

THE LETTER REBUS (PART 3)

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Editor's Note: This article continues the survey of the letter rebus begun in the February 1984 Word Ways; readers should refer to that issue for a general discussion including taxonomy.

Relative Position of Rebus Letters to Each Other (Continued)

Further examples of words indicating position above include:

DisProof 74, Proof boxes 83
surMisE 29
SUPERimposed 51
acros*Tic*S 36, LacrossE 37
nickelod*Eon 83 [load on]
the Band Played* on 63, DandElion*S 75
ONE is superior to the OTHER 58, superior WisConSin USA 58
Pontooned 65, periodontoSis 80
HERbert hOover 73
slipCoverS 81
a BaD hangover toDaY 81
jamES MonROE 73
GROover head 82
WaGonS-lit 75
THalidOmide 75
Flies over the seAs 58
Flights overseas* 77
aVAcant apartMeNT upstairs 79
make up theiR MinDS 80
CATAmount 80, mountEbank 83

There are numerous rebuses with a stack using two ons, but apparently no one has bothered to construct a stack of three, despite the existence of words such as cONfrONTatiON.

To indicate below, one has the following vocabulary:

MisunderSTandinGS 23, FLOunderS 23, SunderS 26
round underneath the MOon 36, underneath the PlanO 51
upS and downS 25, upSIDE down 26, Hand-ME-down 30
DOWN beneath the WILLOW 42, Be beneath you* 53
SneathS 29, One at hOME 29
six degrees below zero 27, FURbelowING 51, below PAR 70
topS and bottomS 25, HEPatopHLEbotom*Y 62, copper bottomS 80
at the bottom of the BaY 39, AT the bottom of the sea* 52
highFlowN 26, SWALlow 27, overFlow BASin 29
SaY it with FlowerS 27, Flower Lover 37
EARS lowered 80

the netherLands 39
 overCrowDED subWays 40, subFUSC 65, lAMbus 77 [suber]
 EaVESdropped 44
 ONE is inferior to the OTHER 58
 SeLF-abasement 80

A rather similar vocabulary is used to indicate letters diagonally up or down from each other:

sign OF fall 82
 ConeFlower 23, BlowerS 49, when KnightHood WAS in Flower 51
 SlowS up 25, Pro*Io*Cu*to*Rs 27, lowLands 29
 CoffEE 27, Flies off the HandLED 30
 OUTLawry 54
 SWanSdown 28, SIT down in front 48, WatERship down 74
 Dazed Campers and then dropped letterS 34
 eye*dropS 74, dropPinGS 76, HYdropath 82
 niagara RAPidS 39 [suber]
 YES depress YOUR dimmer switchES 73
 gasOline linES 74 [suber]
 A raised and sunken SYstem 75, sinkYoneS 79
 A subscriptlon RatE 79
 under six Flags 81, THunder on the left 39
 HUT at the foot of a HILL 62
 REConsider 56, under ConsiderATlon 41
 Lover'S right 28, after the Ball is over 43
 LonG Stopover 55
 raised the RafterS 68, Both sides i arM 76 [suber]
 night and DaY 56, Knight 38
 DOWry 63
 right off the BaT 51, vertical TAKEoff 70
 EYesorE 81 [suber]
 PUT up OR SHUT up 23, SlowS up 25, CatSup 26
 highBrowS 31, highLand FLinGS 33
 night-Blooming CereUS 32
 closed MinDS MADE up in advance 76
 HE is upright .. 60, upright PlanO 48
 A foe disputes ME not 72 [suber]
 over AND above besideS 49
 Stop in FOR a short viSit 72
 great UnwAshed 80 [n.w.= northwest]
 tenneSseE 73 [n.e. = northeast, s.e. = southeast] X^S_E

The word in can be embodied in a rebus in many different ways. The usual method is to center a letter (or letter group) inside a horizontal sequence of letters:

