

# KICKSHAWS

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*Kickshaws is currently being assembled by a series of guest editors. All contributions should be sent to the editor in Morristown New Jersey.*

## Language Blocks

In the chapter on geometric forms in Language on Vacation, Dmitri Borgmann presented an example of a nine-by-nine word square in French, apparently the only language besides English at that time to have a square this large.

Now, Romanian and Serbo-Croatian have joined this exclusive group. The first Romanian nine-square appeared in Rebus magazine on July 5, 1968. It was constructed by Dr. Nicolae Andrei, who also constructed the second and third nine-squares in 1973. The latter appears below.

The nine-square in Yugoslavia is also new, although an attempt is recorded as early as 1940. The example below is by a prolific 43-year-old puzzler, Zivko Dokić, and appeared in Krizaljka magazine in 1984.

### Romanian

I N S E C A B I L	That which cannot be dried up
N E A C U S A T I	Those who are not accused
S A L A M A L E C	Moslem greeting
E C U R I S A R I	Wood cuttings
G U M I N I C A T	Having taken communion
A S A S I N A T A	Murdered
B A L A C A R I T	Playing in water
I T E R A T I V I	Repeated
L I C I T A T I E	Auction

### Serbo-Croatian

P O D G L A V A K	Head pillow
O P E R A T I V A	Organ of an institution or organization
D E N I K O T I N	Way to clean smokers' teeth
G R I F O N I J A	Bloody tension
L A K O N I C A R	Man who uses short, simple sentences
A T O N I R A T I	Completely lose one's voice
V I T I C A N I N	Inhabitant of the Vitica region, in Fojnice prov.
A V I J A T I K A	Aviation
K A N A R I N A C	Canary

## German Word-Building

While on the subject of foreign wordplay, here's a mammoth nineteen-letter word pyramid in German - the largest example I've seen in any language. Each word has all the letters of the previous word plus one. It is taken from the Buch der Rätsel by Karl Heinz Paraquin (1972).

A	Vowel
A R	Area measure
B A R	Pub
R A U B	Robbery
B R A U E	Eyebrow
B R A U E R	Brewer
E R B A U E R	Builder
B R A U E R E I	Brewery
R E I S B A U E R	Rice grower
S A U T R E I B E R	Swineherd
R A E U B E R S I T Z	Den of thieves
U R A N B E S I T Z E R	Uranium owner
B I E R U N T E R S A T Z	Beer coaster
B E R A T E R S I T Z U N G	Meeting of advisers
Z U B E R E I T U N G S A R T	Method of cooking
A R B E I T S U N T E R Z E U G	Work underwear
U E B E R T R A G U N G S Z E I T	Communication transmission-time
G R A T I S U E B E R S E T Z U N G	Translation made for free
G U T S A R B E I T E R Z E U G N I S	Good farmworker's report

## It's Completely Oxymoronic

Here's a two-part puzzle by a former crossword magazine editor, David Lindsey. The 32 listed words can be combined into pairs to form 16 oxymorons, or self contradictory phrases (like "pretty ugly" or "little giant"). All of the answers are expressions in actual use; most should be familiar. To begin, see if you can combine all the words into their proper pairs. Then, as a bonus, see if you can determine the logical order in which the words are listed.

subway	waste	assistant	misleading
weekly	news	forgotten	principal
uneasy	down	escalator	grand
typed	victimless	melted	crime
primary	elevated	flat	peace
recycling	manuscript	missing	old
baby	journal	memories	link
duplex	clue	second	ice

## Consonyms

A consonym is a word that has the same consonants in the same order as another word. For example, truncate (with consonants t-r-n-c-t) is a consonym for turncoat. The word thence (t-h-n-c) is a consonym for ethnic. The letter Y, as a semi-vowel/semi-consonant, is avoided in all examples here. How many of the words

below can you find consonyms for?

aforesaid	quorum	pastiche	chosen
interact	torch	maneuvers	fecund

### An Amazing Reversal

The most amazing sentence reversal I can remember seeing appeared in Our Young Folks magazine back in March 1866, and was brought to my attention by wordsmith David Shulman. It reads forward in English and backward in Latin, not only making sense both ways but having the same meaning in each direction!

Anger? 'Tis safe never. Bar it! Use love!  
Evoles ut ira breve nefas sit; regna!

Freely translated, the Latin means

Rise up, in order that your anger may be but a brief madness;  
control it!

