

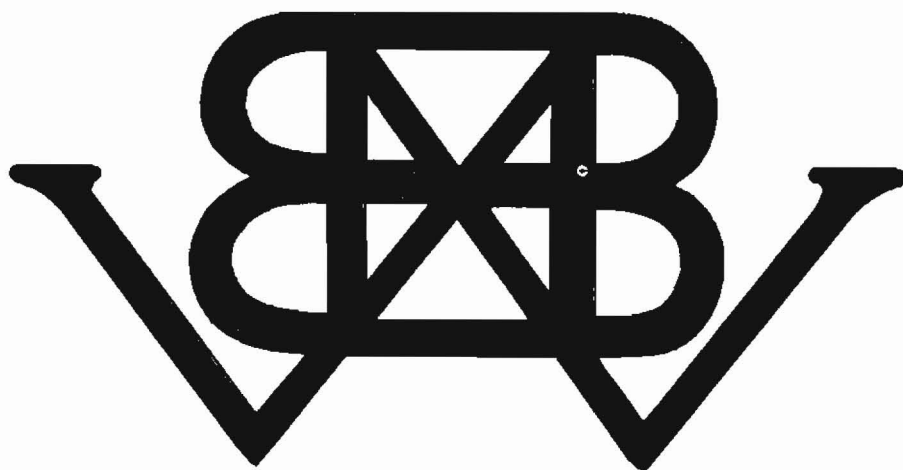
KICKSHAWS

DAVID MORICE
Saint Louis, Missouri

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

The Universal Letter

The Universal Letter is a composite of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. All knowledge that can be communicated in English is stored in this symmetric symbol. Most of the letters appear upright; the rest are placed sideways. E pluribus unum.



Adjectivizing, Verbizing and Adverbizing

Xerox, usually a noun, has come into popular usage as a verb meaning to photocopy (I Xeroxed the book). For marketing purposes, a few other companies run ad campaigns turning their brand names into adjectives, such as Marlboro man, Pepsi smile, or Excedrin headache. Proper nouns in general - names of artists, cities, presidents, etc. - can be used as adjectives, nouns or adverbs: a Picasso painting, St. Louis woman, etc. This versatility of English invites further experimentation:

The beauty queen Ivoried her hands after Gleeming her teeth
Crestfully

"I feel somewhat Mozartish," Bached the conductor, Beethovening
the orchestra during rehearsal

Toyota-faced, he asked his parents for the car

"Stop it! Stop Chicagoing me!" she screamed as she New Yorked
him on the knee

Millions of years ago, the earliest amoeba Campbellled out of
 the primordial soup
 Her sweet, Murine eyes belied her Real-Kill tongue
 "Schlitz!" the carpenter yelled when he Budweisered his thumb
 with a hammer

The Thirdway Wordway

When I was working at Iowa Book & Supply bookstore with Ralston Bedge, a word-minded friend of mine, we discovered an unusual and incomplete set of word pairs. Can you find new pairs for six, seven, nine, ten, or beyond? Bedge and I couldn't come up with any real phrases, so we coined our own (see Answers and Solutions for our coinages).

Oneway runway
 Twoway thruway
 Threeway freeway

Fourway doorway
 Fiveway driveway
 Eightway gateway

Bilingual Reversals

The sentences below are Spanish in one direction and English in the other. English translation of the Spanish is in parentheses, followed by the English reversal on the next line.

Epa! Eres amigo de todos! (Hey, you're everyone's friend!)
 So dote, Dog, I'm a sere ape

Yo bogo, tu remas (I row, you row)
 Same rut: O, go boy

Ora! Es el raton temerario (Pray! he is the fearless rat)
 O, I, rare, met not Arles' ear, O! [Van Gogh?]

A Papa: Es ta-tacano pa' el (To Papa: He is st-stingy for him)
 Leap on a cat at sea, Papa

De ti? Me llamo "Paz" (Of you? I call myself "Peace")
 Zap! O Mall, emit Ed

La palabra balas (You bleat the word)
 Sal, a barb: Al, a pal

O, el dia monetario (O, the monetary day!)
 O, I rate no maid, Leo

Homonymic Sentence

In Beyond Language, Dmitri Borgmann presents a homonymic sentence, which uses the same word four times: BUFFALO BUFFALO BUFFALO BUFFALO. He translates this as "Wild oxen roaming the streets of Buffalo, New York bewilder visiting North Carolina coast dwellers." Below is a five-word homonymic sentence, introduced by the following paragraph:

In the 1950s, a bearded rebel entered a bongo drum contest. He was worn out, however, and his drumming didn't win. In other words, the tired beatnik played a losing drumbeat on his bongos - BEAT BEAT BEAT BEAT BEAT.

man. It was brief, but to the point: A.E., I.O.U.

