THE LETTER REBUS (PART 2)

A. ROSS ECKLER
Morristown, New Jersey

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.

Characteristics of Individual Letters (Continued)

Letters can be distorted in ways other than by mutilation - by squeezing or stretching in one dimension, by rotation (including inversion), or by reflection. In the first group below, underlined rebus letters are taller and thinner than the others; in the second, wider (or even traced in outline); in the third, distorted in more complex ways.

the thinG they have in common 73, Breadth inDeX 83, great MinDs thinK Along similar LinEs 79, one thinG after another 73
black muslim 75
as the nicest 82
BeNthic 84, thick OF thinGS 81
broad twelveS [XII] 81
the GODfather [symbol for Venus] 72, gibStaff 76, Timon Of at-HeNs 83,
flatS 79, double-digit inflation 83, flatten [X] 80
Open wide the Pearly Gates 79, wide Open spaceS 83
great MinDs thinK Along similar LinEs 79, ElongatE 79
Smashed 82
round About 79
jutland peninsula 73
twistO [pen name of NPL member] 83
natural bent [musical notation] 84

The verticality of a letter is described by rebusS like plumb­ism 72 or Malignity 79. In contrast, consider rotation and reflection of individual letters. In the groups below, the underlined letters are respectively rotated 90 degrees, rotated 180 degrees, tilted, mirrored right-to-left, and mirrored up-down.

Flying 23, DandElion 48, you are lying down on a bee 73.
Flying WinDMiLLS 81
SupFLies 54, anaLYze 60, philLies 81
double Play 22, "MandAlay 75, PlayMateS 83
dead seaS 73, one-Idea'd 86
Vanilla ConES 74, when there's a Will... 79, CaRillon 78
pulpitS 72, ANtiparticles 74, tiptOE 59
ANtiPoverTY67, tiPOver FIRE extinguisher 82
Two rebuses specifically contrast turned and upright characters: Supplies 54, StipLup 72.
Most rebuses are printed with capital letters, although there is no reason (other than historical precedent) why this need be so. However, it becomes important to pay attention to the letters in a small subcategory of rebuses: those in which capital or lowercase letters are specified in the rebus description.

smalliy 22, smallish 25, abysmaliy 26, Dismally 29, Dismaller 66, aBandoned smaller 80
weel 24, overweeNING 39, Peewee 48, Plow under SweeT Clover 51
AfPeetle 24, Man's AfPeetle 65
little GO and great GO 25, Belittle 33, Belt tile 38
minute Hands and second Hands 29, minute5 56
GloweringGs 31, SoLo 34, lower caseY into 49, Slower case 79,
Chooses a crew ofD 82, capital Flower case 81
shortHorNs 40, Stop in FOR a short Visit 72, His undershortS 74
microBe 41
minorite 58, geronimo 73, majorCA and minorCA are not close 83
see Amer라면 A first 60
them pianofortes 75, theSpian is simoN 77
shrunken headS 75
mutiny 75, DEStiny 50, the CAinE mutiny 81
Grunt 82
Spend Cash if there 82

Lower case letters have sometimes been characterized as different or strange when compared with capital ones.

INin: INdifferent 39, i 1E: differentiatE 69, ie 1E: differentiatE 71
Mmmm: Mothers 38, Y yy: why otherwise 65
paRd-e: a strangeR in PARaDisE 72
st: queer street 76

In the same vein, the 1930 rebus hon^eSTy is Pol POL Pol
the best POLicy was clued by this rebus: ST

Capitals are specified not only when lower case letters are present, but also when they stand alone or with other capital letters.

capitalS 22, capitalIZaTion 27, capital ManSE 29, the capSTone 73
little GO and great GO 25, great DanE 31, Belittle greatNeSS 49,
DisinTEgrate's 43, HE lowerED HER down with the greatest of Ease 47
largeNeSS 72, largeSSe 37
majorCA and minorCA are not close 83
PREdominant 54
His small following WAS enlarged 58
the superB CUisine 65, superSonIC 72
nighT shifts 82
RedisTillaTion 72
them pianofortes 75
Distress 36

Note that the word shift has been used to indicate both capital and lower case letters. Occasionally the alphabet has been used to emphasize capitalization: mnopqrstuvwx: featureS 41, jklMnop:

Finally, there are aUTotype Tinty 82
Sprinted print
Kinked picaRoo.
it a lic
romBAce
Written since 1970
noNDscribble
TEr ES
COwardy
Onward
penTalp
indit'El
sketchY:
great B
Discussion
sign OF
throughout

Absolute E
capitalism. In 1973 T was capitalized in the words of the accompanying verse, the answer being the predominant characteristic:

In recent years, the practice of physically enlarging or shrinking letters to indicate size has become quite common.

tallOwtopped 25, FonD of araBian StallionS 73, frontStallS 53, tolere*ate* 27
a big broadWay HIT in 1922 63, abigEUS 80, A: gibberella 79
titanOthere 71
immenseE 76
elephantlasis 76
long1CorN 83
superB 77, superVisE 79
marc*u*'s wel*By* 77
INTegral 78, eNTargetD appendIX 80
great MinDS 79, great UnWashed 80, great circle 83
calliPYgian too 80, giganticDe 83
megaloRNis 81
babyLon 80
shortHand note Book 83
period in every weeK 84

Finally, rebuses can be either printed or written in longhand. There are a few references specifically to printing.

autotype 21, sLeepytiMe 82, typesetTER 24, DAinty peRson 78, Tintype 79, STereOtyped 80, a tautotype 76
Sprinted 23, UNprinted 25, lMprinted 30, printemPS 78, FinGERprint 70, TireprintS 53
Kinked 26
piCaROon 80
it a lick and A 74
romanCE 22, romanY 26, oneromanCy 28

Written letters were much slower to be exploited, flourishing only since 1970.

noNDscript 68, NAboth in the scriptURES 77
scribbleMANIAC [pen name of NPL member] 75, AN undivided in-
TERest in the Land DEscribed above 81
COwardLY Lion 73, CDoward 77, REwarDeD 80, Anderw JackSon 79
Onward 72, Knees TURN inward 77
penTalpha 78, penCIL 73, penPlain 78, jurLand peninSULA 73,
penthouse 73, penultimate LinES 75, penNy wisE and ... 74
indit*ED 74
sketchY 75
great Britain* 62
Discursive 80
sign OF fall 82, sPring is Here 82
thoroughWORT 25

Absolute Position of Rebus Letter

Many rebuses attempt to describe where a letter (or letter group) is located in an absolute sense, without respect to other letters in the rebus. For right-left positioning, dummy letters were used...
in the rebus a handful of times, as BETH: aBoriously 27, OOOOD: Determination 61, and OOOOX: eXtermination 61. However, it was early recognized that more economical clueing was achieved by moving the rebus toward the appropriate margin.

right side: Flagging 48, Yeast 77, consider 48, Converge 47, thitherTO 56, farO 75, Bright 64, faraway places 79, philatelist 81, see the Bright side 49, starboardER 49, subsequently 79, right marginS 77, Unjustified 77, Safaris 77, postulate 77, Yonside 57.

left side: Yearly 48, tropicS 79, leftHandED 78, Cleft 27, SHE is left alone 79, XXX: tench i export 79, sea port 77, west ALLis 78, edgewise 81, black sea port 83, Bear left 81, punnim gram 83

One rebus used dummy letters to indicate the center instead of the extremes, RUMMAGE SALES: in the middle AGES 35.

For up-down positioning, similar techniques have been used. Only one rebus, the letter Z placed above a string of Os clueing topaz in 1935, used dummy letters. It was soon recognized that the rebus could instead be moved up toward the title, or instead down toward the accompanying verse.

high: heightens 82, leave it up to you 83, atticism 76, overruled 82 [D above top line on page], upupa Eops 82, Braised 82, O: that's potato soup 83, Supposition 79, the high five 83, cross the border 84 [X on border], sight*S high 78

low: on a flatCar 82, humble pie* 82

Rebus letters can be specified with respect to the location of the verse, as in Converse 27, overallIS 31, and O: discover 81. In the latter, the verse is implied rather than specified. It is only a small step to let the rebus letters move between the lines of the verse, or below the verse.