### A Mysterious Pattern

Words like flipflop, ding-dong, and fiddle-faddle are known to linguists as reduplicative words of the third order. While compiling a list of these for a puzzle in Games magazine, another editor and I noticed a curious pattern. First, the initial vowel always seems to be a short I, and second, the second vowel always seems to be a short A or O. In all our search we found only two exceptions to the rule. Here is our list:

Chitchat	Jingle-jangle	Singsong
Clip-clop	King Kong	Ticktock
Crisscross	Knickknack	Tiptop
Dillydally	Mishmash	Whimwham
Ding-dong	Ping-pong	Wiggle-waggle
Fiddle-faddle	Pishposh	Wishywashy
Flimflam	Pitter-patter	Zigzag
Flip-flop	Riffraff	
Hippity-hoppity	Shilly-shally	

The two exceptions: teeter-totter (long E as first vowel), and ship-shape (long A as second vowel). Can you find any other exceptions, or suggest a reason for this rule?

### Are These Cryptograms Solvable?

The National Puzzlers' League has a set of standards for the construction of cryptograms to ensure that the puzzles are fair to solvers. These rules state, among other things, that the answer must contain at least 75 letters, that at least 18 different letters of the alphabet must be used, and that no more than 6 of the letters can be unkeyed (i.e., appear only once).

The old New York Herald Tribune ran a popular cryptogram for many years that followed a different set of rules. There was no minimum length, and no requirement on the number of different letters. Unkeyed letters, though, were forbidden.

Are these standards strict enough to guarantee fairness?

Below are three very short crypts from the Herald Tribune - admittedly extreme cases, but nonetheless actual examples from the paper - which strike me as virtually unsolvable. I say "virtually" because I'm not sure they can't be solved without some experts trying. Here are the crypts:

1. R T E S    R T R N U    U N R E S T    G N U    Z G    R N U Z
2. C R Y P T E D    Y D T    E P R C    D E W    T P C W
3. W A R    T O Y    T O W A R D    Y A R D

Answers will not appear until the next issue. Let us know how you do.

And Now a Word from ...

Each year the advertising industry gives awards for the best print, radio, and television commercials. Here are three categories they missed:

**Most Redundant Slogan.** The runner-up prize in this hotly-contested category goes to Raid for its slogan "Kills bugs dead." First prize goes to D-Con for its doubly-redundant "Kills fleas dead - forever."

**Best Oxymoron.** The runner-up in this category is an unidentified sleeping aid (this came to me second-hand) that touts itself as "the solution to the nightmare of insomnia." First prize goes to the Star, the supermarket tabloid, which last July ran the headline "Unbelievable Proof: Life After Death."

**Most Inappropriate Product Name (International Division).** The winner, in a class all by itself, is the Italian nasal decongestant called Smog.

Rock It

In a Kickshaw last November, Benjamin Zimmer gave two examples of wordplay in rock music and invited readers to send others. My contributions:

The band Electric Light Orchestra released an album in 1976 palindromically titled OLE-ELO

The Swedish pop group with the palindromic name ABBA had a hit in 1975 with a palindromic title, SOS.

Next!

Ex-Terminations

The letters EX form a common prefix meaning "out of" or "from." For some unknown reason they also form a common suffix in coined product names, like Kleenex facial tissues and Comtrex multi-symptom cold reliever. How many of the following EX products can you identify from their brief descriptions?

1. Foot powder
2. Glass cleaner
3. Sleeping tablets
4. Nasal decongestant
5. Lady's undergarments
6. Watch (two possible answers)
7. Portable address-card file
8. Laundry bleach
9. Cereal
10. Heat-resistant glassware
11. Audio tape
12. Jock itch powder
13. Shampoo
14. Feminine napkins
15. Acne medication (three possible answers)

### Movie Quiz

A popular movie last summer was called Weird Science. What is doubly unusual about its name?

### Names in the News

About half of the newspapers in the country seem to have names that reflect mergers of earlier papers. For example: the Chicago Sun-Times, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Newark Star-Ledger. Here are some suggested names for other combinations of papers:

Washington World-Leader  
 Los Angeles World-Record (in honor of the 1984 Olympics)  
 Nashville Record-Press  
 Honolulu Sun-Light  
 Fort Bragg Mail-Call

Other examples are invited.

### A Perfect 32-Letter Pangram

For pangram fanciers, here's an exotic example from Polish. It uses each of the 32 letters of the Polish alphabet exactly once:

Pójdź, kińże tę chmurność wgłab flaszy

The sentence is supposed to cheer up someone who is morose from drinking. It means "Come, throw the gloom in the bottle."

### Rebuses

Letter rebuses have been popular in America for more than one hundred years. An example from Merry's Magazine of the 1860s went:

1 YY 1 OWN Ć it.

This is translated as "Too wise in one's own conceit."

Here is a pretty example in verse by H.C. Dodge, from the July 1903 Woman's Home Companion.

