

ALPHABETICAL ANTONYMS

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During 1993 Nyr Indictor published the short-lived *N is for Newsletter*, a journal devoted to “alphabets, alphabet books, and alphabet memorabilia for alphabet lovers.” The September issue contained the following challenge: “Create an alphabet of antonyms, that is, pairs of words that begin with the same letter that are in some way opposites, like aerobic and anaerobic, author and authoress, or ask and answer. The third type of example is more difficult to find than the others, which are cognate pairs.” A large number were published in the October/November issue, including a complete set that I submitted. The following selection is taken from his list:

A ask-answer, awake-asleep
B blonde-brunette
C clear-cloudy, cash-credit, city-country
D duke, duchess, doff-don
E entrance-exit, ephemeral-eternal
F fair-foul, fact-fiction, flora-fauna
G grave-gay, graceful-gawky
H heaven-hell, his-hers
I idle-industrious, interest-indifference
J Jack-Jill, January-June (or July), judge-juror
K king-knave
L lord-lady, lad-lass
M maximum-minimum, mind-matter
N now-never
O off-on, Orient-Occident
P poetry-prose, push-pull, public-private, past-present
Q quantitative-qualitative
R raw-ripe, repeatedly-rarely, raise-raze
S sweet-sour, smart-stupid, spend-save
T this-that
U upon-underneath
V victor-vanquished, virtue-vice
W with-without, who-what
X xenophobe-xenophile
Y yin-yang
Z zig-zag

To avoid a cognate pair for X, I suggested the less-than-satisfactory xenium (a present to a guest or stranger) and xenelasia (the general banishment of aliens from Sparta by official action).