Housman, however, was surprised. He'd meant the money to be a gift, so he wrote an even briefer note on the paper and handed it back to Kipling. It said: Y?

Ode on a Grecian Alphabet

Here's the Greek alphabet punned into a paragraph about the time I played poker against Alva, Sadie, Cap, Mike, Ron Pyre, Sigmund Dow, and Maggie:

Alva bet a game and dealt. A - yep - sullen Sadie ate a date. I owe to Cap a lamb. Damn! Ooh, news! I owe Mike. Ron Pyre owes Sigmund Dow. Up, sullen - fie! Guys, I owe Maggie.

Headline Hunting

A few years ago, I was living a Spartan existence in a single room above the Englert Theatre. One afternoon, Ralston Bedge, my next-door neighbor, taped a strange newspaper headline to my door. After reading it, I searched through the paper and found a headline to tack on his door. For the next few months, we became headline hunters, hanging up captured headlines like trophies of the hunt. When I moved out of the theater, I saved some of my favorites. I'd like to add them to the ranks of headlines enshrined earlier in **Word Ways**:

RAINBOW GIRLS ADMIT BLACK
 KURDS MASS ON TURKEY BORDER
 FAIR HICKS DON'T NIX STYX LICKS
 BULLDOGS CAN'T LIVE IN PAST VS. CALIFORNIA
 INDIANA'S NIT GOAL: HALT TORRID CARROLL
 MOSES CHARGED WITH MURDER
 BELL NOT A COX MAN
 CARL CHILD DIES AT 91
 RED SOX PURCHASE FINGERS
 RAPE CASE RESULTS IN HUNG JURY
 IOWA SNATCHES WIN IN GIRLS' BASKETBALL
 DAVENPORT ANNEXATION ASKED FOR BY CATERPILLAR

Around this time, news reports said that the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations had given permission for the Central Intelligence Agency to administer lysergic acid diethylamide, the illegal psychedelic drug, to unwary army men. The newspapers passed up a great chance to plaster the front page with a headline composed of individually pronounced letters: JFK, LBJ OK CIA LSD.

Numb Errors

O, net worth, reef, ourself. I've, si, Xmas Eve. Neigh, tin in exit end.

What is the significance of the preceding text? You have ten seconds to figure it out. Nine...eight...seven... See Answers and Solutions.

Ap'str'ph's

Words can be chosen to make a sentence with apostrophes bristling out like the quills on a porcupine. The sentence below has 42 apostrophes in 37 words. It doesn't include the more common contractions, such as I'd, he'll, won't, etc., nor the possessive. Most of the words can be found in Robert Burns' poetry, and two appear in Alan Frank's article in the May 1986 *Word Ways*. Can you translate the paragraph - "For a' that, and a' that?" The full text is given in Answers and Solutions.

'Tis o'er ev'ry fo'c's'le th' bo's'n look'd wi' min' pu'd 'til
fu' o' fa', e'en t' nor', tho' mis'ry's awfu', 'n' ca's sigh'd
thro' ha's e'er sin' a' kiss'd, car'd, wish'd, an' clasp'd,
ne'er ev'n i' lo'e.

Traveling further into the twilight zone of language, greater heights of apostrophization can be achieved. For instance, using commonly accepted methods of contraction, "Shall not have had" can be changed to "Sha'n't've'd" and pluralized with an 's, then extended even further with the contracted form of "will." The new word has six apostrophes among eleven letters: sha'n't've'd's'll. Example of usage: If the secretary shortens the phrase shall not have had wherever it appears, then all of the sha'n't've'd's'll be published next month.

Letter-Heavy Sentences

Here are a couple of sentences which have a much greater percentage of one particular letter:

Sis sasses asses as sissies assess sassers.

[22 Ss, 14 other letters; 61.1 per cent letter-heavy]

"Gee, bee deeded wee eel fee, Dee" Lee eeked; "Eye, see tee?"

[26 Es, 15 other letters; 63.2 per cent letter-heavy]

Letter-heavy sentences of 50 per cent or more could probably be written for most of the alphabet, but the percentage would be much less for the rare letters J, Q, X and Z.

Wordcycles

A single word can be expanded in charade fashion to build a full sentence. For instance, the word "open" written next to itself a few times (openopenopenopenopenopen), divided into smaller words (open o pen ope nope no pen open), and dressed up with capitalization and punctuation, results in the first line below. In addition, no two-word phrase is repeated.