TMT: MinTs 24, TUNE: UNinTEresting 27, TFLY: FLinTY 26
 CCDCC: in the midst of the Crowd 55, TlNGSH: midst of THINGS 63
 URTND: midURNDist 74 ["my durndest"]
 APYRL: PYRamidALis 37, ECETS: aCETamidES 42, AAEEA: admiAsE 59
 RDO: in the middle of the ROaD 57
 STOS: rightS and leftS TO the midsection 46
 CBLET: intraCTaBLE 57

|III|: Is midway between the sidelines 67
 -ING-: readING between the lines 43
 DEBECKS: BEtween DECKS 25
 STSASDY: SAint SwithinS DaY 28, WAGTANCEDLK: within WALKinG
 NLI DisTANCE 55
 A : interNatlOnAL 39
 ITHNS: insert THIN soleS 40 ITN : inside INformatIOn 47
 NCCOE: COincid*eNCE 26, I : inside INformatIOn 47
 EVE: innerVatEs 44, TD8: Dinner aT eight 81
 XCED1: intoXICatED 69, ELECEDVEN: intoXICatED 80, SH BOEX: SHE
 dropped a letter into the BOX 39
 DTE: DEcentralisT 62, DEDE: DEcenterED 73
 Ill D Hudson: of tIme and the river 42
 8W8: middleWeights 29, SPO: middle Platter Of ormerS 83
 MLN: the interior LineMen 70
 STPES: the President of the united STatES 72

In addition, there are a considerable number of rebuses using a verb followed by the word in: LCHUR: left in the LURCH 49, DRTI A: roBERT inDIana 83, OEO: Obispo pinE 81, GLS: shoveLinG Snow 83, SEGLWS: SparkLinG WinEs 74, FSE: inFEstationS 74, ETAD: enterTAINED 58, SCGAF: SCAFFoldinG 79, SUGBER: niGgard 80 [suber], REBUSS: stuffinEss 83, GOOG: stampinG Grounds 81.

The insertion of a letter can be done vertically instead, using many of the same synonyms for in:

---		C
ING: read ING between the lines 64		TENT: inConSisTENT 56
---		S
G		C
WD: GonE with the WinD 71		BLE: inConsideRaBLE 59
E		R
A		E
HEF: HE Flies through the AIR.. 40		S: theY have SinCE
I		S made up 83
R		Y

However, some rebus constructors use only the first two letters of a longer sequence to surround the letters in question, as in
 F
 ECMENT: solitary ConFinEMENT 27.

One can alternate one set of letter with another;

WSOHLEVEEPS: SHEEP in the midst of WOLVES 77
 AFTME: eFFeMinATE 23, AWPOPRLME: a WORM in an APPLE 31
 AAGLELS: ALL through the AGES 55
 DAUESRTORY: AERO space inDUSTRY 72
 MJAAICDKS: JACK among the MAIDS 75
 DrEoEyR: ROYal tern ate with kill DEER 83

Furthermore, one can surround a letter with four or more other letters to clue the word in:

C		P S P
DVI: aVis inDICA 26	S L I S	: Lles* in the SPring 57
A	P S P	
U		ADO
OBT: roundaBOUTS 25		D D: much ADO about nothing 25
S		ODA
H E	SOM	
S : HEREaboutS 34	EWN: WinSOMENESS 41	
R E	ESS	
I		DDDD
ISI: ones surroundingS 28		DWLD: all around the WorLD 27
I		DLWD
		DDDD

In recent years, this technique has been supplanted by one that encloses letters in larger ones, notably G in words ending in -ing (see page 5 in the February issue).

Another nuance is created for in if the surrounding symbol can be readily split in two. This is achieved by replacing the letter W with UU (as in ULU: outside the LaW 60, UYU: midWaY), by an Arabic numeral (5T0: LaTin 77, 1P0: PinXit 81), or by a Roman numeral (1PV: Pinafore* 49, D1D: one in a thousand 54).

All of these rebuses keep the letters being enclosed entirely separate from the letters performing the enclosing. However, this need not always be the case; a letter can be counted as part of the enclosing set (shown in quotes for clarity):US: Sin'US'itis 27, T: Tin'TYPE' 21, DAHOMEY: a HOME in the country 83, FORMATION: Misin'FORMATION' 30, BRAN: RAisin 'BRAN' 48, E ER: Easin'ESS A Y'EaR 82, POWHATAN: WHAT's in a name, TEA: in'T*'Eresting 32. A related rebus is illustrated by BILLS: Sends the 'BILLS' 45.

