

AN OVERLAP CHAIN OF TOWN NAMES

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An overlap chain of words is a sequence in which the last letters of each word form the first letters of the next, as in SPACE, CEILING, INGOT or SEVEN, EVENT, ENTRANCE. A complete overlap chain is one in which each letter participates in exactly one overlap - that is, there can be no letters in the middle of a word not overlapping with the preceding or following ones (for example, LL in CELLING), nor can any letter overlap with both the preceding and following words (for example, EN in EVENT). To avoid uninteresting chains, I require also that each overlap must be at least two letters, which means that each word must be at least four letters long.

No doubt very long complete overlap chains can be constructed under these rules using words from Webster's unabridged dictionaries (although the chain-length would be reduced if one insists on at least three letters of overlap). I present below a complete overlap chain based on a more restricted word-set - the names of United States cities, towns or villages as given in the Hammond Ambassador World Atlas (1956), or the Times Atlas of the World (1981). To lend further challenge to the task, I used one town from each of the 50 states. It would have been more elegant to construct a complete overlap ring, overlapping the final name of the chain with the first, but I was unable to accomplish this. The state names are given in abbreviated form beneath the splits (Circle AK, Leer Ml, etc.). Note that the two-word names La Fayette, Fayette City and City Mills break at the splits; note also the reversal-name, Adaven, for NV.

CIRC LE ER WIN ONA GA RY DAL LAS CA BOT NA PIER CE DAR BONNE VILLE GREEN MOUNTAIN VIEW FIELD

AKMITN AZ KSWVGA MO ALVT IAKY OKME LA OR CO NC HI SD UT

ING ALLS BROOK LYN DON ALD ER DAHL GREN ADA VEN ANGO LA FAYETTE CITY MILLS AP LIN DEN VER

IN SC CT IL WI WAMN VA CA NV NE DERI PA MA TXAR FL ID MS

BA SIN GAC KLE IN WOOD STOCK PORT ALES IA

WY NJ ND MTNY NH OH NM MD