Open, O pen, ope. Nope, no pen open.

Important imp or tan Tim? I'm port, ant. Import ant.

Salad, Sal? Ads? A lad's a lad.

Banana ban: a nab, Ana, Nab a nana.

Glowing, lowing. Low in glow, in glowing.

Belie verb, Eli, ever believer.

Ann O'Tate, Dan; not a Ted annotated.

Pan a map, Ana, Ma: Panama.

Dime, dim Ed. I, me.
lnk in kin: kink in kink.

Kinetic Palaver

How many different ways can this surrealist poem, including the title, be read aloud? For answer, see Answers and Solutions.

When tunes upon a zither whorl
As desolate as bogs,
I shall forestall a courtesan
Without aquatic togs.

A hussy on a patio
Can quash a vase, or should
Seduce you on koala loam
As just a hussy could.

Effulgence's a nuisance: half
Your bistro's mongrel, or
Safari on a patio -
I recognize you, for

Your xeric, middling duplicate,
A babel as I read,
Confounds tomatoes with a root
To exit when I lead.

Alphabetical Algebra

What happens when you double the alphabet? Or square it?

In order to multiply the alphabet, convert the letters to their positional value (A=1, B=2, ..., Z=26) and multiply each value by the given number. Then convert the 26 products to their alphabetic equivalent. For a product over 26, divide by 26, and convert the remainder to a letter. A zero remainder equals Z.

If the alphabet is multiplied by 2, all the vowels drop out, and if it's multiplied by 13, all odd letters change to M and all even letters change to Z.

$ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPOQRSTUVWXYZ \times 2 = BDFHJLNPRTVXZBDFHJLNPRTVXZ$
 $ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPOQRSTUVWXYZ \times 13 =$
 $MZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZMZ$

Squaring the letters of the alphabet one by one results in a sequence which is palindromic, except for the final letter.

$ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPOQRSTUVWXYZ^2 = ADIPYJWLCVQNMNQVCLWJYPIDAZ$

Cubing the alphabet produces a sequence remarkable for a couple of reasons. First, every odd letter except for the middle M is a vowel, and every even letter is a consonant. Second, a surprising number of words in Webster's Seventh Collegiate are formed by adjacent letters in the cubed alphabet: AH, AHA, HA, HE, HER, HERA, ERA, RA, RALE, ALE, EL, ELM, NUN and EN. The regular alphabet has only three such words, AB, HI and NO, and similarly the squared alphabet, AD, DIP and ID.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ³ = AHALUHERALELMNUNYHURENYRYZ

Multiplying by 26, of course, results in total and final homogeneity - a string of 26 Zs.

P-(A,E,I,O,U)-T

The next paragraph features a set of five words with different vowels: pat, pet, pit, pot, put. Each line has a particular order in which the vowels appear. By vowels, the order is aeiou, eioua, iouae, ouaei, uaeio. Although it's not intended to be a tongue-twister, the poem does have an interesting feel and sound when rapidly read aloud.

Pat a pet in a pit or a pot. Put
 a pet in a pit or a pot, and put Pat
 in a pit or a pot. Put Pat in a pet
 pot? Put Pat and a pet in a pit?
 Put Pat and a pet in a pit or a pot.

Distorted Titles

The list below presents a baker's dozen of distorted titles. Each refers to a well-known song, play, musical, novel, movie, newspaper, or magazine. The original words have been replaced by synonyms, antonyms, spoonerisms, tense changes, plurals, etc. What are the original titles? Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions.

1. A Purple Number
2. Salad of the Bad Cafe
3. She Didn't Desire to Put Her Foot Down
4. At What the Buzzer Buzzed
5. Blueberry Swede
6. Nothing's Ill Which Starts Ill
7. Into a Mirror
8. San Francisco Places
9. We Didn't Stab Cows, Did We?
10. Back From the Draft
11. Dog Under the Cold Aluminum Siding
12. Your Unfair Gentlemen
13. Letter Routes

The License Plate Game

When you're driving along, bored with the radio and tense from the traffic, you can pass the time more easily by playing the License Plate Game. Here's how it goes:

Look for the standard license plates with three random letters such as CAK-325. Vanity plates aren't allowed. Try to make three words by adding one or two letters to the trigram. First, try to make a word with an unbroken string, as CAKE; second, with a broken string, as CreAK; and third, with a rearranged string, as BACK. Score two points per four-letter word and one point per five-letter word. See how many points you can make from five con-

secutive plates; the maximum possible score is 30. Play against a friend - the loser pays for the gas.