inside verse: netherLandS 35, center of a flat penCil 80, Winter posed 81, inflated 74, read between the lines 75, reads between the lines 83

underneath verse: HEREafter 45, underived 45, fur*bellowS 45, lowell 51, THunder on the left 57, Slowdown 58, Glower 62, mink seal ermine: furbelow 59, Blowdown 72, eftails 79, Sunder 79, aGlow 73, IN conclusion 74, aRse 77 [R southeast]. DETermination 81, deep six 83

combinations: WEL [above] OOK [below]: WE LOOK before and after, NE [above] EN [inside]: NEVer see EN 80, G9 [above] G [inside]: Game-opening 83

Twice, letters have been written on top of the verse text - X: over-seXed 81, OFC: takeN out OF Context 82. In 1964, a rebus was presented in which the spaces between words in the text (not a verse) formed the shape CS, which was the rebus for CatS. In similar vein, a verse in 1983 had alternating long and short lines tracing the letter W on its side; this formed the clue for Wangled.

In 1982, a rebus with a W in the rebus: rebus conj: Verse: Lit

Sometim

For exampl

The sc

Rebus

Its gr

They i

Which clue

Rebus: T

Letters call

REBUS: 80, SUG

Finally, the

SREBU: E, IGMA

The alp

absolute p

MAB...K

the Ba

trapeze'

disconc

extraPO:

AB...QRS

cover in

Very brie

is over 4

45, Q: po
In 1982, the verse *Lo: Eau!* was written entirely inside the letter *E*, with an RI above it: *River seinE*. In contrast, in 1984 a rebus consisting of the letters *LT* was completely encircled by the verse: *Linden closeT*.

Sometimes, the letters of the rebus are part of the verse text. For example, in 1982 the letter *L* above the following verse

> The song of the warbler
> Reechoes, replays.
> Its greenness displays

clued the phrase *Linden tREE*. Even cleverer was the 1984 rebus

> They asked me, "When you go, by chance,"
> (I'd thought on it a lot)
> "Will you see the sights in France?"
> Then I responded, "Not 1"

which clued the answer *Versailles* [verse 1].

Rebus letters can also be positioned with respect to the rebus *title*. In the examples below, REBUS is merely regarded as a letter-sequence with respect to which rebus letters can be positioned; no use is made of the actual letters in REBUS.

> NS TH
> REBUS: uprightNeSS 53, REBUS: THis above all 74, REBUS: cap­
> aRison 81, Z REBUS: topaZ 80, REBUS C : Cover up 79, REBUS G :
> Genesee [Ge n.e. see] 83, REBUS: THunderhead 70, BREBUS: aBad­
> don 78, TH

Letters can be placed in the rebus sequence.

> REJBUS: popinjay 82, REBUSS: stuffiness 83, SUGBER: nGard 80, SUGIBER: nGites 82

Finally, the letters of REBUS can themselves be used.

> SREBU: prepositions 83, REBUS: nothing comes between US 83, E
> IGmatic REBUS: parts unknown 83, REBUS: hand-me-downS

The alphabet (or fragments thereof) has been used to indicate absolute position of letters since earliest days.

> MAB...KL: Misleading 31, 1J...OP: Plastic* 48, AB..CD..YZ : after the Ball is over 43, AB..YZMU: eMuLate 53, LMNOPPPPQ..T: ex­
> trapeze* [extra Ps] 68, AB..GHJK..ZI: Isolate 74, AB..MNPQ..ZO: dis­
> consolate 74, ACDE..NOQR..2PB: Blast Plate, AB..NPPQ..WOXY: ex­
> traPo rate 70, TVVWXYE: finaIe 73, AB..WX: eXtermination 79, F
> AB..QRS..YZ: puRported 75, ABCDEFGHAJ..Z: anAis nin than dis­

Very brief alphabetic fragments are evident in AB; after the Ball is over 40, AB: a Blast 28, S: night letter 37, SU: night letters 45, Q: postPone 70, CZ: by the BF 81, U: after tea* 34, and S:
just pastRami 84.

