

MORE QUALITY WORD SQUARES

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In a companion article, I presented one hundred 6x6 quality word squares. In this article, I extend these results to squares of the seventh, eighth and ninth order.

Because 7x7 squares are larger than 6x6 ones, it is much more difficult to construct them using common words and names only. Shown in the appendix are the twenty best 7x7 word squares known to me. I took eight of them from my first book, Language on Vacation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965); another seven, from the November 1975 Word Ways article "7x7 Computer-Generated Word Squares" by M.D. McIlroy; and the remaining five, from miscellaneous sources the identity of which I no longer remember.

On the whole, I applied the same standards of word quality in selecting these squares that I applied to the main body of 6x6 squares. However, I permitted each square, if necessary, to use one quite uncommon word. That explains the presence of the words FELUCCA, VOLUTIN, CENACLE, CESTODE, ATAXICS, and AXILLAE in them, as well as of words of intermediate status: CHORINE, BRACKETED, TESSERA, ETHANOL, CAR-MILE, MISCROP, PHRENSY, PLENIST, HECTARE, TERTIAN, and WASSAIL. The word CAR-MILE is the only hyphenated word to appear in the group; there are no two-or-more-word phrases, and no words or names straying outside the Websterian perimeter.

These twenty squares are not the only high-quality seventh-order squares that it is possible to construct in English. Readers are invited to try adding to my collection with squares of comparable caliber. Such squares cannot, however, be extracted from McIlroy's 1975 article; each of the remaining 27 word squares presented in his article is distinctly inferior in caliber to those shown here. I spent considerable time evaluating McIlroy's 7x7 squares before deciding which ones to admit to the select coterie of first-rate word squares of the seventh order.

The transition from 7x7 squares to 8x8 squares is an exceedingly difficult one, and it is no longer possible to limit eight-order squares to those consisting entirely of common words and names. What is possible, just barely, is to insist that they consist entirely of literary and technical modern English.

Shown in the appendix are the four finest 8x8 squares known to me. Although they are arranged in the usual alphabetical order, the order of their quality is slightly different: 1,3,2,4. The first

square is distinctly the best one. Square 3 introduces a two-word term, SIN EATER. Square 2 also uses a two-word term, OPEN TONE; in addition, it uses a hyphenated word, DEER-NECK, and that word is not Websterian - it is found in the Funk & Wagnalls Unabridged. For the curious, a deer-neck is the thin, deer-shaped neck of some horses. (Parenthetically, until I located the word, I assumed that DEER NECK was the name of some community somewhere in the United States, but I could not find such a community.) Square 4 uses another word from the Funk & Wagnalls Unabridged, IRIDOLIN (an oily liquid compound derived from coal tar, one habitually ignored by Websterian dictionaries), and three geographic place names: METAMORA and LA GRANGE, communities in Illinois, and WESTMILL, a community in Hertfordshire, England. All three of these communities are included, among other places, in the 1965 Times-Index Gazetteer of the World.

Using the standards applied to 8x8 word squares, no fully satisfactory 9x9 word square has ever been constructed. Shown below is the best such square known, with complete explanations of the words and names included in it. Try improving on it - if you dare!

F R A T E R I E S
R E G I M E N A L
A G I T A T I V E
T I T A N I T E S
E M A N A T I S T
R E T I T R A T E
I N I T I A T O R
E A V E S T O N E
S L E S T E R E D

FRATERIES are refectories (dining halls) in monasteries; REGIMEN-AL is of the nature of a regimen, such as a systematic diet; AGI-TATIVE is tending to agitate, disturb, or excite; TITANITES are brown or black monoclinic calcium silicotitanates; an EMANATIST is a believer in creation by effluxes from the Absolute; to RETI-TRATE (found only in the Century Dictionary Supplement, 1909-1914) is to redetermine the concentration of a solute; an INITIATOR is an explosive initiating the explosion of a main charge; EAVESTONE is a township in West Riding, Yorkshire, England (see various British atlases and gazetteers, such as the Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles, published in Edinburgh by John Bartholomew in 1943); and SLESTERED means engaged in dirty or sloppy work. Because this last word is Scottish instead of English, it disqualifies the square from a first-class ranking. All words not identified as to source can be found in Webster's Second Edition and in other dictionaries.