Shifting one's viewpoint, one can, instead of using in, describe the act of placing letters around a letter by a combination of the follow right and precede left operations described previously:

DSIE: inSIDE out 29, SGT: outSTandinG 40, SLIH: outLandISH 47
 YMEE COO: without ME YE Can dO nothing 40
 SHAFROEKES: splitting SHAKES with a FROE
 ARN: AN outsider 37, ULU: outside the LaW 60
 OUES: inn*UendOES 46, SBS: BadneSS 72 [suber]
 HIGT: aroundLIGT 54, HOMER: One arM around HER 60
 KIDOFrNG: a bout OF DRinKING 55, BITS: BoneS about IT 68
 MpY: thorn in MY side 81
 HERO: HOuseholder 82
 XTY: oXYhemaTin 81
 CLEBURNCLE: BURN the CandLE at both ends 58
 XAX: chieftAin 83
 AHUPeM: HE gets UP in the morning 76
 NMil: MINIsKirts 67
 HCS: HandS across the C* 72, X1TOX: O Tides a redness orca

net 73 [suber]

NAI: A red robin 75 [suber], DCAA: CanADA border 78

ÅUHS: until death do US part 82

The positional rebuses discussed in the past few pages are located in the standard position - halfway between the title and the verse below. More recently, rebus constructors have discovered how to incorporate the positional rebus in the title. Some examples:

B PREBUS
RE US: the Bison theRE 75 IUM : extra PatRonIUM 79

REBCUS: night-Blooming CereUS 83 REBUSS: SinUSitis 83

TB REDBUS: REload the BUS 78

Note that in every case the letters of REBUS play a role, with other letters added as needed.

Similarly, the positional rebus can appear in the verse below:

Ol: inverse propORTIon 83 E: onE another 72

RT S E

.. errors and PRIME,: undercapitalisM 82

DEB

..floating on air ..: DEBonAIR 82

A handful of negative positional rebuses have appeared. Two

GG GG G GGGGG T TT T

very similar ones are HERBERT HOOVER: GovernoR 30 and GHIJKL: o-

H Y

verHand KnoTs 72. Both C: topnotCH 73 and MO: MOnotonY 57 show

RP RS

the inverse of the negative statement. G gS : the GRandParent of five little GRandSonS 82 demonstrates the equivalence of aren't off and on. One rebus combines a negative statement with its title:

SUB R: MOnotonE 80.

OM

Groups of Identical Letters

If the word or phrase describing the rebus contains the letter S, it is not uncommon to see the preceding letter presented two or more times in the rebus: IIIll: allles* 21, WWW: theWs 22, RRRET: someRsET 22. In addition, the number of times a letter or symbol appears in the rebus can be specified. For single appearances, one has:

HoneY 22, oneIDA 25, won*DER 25, byGoneS 23, BoneS 26

Nonesuch 61, Done such 61

singleT 22, singleHandED 25, singleD 26, singleTonS 35

Nonce 25, ConcerTinAS 72, eNSConce 75

loneLinEsses 24, loneLY 25, lone HandS 29

A lonely afternoon 47, lonesomeR 27

aBalone 21, I'M alone 26, B: let her* alone 37

soleN 22, Asole 46, MT: soleMni*Ty* 27, insert THIN soleS 40

soloist 37, soloMonS 47, soloN 48

only theN 55, MatRonly 56, Sonly 60
 see Amer*lc*A first 60, ON me rely 45, X: chimere 78
 butanE 52, butChereD 48
 solitary ConFinEMENT 27
 justICE 22, aDjust 27, readjustS 25, just a Bit 51
 ALASC S: in A CLASS by itself 43, I am by myself 66
 aBalienated 21
 individualisM 54

Rebus-makers have devised a very large number of ways to exhibit exactly two letters:

