

VANILLA VAGINAS: STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

ANIL

Perth, Australia

It's often surprising, even amusing, when unlikely words turn out to be related etymologically, such as vanilla and vagina (pod, sheath). Some of those here seem so unlikely you're unlikely to believe me and will want to look them up yourself for confirmation or details. Admittedly many pairings are of composite words that share a common root in only part of the word(s). But the two halves of the hyphenated words listed here count separately.

I have searched only the A's in Chambers' *Dictionary of Etymology* and found so many it'd take some time to survey the whole dictionary and would yield far too many to present in a reasonable length article. My raw A result extrapolates to ca. 2200 pairs in A-Z, but actually maybe half that since each letter infringes on many subsequent-letter cases, leaving each in turn with progressively fewer new examples. And I present here only about two-thirds of the A's I found, extrapolating to maybe 700 pairs or groups in A-Z of this degree of surprise. I urge others to take on the rest of the alphabet in this voyeuristic bedroom search. Doing one letter was great fun, but doing the whole alphabet at my pace would take 4-5 months. Perhaps if each reader did one letter, as in a charity fundraiser, together we could cover the whole language.

Part 1 gives the most surprising or amusing pairs I found, while Part 2 gives groups of relatives large enough to construct whole sentences out of them alone.

PART 1. SURPRISING ETYMOLOGICAL PAIRINGS [a] = antonyms; [s] = doublet synonyms

abet, bite [a] —or [s] in the case of a mother animal chewing food for baby

essence absence [a] Existentialism

accidental, cadenced [a] chaotic v. rhythmic

account, compute [s] timely, as bookkeeping is the forerunner of computing

acre act A circus?

acrid, acute edge acrobat Same circus? "Acrid" for want of a larger venue?

acrostic stair A word square maybe?

address, direct [s] verbs (mail envelopes)

adhere, hesitate [a] or [s] depending on context

adjust yoke something oxen and all other slaves wish they could do

Advent, Coming [s] Jesus past v. Jesus future?

aesthetic audio music

agent agony common complaint of creative artists

gradual aggression An improvement over instant aggression? Or just prolonging the agony?

aisle-axis aileron aeronautical mumbo-Jumbo

allow, laud [~s] Silence is golden.

amenable mountain menace an oxymoron

amnesia: mental amnesty! Pop plop, fizzle fizz, O what a relief it is. (*Alkaheimers' ad*)

migrating amoeba a Customs headache (*What, no visa?*)

dated anecdote You probly already knew this one.

anniversary adversity Guess who forgot his wife's favourite date?

annoyance, odium [~s] doubly hateful

sworn answer Courtworthy

anthracite anthrax Someone's caught a *really* bad coal.

antique antics Old timers' frolics. Or what very old silverware gets up to when unobserved?

ocular antlers A pair of Elton John's or Dame Edna's glasses?

felt anvil a stool or table used to beat wool to a pulp

aperitif: aperture overture for opening up the food canal

pulse appeal that great adrenalin rush

apron: nap map geography well-known to the pet cat

archaeopteryx feather What a stupendous discovery! (You're welcome.)

hard aristocrat Pardon the hydromoron. HYDROMORON is a coinage I propose for referring to "obvious" redundancies or tautologies. Short for Mark Twain's "But I repeat myself." remark. It's the opposite of OXYMORON, as O and H are the two extremes in chemical or redox potential.

asp aspic Snake pudding—yum!

assault sally [s] Why? What'd she do? Leave her alone!

atavistic uncles Aren't they always thought so by the younger generation?

attorney turner For spit roasting over an open fire? Yeah!

auburn albino [~a] coloured v. colourless, as in the Old South

Aunt Mamma Incest!

Eastern Australian aurora Things really got twisted around here—and in **Austria**. East=South!

auspicious aviator,

auspicious spy Sounds like a good movie. (two groups, based on the two halves of auspicious)

avant-garde Vanguard award a prized prize for those who normally spurn prizes

PART 2. “ONE WORD” SENTENCES

All the bold words in a line, whether one sentence or more, share a common root.

Educate? Abduct, tow! Make them learn! Use stealth or brute strength if necessary.

Adolescents, abolish old adults’ altitude! Kids, bring us oldies down from our high horses.

Accost coast! “Send in the Marines!”

Achieve chief chef’s head. Get hir job—by hook or by cook.

Tame, adamantly! Be fiercely peaceful!

Subvert adverse-perverse advertising vertex!

(Wise witty advice! **Vedas? Vision? Video?**) Where’d you learn to distrust advertising?

Clip, agglomerate “clam globes”. Pinch and string together pearls from bivalves.

Allege ambiguous agile agent agony axis, litigate! Do something about that agent agony.

Right: alert, erect, arrogant, “anorexic”. It’s a lean, mean Big Brother who’s watching you.

Alias! Else alienate, alter altruism. Don’t give your true identity, it will offend and will cost you.

“Defer, Ferry, bear alley-pheromone fare ampoules!” “Boat, obey my wish and help me smuggle some illicit sex-drug!” (The relation of **alley** to *ferre*, bear, is disputed.)

Amortise mortal mortgage. It only *seems* **immortal**.

Don anathema manufactured do. You must go against your grain here.

Donate dated antidote dose data. (*Why bother if it’s passé?*)

Annex net-connected node. Grab a piece of (ie, enter) the network.

Assimilate same homology, assemble similar anomaly! Don’t make the same type mistake again.

Apologise, legendary logic anthologist! A famous philosophy editor has made a bad boo-boo.

Ban aphasia! Outlaw brain damage! Ostracise (or kill off?) all the “mentals”.

Conceal apocalypse cell’s hall. Hide the doomsday conspiracy’s meeting place.

Stall/arrest Apostle’s apostate stand. Delay Judas’ betrayal. (*To give Jesus a running start?*)

Appraise, apprise, apprehend prehensile apprentice. (Prey gets predator!)

The grabby trainee is found to have been stealing and the tables are turned.

(The relation of **get** to I-E. *ghed, ghend* and hence to L. *hendere* is disputed.)

Arctic ursine:

Brown beaver? Bear! They’re easily confused—if you’re a kilometre away, or stupid.

Arid. Ardent Arsonist. Ash. a sad story in three chapters

Armoured armadillo arithmetic: “Army artillery armistice!” ...Articulates Art article.

“Make lovelies, not war!” is the armadillo formula.

“Arraign rationalism!” Anagram: Cow reasoning, sow ignorance. (*Animal Farm?*)

Insert serial assertions. Regularly interrupt the conversation with alleged ‘truths’.

Sad assets—satisfied? Now do you believe I’m bankrupt?

Assess assiduous sitter. Ask if the child-minding applicant is perhaps a bit too keen.

Thunder astonishes, astounds. Anagram: Astounds at sounds.

Nimble autonomous astronomers economise. Deftly they get by on a too-small private grant.

Augment (eke, wax) auxiliary August auction, august author, authority, augur.

A highly regarded writer is asked to compromise his genius to bolster profits at an August sale.

Ay nix “Naughty Age”? No, not always! (Ay meaning ever.)

We shouldn’t forever look down on the ’00s from the lofty heights of the ’10s.

Eye optical ocular autopsy. View an eye in the morgue microscope. (But remember, the elk head on the wall is watching through its **antlers**.)

Come, Avenue adventure event! A drag race maybe? Or a drag queen parade?

Awe-ache, ail awfully. You suddenly aw-ake and really regret it.