a fine cook, but you can take his etymology with a grain of salt, too. From page 276 of his Delights & Prejudices (Simon & Schuster, 1964): "Barbecue cooking was first introduced in America by the French ... on a homemade spit which pierced the animal from barbe a la queue -- literally from whiskers to tail!" Very pat and maybe even correct, but Opdycke, the ODEE, Partridge, Stimpson and Webster disagree with him. They say barbecue comes from the word barbacoa from Taino (XVIIth century), a now-extinct language of Haiti. The word meant "a framework for outdoor roasting".

Quickies

The Word Buff writes that Web 3 gives the reference entry "Misprize var of misprize" and the reference entry "Misprize var of misprize". He got caught in what appeared to be an infinite loop between these two entries, but managed to extricate himself by first changing the loop into a figure-eight via the similar pair pendant-pendent, and then closing Web 3 abruptly with an audible crack.

Charles Suhor proposes using suffixes to denote degrees of affability in a Secretary of State: kissing, kisser, kisser, kisser. R. Robinson Rowe writes that EARN is one of a limited class of words that remain words if you add the suffix -EST either once or twice. Can you find words which form new words upon either one or two additions of the suffixes -ED? -ES? -S? -ER?

Pamela H. Brang points out that Web 3 has the entries BLACK

HORSE and WHITE HORSE, and Web 2 the entry RED HORSE. No big deal -- except for the fact that all three entries refer to fish!

Mary Youngquist writes that EEEFGHHNNORSTUVWXYZ is the smallest letter-list which can be used, in turn, to spell out the digits zero, one, ... , nine. What is the shortest list of words using exactly these letters? The best she could find was VEX UNFROZEN WIGHTS.

Philip Cohen challenges you to a rather difficult disinterment. The trigram YUP is not frequent in English, except in Gary Cooper movies. YUP is buried in the Web 2 word YUPON and the Web 3 word YUPIK. In what Websterian word is YUPON in turn buried?

Several mentions have been made in Word Ways to words having origins unknown. Ralph Beaman notes that Web 3 says SAWDER, meaning "flatter", is origin unknown. But, under SOFT SAWDER, meaning "flattery", they say SAWDER is from ME solder. So it's both known and unknown!

Steven Larsen of Westwood, California directs our attention to the entry UNDIGENOUS (generated by water) in Webster's Vest-Pocket Dictionary, which does not appear in the latest Pocket Dictionary, the 7th Collegiate, or the 3rd Unabridged (but is in the 2nd). This is further confirmation of the fact that the words in a small Webster are not necessarily a subset of the words in the larger Websters.

A Collegiate Quiz

Thomas L. Bernard of Springfield, Massachusetts notes that we become so used to hearing and accepting names, whether they be of people, places, or even colleges, that we seldom stop to consider the derivation or etymological roots from which they have sprung. How many of the following well-known American college names can you identify?

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|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. By God! | 11. A servant |
| 2. A dove | 12. Elm wood |
| 3. Fat man | 13. Upper linden tree |
| 4. Big hill | 14. Chief guardian |
| 5. New town | 15. A place to sit |
| 6. Bold friend | 16. Brave as a bear |
| 7. Army guard | 17. Birch meadow |
| 8. Sacred oak on a hill | 18. Dark wasteland |
| 9. A leader | 19. From the mound |
| 10. Fertile upland | 20. Springs in the meadow |