A final strategy for the absolute positioning of rebus letters is a pattern of compass directions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Disoriented 63</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>LE</th>
<th>Least 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ER ER northernER, westernER, southernER, easternER 48

ER

H H His newest [n.e., west] Hit is at the top of the chart 81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>chinese [chi n.e., s.e.] Dinner5 73</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DinnerS 73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RA R Answer [A n.s.; w.e.R] 82 A sPAn 82

Note how the cardinal directions have been gradually suppressed, until in 1982 one must infer their existence from the pattern alone.

Relative Position of Rebus Letters to Each Other

The description of how one letter is positioned with respect to another is a venerable rebus device; the vast majority of the rebus columns in the weekly magazine Golden Days in the early 1880s were of this type. Undoubtedly, these are the commonest rebus in the Enigma - over, under, in and on have each been used hundreds of times. As elsewhere in this article, the earliest-known Enigma examples are presented.

The first set denotes how a rebus letter can follow on the right:

RafterS 22, GRafterS 22, afterWisE 22, afterThought 26
AthenS 22, HEAthenisM 27, aUthenTic 28
behindHAND 24, 10:30 pm S: behind the timeS 29, One arm behind
His back 54, hind PART before 52
ABAft 24, aBandoneD 34, D&DRS: Dampers and DRaftS 52
rightS and leftS 25, Canon to the right of theM 41, WainWright
BE on the right side of the Law 46, BE on the right side of theM 41, WainWright
EPipasTIC 27, REPastS 27, pastIME 39, pastERN joinT 47
Apriorl, Aposteriorl 27, anteROposterior 72
An extRA Share of fishS 32, UnextERNinaTED 67
Manipulate 43, specULator 28, esCAlator 29, 1DOlator 67
dexterOUS 29
repeating FlrearM 47, DrearineSS 72, HE is found .. in aRRears
CatTails 29, Cat O’nine tails 71 82
..Day follows night .. 39, a left jab on the jaw followed by a right hook 51, THE following letterS 60

In contrast:

beforeHand 24, a foreHand prime
Pleading 34, conCealing 28
Ceremonial 27, leftHand
AFTfront 27, Apriorl, anteROposterior 72

Note that precede-le.

A somewhat left or right.

His first
THE begins
AstartE
headS or
Hind en...
In contrast, a rebus letter can precede another on the left:

In contrast, a rebus letter can precede another on the left:

Note that one word, astern, appears in both the follow-right and precede-left lists!

A somewhat different vocabulary is used if the letter is at the left or right end of a sequence:

His first Blast 41, at last I'm first 66
In general, rebus letters are positioned adjacent to each other; however, spaces can appear, particularly when words such as left or right, front or rear, port or starboard, or early or late are used. A few words guarantee the existence of an intervening space:

- Land office 29, An extra Share of fish 32, Standoff is Sh 38
down ON the farM 48, far from the MaddinG Crowd 54
- Safari 45, Niagara falls 72
- Lands beyond the seas 48

Flying off the handle 46
- APPLE A: appal*Achian* 43 [shun]
Handout 51, There with His Mouth agape 60, outside is 72

SEaside 29, Consideration 32

- Ttetrapetalous 80, apartHROSis 29
- cross Bones on black Flags 39
- Recover from it 61
thitherTo 56

The vertical vocabulary is as rich as the horizontal one. To indicate above, one has:

- BonBonS 22, Nonplus 22, P RisionER 23, Sand Monitor 23
- CatopTER 23, THANatopSis 23, onOMatopOESis 26
- tallOW-topped 25
topS and bottomS 25, StopS 26, to put two and two together 29
ManStepping 26

CAKE with icing on top 57, upside-down c aKE on top 72
PERSon to person 61, Won't operate 55, on the top of His Head 70
Clover blossoms 22, Dover Sands 23, overEat 24, Cover points 25
hy*PERBore*AN 30, CanDo*r* 23 [o'er]
on one's upperS 24, breakFAST, Dinner and Supper 31
upS and downS 25, upSIDE down 26, Hands up 28

high FlowN 26, hy*PERBoreAN 30, highlandsS and lowlands 33
aboveBOARD 26, Thoughts above distinctionS 40

a PEal of thunder 28, a great DEal of telnSion 66
once upon a time 30, CouponS 47, Coupon Bonds 53
SponDyloListheSis 81 [pon]

The three of the major Syllogisms correspond: A: ever B: no. C: some O: some