PPP₀RR: Pro*lo*CU*to*Rs 27, SonG withOUt woRDs 58
 double UP 22, a double Play 24, capital doubled 30, REdoubled 28
 twiceR 33, singleHandED twice 45, XEXE: cross a 'Te' twice
 anImated 23, Mismatched 35, HAMated 42
 bothERs 24
 eNtwinEs 24, twinERs 53, EAST wind* 69, Atwain 28
 match point 77, Mismatched 37, UNmatched 53
 a pair of specs* 29, a pair of black eyes* 33, lmpaired 53
 lbis 29, GOO: sibilinG 73 [suber], c*anNAbis 72, bishOP 76
 TeachER DEparts 29, Beseech* 35, AN underSTandinG TeachER 65
 HH: mediate 72 [suber]
 extraCT 33, extraORDinary 39, extraPOLate 70
 Has a swell ash 69
 Slow down There Where's the Flre pete* 68
 repeating FlrearM 47
 repeatedLY 53, A repeated low Blow 59, repeated rightS .. 64
 OO: sparr*Ow* 67
 puRported 75 [suber]
 TireprintS 53
 TlTanotherlUM 52
 presentaTlon copy 83
 dualisM 25, dualAS 39, inDIVIdual 60, Cloud*Y 72 [suber]
 nearLY the same 70
 OBLiterated 58, ALLiterated 61, SS: illiterateS 77
 duplicated 40
 STand againST 60, niagara faLLS 72 [suber], niagara 82 [suber]
 Credo 83, SHoder 81 [suber]
 DO DO : HAd it to DO over again 80
 HA HA HA HA :
 LoudLY 38 [suber]
 AA B: A gem in a tea Ball 78

Representations for three or more letters are less often encountered:

threePs 22, three jays* together 65
 a tripleX 22, tripleTs 25, EEE: tripol*i* 35
 Wlth rice 59
 elbertA 72 [suber], ENGelbert 78 [suber]
 triCERatopS 67, KKK ISM: MIniSKirt 73 [suber]
 Eternal 73
 Histro 75
 hol*t rineHart WinSTon 80
 WINter 33, terPsicHorE 72, HEH HEH HEH OO: HE*terOcercal* 34

UUUU: q*Uartet 74 [suber]
 for*eNsic* 24, I111: four-eyes* 24, for*Ks 25
 quadrupleTs 25
 six of one and half a dozen of the other 75, sExisM 77 [suber]
 the seven seas* 35, TTTTTTT: seventies* 81
 Weight 29, eightHs 24, MaGNate* 39, EEEEEEEE: eighties* 81
 LEOnine 73
 tenOsitis 28, DisContentED 29, OFtentimes 22
 decuple 69

Unspecified repetitions of a letter or letter-group are clued by a variety of words:

SO many times 69, Dynamos 39 [suber], mani*aC 27
 l l: equallze* 64
 allles* 21, all around the WorLD 27, all fives 34
 someRsET 22, 8 am, 2 pm: sometimes 24, Handsome ls .. 26
 likewise* 24, Disliked 27
 much ADO about nothing 25
 polydeuces 28
 ALoft 30, Soft 33, of tlme and the river 42, Soften 35
 severallze* 31
 Discontinued 31
 EEEEE: Esteem 32, SSSSS: eSteems 32
 alloverisH 83, aCTUal lover 79
 Ghost 49
 Sandlots 46
 multipleX 38
 SAY IT over and over again 62
 Sever 72
 massAc*hu*setts* 34
 ex-traPeze* 68

One rebus achieved a repetition by negation: TTTTTTT clued **noT** alone in 1974. Although none of the above words implies a straight horizontal line, most were conventionally presented in that manner. Other terms of multitude more specifically suggest evenness; the words **row** and **line** are the ones most commonly used:

CONsequences 75
 breakFAsT cereal* 82
 Oranges before breakFast .. 81
 crossrow 22, CrowDs 27, highBrows 31, aPone*Uros*is 29
 G-string 33
 q*Uartet 74 [suber] [q = queue]
 Maligned 42
 anlline 29, isaBELLline 29, DandElion* 34, Clo*theSline 37
 OOO: rings central information 82
 aT all evenTs 39, evenTs 43, Hampers and SlowS even StopS 64