If you wish to be successful in constructing word squares of the seventh or higher orders, equip yourself with all available word lists: regular alphabetical, reversed alphabetical, and sorted by initial and terminal letters. You will also need a great deal of time, patience, and luck.

A C C E D E D	A S S E R T S	B R A C T E D	B R I S T L E
C H O R I N E	S L A V E R Y	R E S H O N E	R E N E W A L
C O B A L T S	S A L I V A S	A S C E N T S	I N C L I N E
E R A S U R E	E V I D E N T	C H E E S E S	S E L F D O M
D I L U T E R	R E V E R S E	T O N S U R E	T W I D D L E
E N T R E A T	T R A N S O M	E N T E R E R	L A N O L I N
D E S E R T S	S Y S T E M S	D E S S E R T	E L E M E N T
C A S T O F F	C E L E S T A	F E S T I V E	M A S C A R A
A P P A R E L	E X A L T E R	E T H A N O L	A R C A D E S
S P I C I L Y	L A W L E S S	S H I N G L E	S C A R V E S
T A C T F U L	E C L I P S E	T A N T R U M	C A R M I L E
O R I F I C E	S T E P H E N	I N G R A T E	A D V I S E R
F E L U C C A	T E S S E R A	V O L U T I N	R E E L E C T
F L Y L E A F	A R S E N A L	E L E M E N T	A S S E R T S
M E R G E R S	M I S C R O P	N E S T L E S	P R E P A R E
E T E R N A L	I M P E A C H	E N T R A N T	R E M O D E L
R E G A T T A	S P E N C E R	S T R A N G E	E M U L A T E
G R A V I T Y	C E N A C L E	T R A I T O R	P O L E M I C
E N T I T L E	R A C C O O N	L A N T E R N	A D A M A N T
R A T T L E R	O C E L O T S	E N G O R G E	R E T I N U E
S L A Y E R S	P H R E N S Y	S T E R N E R	E L E C T E D
P R O B L E M	R A G B U S H	R E P L A C E	S H E A V E D
R E C E I V E	A T L A N T A	E N L I V E N	H O S T I L E
O C T A V E S	G L I T T E R	P L E N I S T	E S T A T E S
B E A C O N S	B A T T E N S	L I N E A T E	A T A X I C S
L I V O N I A	U N T E A C H	A V I A T O R	V I T I A T E
E V E N I N G	S T E N C I L	C E S T O D E	E L E C T O R
M E S S A G E	H A R S H L Y	E N T E R E D	D E S S E R T
T E A C H E R	T O A S T E R	V I R A G O S	W A S S A I L
E S T H E T E	O B S C E N E	I N E X A C T	A N T E N N A
A T T A C H E	A S S E R T S	R E V I L E R	S T R I N G Y
C H A T T E L	S C E P T R E	A X I L L A E	S E I Z U R E
H E C T A R E	T E R T I A N	G A L L A N T	A N N U L A R
E T H E R I C	E N T R A N T	O C E A N I C	I N G R A T E
R E E L E C T	R E S E N T S	S T R E T C H	L A Y E R E D
A G A R I C U S	F O V E A T E D	R E M I S S E D	W E S T M I L L
G E N E R A N T	O P E N T O N E	E V E N T I M E	E U T H E R I A
A N A C O N D A	V E N T R I N E	M E T H A N E S	S T A R T I N G
R E C A N T E R	E N T A I L E R	I N H A L E R S	T H R E A D E R
I R O N W O R T	A T R I D E A N	S T A L L A G E	M E T A M O R A
C A N T O N A L	T O I L E T T E	S I N E A T E R	I R I D O L I N
U N D E R A G E	E N N E A T I C	E M E R G E N T	L I N E R I N G
S T A R T L E D	D E E R N E C K	D E S S E R T S	L A G R A N G E