Animal Form

The sheepish antelope horsed around with a zebra in his Mustang. As the lion was pigging out on a giraffe, the elephant got the hippo's goat by badgering the pigeons. Like an alligator, the tiger dogged the walrus and then wolfed down the owl. The cat and his foxy chick buffaloeed a squirrely ass, who steered his Rabbit into a Cobra. The chimpanzee rammed a Pinto, too, because the turtledove was monkeying around with a mole on her calf. She went ape over the aardvark, till the springbok cowed the gorilla batting the koala. "Rats!" crowed the snake, "How does that turkey weasel out of it?" While the kangaroo was parroting the gerbils, the mouse in a mink goosed the frog on a mule, the llamas chickened out, and the burros ducked! And when the vultures henpecked the elands, the toad couldn't bear it.

Without looking, guess how many different animal and bird names appear in this story. Now go back and try counting them. Are you sure you're right? See Answers and Solutions.

The International A

English-language place names for countries of the world exhibit a peculiar abundance of the letter A. If you consider every country name with the same vowel throughout (univocalic), most of them are A-only words. The names were taken from Washington University's International Office list of 174 countries.

- A Bahamas, Canada, Chad, Japan, Malta, Panama, Qatar, Rwanda
- E Sweden, Greece
- I Fiji
- O Congo, Togo

In the United States, a majority of state names are A-only, too.

- A Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Kansas
- E Tennessee
- I Mississippi

Other word sets, such as names of numbers, months, colors of the rainbow, etc., have a preponderance of E-only words. Is there a reason for the popularity of A in naming countries and states? Does this phenomenon hold true for cities of the world? It does for the planets: Mars is an A-only word.

Iowa City Winter Scene

Some winters back, a ferocious ice-storm blasted Iowa City during the night. Next morning, I saw the frozen residue - a spectacular glasslike coating on the trees, the houses, and the roads. With my nose stuck to the window, I composed this chilly quintuple pun: Eye, see icy I.C.? Aye, si, I see.

In Stratford, Iowa, the streets are named after famous English poets. I photographed the street sign at the intersection of Byron and Keats, then walked to the next street, Shakespeare, which runs into Milton a block later. As I recall, a greasy spoon restaurant sits near the Shelley Avenue exit to Wordsworth Road. One dubious source claimed the rate of traffic accidents in Stratford increases in direct proportion to the quality of the poet whose name appears on the street, with Shakespeare Street the most hazardous. The power of poetry, eh?

Three Coins in a Fountain

Many writers coin words in their work. Lewis Carroll's nonsense words from the Alice books are undoubtedly the most widely-known, and James Joyce's novels establish him as the master word-minter of all time. In this matching game, the object is to pair up each author with his/her own list of three coined words found in published works. For answers, see Answers and Solutions.

A Lewis Carroll	D Gerard Manley Hopkins	G Ogden Nash
B e.e. cummings	E James Joyce	H Wallace Stevens
C T.S. Eliot	F Marianne Moore	I Dylan Thomas

1. balletbattle, frecklessness, paranympths
2. elephant-ear-witness-to-be, half-fledge, pale-ale-eyed
3. prepoceros, sanguage, vilence
4. ccocoucougouchcoughi, flipchucking, unununun
5. featherlands, owl-light, turnturtle
6. callay, outgrabe, slithy
7. effanineffable, goonight, wopsical
8. dapple-dawn-drawn, leafmeal, selfyeast
9. hoobla-hoo, meta-men, shiddow-shaddow

The Last Word in Poetry

The search for the last word in the dictionary or the last name in the phone book is a time-honored quest. But what about the last word in the entire canon of English-language poetry? I nominate William Carlos Williams, American poet, for a word he coined in his poem, "Ballad of Faith," which appears on page 131 of his Later Collected Poems (New Directions). His coinage, a word to end all words, is ZZZZZZZZ.

New Punctuation

Complex times demand complex punctuation. A few years ago, the interrobang, a superimposed question mark/exclamation point, was created to satisfy the needs of the modern world. Now, by means of linguistic engineering, the traditional comma, period, colon, semicolon, question mark, and interrogation point have been further cross-bred to produce more hybrids. On the next page are enough new punctuation marks to satisfy human needs well into the 21st century. It's up to you to determine how to use them.

NEW PUNCTUATION

QUESTION MARK


HYPERCOMMA


AUTOQUESTION MARK


SUBSEMICOLON


PSEUDOQUESTION MARK


ROTOMATION POINT


BICOMMA


TRANSCOMMA


SUPEREXCLAMAPROTOCOLON


EXCLAMACOLON


HEMIPERIOD


PREQUASIPROQUESTIPERIOD