THE ONE-LETTER REBUS

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A rebus is a letter or letter-group that is described by a word or phrase, introducing new spacing as appropriate, such as $B =$ abalone ("a B alone"). In the May 1973 Kickshaws, David Silverman gave two lists of single-letter rebus taken from the Enigma, the monthly publication of the National Puzzlers’ League, and asked for improvements. Rather than try to invent new ones, as did Ernst Theiler in the August 1973 Kickshaws, I will simply give my own list from the Enigma; being more inclusive, it should have something to satisfy every rebus taste.

Rebus come in several varieties besides the standard one illustrated above: the phonetic rebus, in which the word or phrase is sounded out, such as $K =$ casein ("K seen"); the enigmatic rebus, which refers to other letters than the ones shown, such as $E =$ the end of the line; and the suber, or reversed rebus, in which the letters of the word or phrase must be read in reverse to describe the letter-group, such as $K =$ keno ("one K").

The standard rebus (and a few enigmatic ones) is covered in the first list below; the author’s NPL pseudonym is given in parenthesis following the descriptive word or phrase. One-letter non-enigmatic rebus probably have few surprises left, since the NPL has been working on them for the better part of a century. The phonetic rebus (in the second list) and the suber (in the third) are distinctly harder to construct; the latter remains relatively untouched, and interesting new discoveries are still possible. A number of the reversed rebus have not been previously published.

A ascribed (Evergreen), read a paperback of it (Larry), Anaitis (Vega), a D is played (Sakr-el-Bahr)

B abalone (Alouette, Ayaye Kay, Delaware, Helen Highwater, Jack o’Lantern, M. G. M.), blooming (Evergreen), absorption (Zoroaster), after the ball is over (Treesong), bread and butter (Grulla, Tut), breathless earth (Cagliostro), abused (Fluke, Fred Domino, X. Specked)

C aciform (Gi Gantic), thecitis (anon.), cutter (anon.)

D adipose (Atlas), dauntless aunt (Archimedes), disappearing (Grandmother), disconsonant (Ben J. Min, Ixaxar), discounted (Jim Bill), displaced (Problem Child), dislocated (Barnyard), dissolution (Oedipus), seethed (Alouette, D. Tect), unobscured (Swamp Angel), completed (Gi Gantic), adhered (Amaranth, Amor, Acanthus, Billy Goat, Rayle Rhoder), the bottomless pit (Hoho, Larry)

E Erebus (Not senseless), seethes (Osap)

F fissure (Jee Kay, Cigaretta), a circular: Virginia, Festo (Kennegy), etc.

G agnate (magister)

H darkish (Hoodwink)

I soleform (Ixaxar), o (Ixaxar), c (Ixaxar), s (Ixaxar), a (Ixaxar)

J junciform (Jee Kay, Cigaretta)

K seek-no-further (Ixaxar), M capitalism (Oedipus J., Hoodwink)

L Bethel (Tudor Gantic), L. N. Terry

M beholden (Alouette, D. Tect)

N beholden (Alouette, D. Tect)

O a circular: Virginia, Festo (Kennegy), etc.

P a pat hand (Ixaxar), appositively

Q ringtailed (Fluke, Ixaxar), s (Ixaxar), t (Ixaxar)

R simpler (Archimedes), R. N. Terry

S a capital thorn in (the papers, newspapers)

T tintype (N. Terry), tintype (C. J. H. T.)

U autotype (C. J. H. T.)

V half-wit (Alexander)

W one nowhere (Run amuck)

X simplex (C. J. H. T.)

Y ready (Alexander)

Z amazed (Gi Gantic)

Note that a few of these are possibly too difficult for a rebus.
by a word or

B = abalone

gave

monthly

for improvement

Theimer in the text from the

to satisfy

one illustrated

which refers to the line; and word or

group, such as

covered in the parenthesis

rebus (in

interesting

rebi

New England, Anaitis

circle (Zoroaster, Ev), iamb

earth (Cagner

bear

discounted

Homer, Amor,

poet (Hoho,
been used by NPL authors. The phonetic list follows:

A = avowal (Hoho), C = Black Sea (Hap, Primrose), E = ice (Dreamer, Lateo, Missile C.), F = party (Missile C.), fib (Treesong), I = black eye (Iaxaxar, Pearlie Glen), J = jib (Faro), K = casein (Roving), L = licit (Una), M = anemic (Biff), N = citizen (G tangent), P = sea pea (G tangent), Q = acumen (Sakr-el-Bahr, Twisto), R = Caesar (Mars), S = largesse (Ginhuts, Ifandor, Paul & Virginia), T = romantic (Fred Domino), U = after tea (Plantagenet), V = vis-a-vis (Midurndist), X = annex (Blue Jay), annexitis (Faro), low-necks (Molemi, Sakrel-Bahr)

All unattributed examples in the suber list are by Nightowl:

A = asserts (Treesong), B = bolos (Treesong), C = Casey, D = timid (Treesong), Delos (Molemi), denotes, E = Tessie, F = fees, G = gao, H = rebush (Treesong), nephew, I = inward, Sisai (Treesong), J = Jolo (Treesong), K = knees (Sakr-el-Bahr, keno (Fanacro), Kamehameha, L = leno (Larry), sisal (Treesong), M = Menominee, N = Maine (Stilicho), O = sitona, onward, P = to jeep (Treesong), sip, Q = Qiyas, R = Reno (Molemi), retoned, S = sees (Faro), T = knit (Faro), U = Utes, V = vanward (Treesong), Sivati, X = Xerus (Puzzeroo), Xenomi, Y = wonky, Z = sitz

The letters of the alphabet can also be used to represent Roman numerals or Greek letters, as the following scattering of examples demonstrates:

I = cone (Faro) phonetic, X = cteniform (Merlin) phonetic

B = betaken (Treesong), ate bolos (Treesong) suber, H = etatism (Treesong), enolate (Treesong) suber, I = biota (Treesong) phonetic, N = nuclear (Iaxaxar), unwon (Treesong) suber, P = rhopalic (Treesong) phonetic, T = a tautotype (Treesong), X = chic (Treesong) phonetic, chimere (Treesong), Z = ate Zeno (Treesong) suber.