

A PUZZLER'S PARADISE

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Listed below are 34 kinds of word puzzles, games, and curiosities, each one in scrambled form. Your assignment is to rearrange the letters of each one into its correct order. Simple enough? Of course! Why 34 scrambles, instead of some number that shows a healthy respect for the decimal system? Because 34 happens to be the total of each row, column and main diagonal in a magic square of the fourth order - sufficient reason!

I have been quite catholic in my choice of wordplay forms. However, you will find each term in one or more of the following sources: (1) Webster's Second and/or Third Editions; (2) past and present issues of Word Ways; (3) my first two books, Language on Vacation and Beyond Language; (4) past and present issues of The Enigma, official monthly publication of the National Puzzlers' League; (5) Charles Carroll Bombaugh's trail-blazing 864-page work, Gleanings for the Curious from the Harvest-Fields of Literature: A Melange of Excerpta, Author's Unabridged Edition, First Series (Hartford, Connecticut: A.D. Worthington & Company, Publishers, 1875).

Despite superficial appearances to the contrary, not all of the terms you will be seeking are plurals. Furthermore, you must keep in mind that not all English plurals end in S - the nouns CHILDREN, RADII, and PHENOMENA, for example, do not. In addition, not all singulars corresponding to plurals ending in S can be obtained merely by removing the S's from those plurals - many plurals are formed by adding ES to singulars, and the terminal Y of a singular is often changed to an I before adding ES (as in the case of LADY to LADIES).

With all this helpful information, you may begin to feel that this quiz is really too easy for someone of your caliber. If so, permit me to suggest a variety of ways in which the quiz can be made much more challenging and truly worthy of your finest effort:

1. In unscrambling the forms of wordplay involved here, stick scrupulously to the order in which I have listed them. Quite by accident, all of the most difficult-to-identify forms are bunched together at the very beginning of the list. Therefore, never tackle a later scramble until you have decoded all those preceding it. This procedure will turn the quiz into a test of your will-power.

2. Place an accurate stopwatch next to the list of scrambles and allow yourself a maximum of ten seconds (or five seconds, or only one second) to recognize the form of wordplay concealed by each scramble. The exact time limit you set yourself will depend upon

the precise level of your wordplay expertise - which you know better than anyone else. This procedure will turn the quiz into a test (1) of the speed of your mental processes, and (2) of your ability to concentrate simultaneously on two different things, the scrambles and your stopwatch.

3. Have a trusted friend, one on whose discretion you can rely implicitly, take this article and handprint each of the 34 scrambles, in large block printing, on a three-inch by five-inch card. Have that friend film the cards in sequence. Then, use a movie projector to flash each scramble on a screen in front of you, for a tiny fraction of a second. This procedure will turn the quiz into a test of your powers of subliminal perception. Make certain, of course, that you have not even glanced at the list of scrambles in this article before relinquishing it to your confidant(e).

4. Use the cards described in the above like a pack of Zener cards in parapsychological investigations. Have your friend take the cards to a desk or table in another room, shuffling them thoroughly. Then have your confidant(e) concentrate on each card in turn for exactly 30 seconds. During those 30 seconds, you are going to try (1) receiving the scramble on the card from your friend, and (2) unscrambling it correctly. If your psychic powers are highly developed, you may omit step (1), going directly to step (2). This procedure will turn the quiz into a test of your telepathic (metapsychotic) and/or clairvoyant (clairsentient) powers.

Here, then, is the list of scrambles that you have patiently been awaiting:

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| 1. STRAINED | 18. TOSS ACID! |
| 2. ATOM UNITS | 19. SH - MY MOON! |
| 3. GAME MARTS | 20. SLAVERERS |
| 4. ETCH NOTES! | 21. MORAL PIGS |
| 5. POLISH GROG | 22. A-SMARTING |
| 6. MOST RUBIES | 23. ROSS CACTI |
| 7. CARCINOMAS | 24. SICK HAWKS |
| 8. SHOVE SCREE! | 25. NERO SMYTHE |
| 9. A TEST LAUNCH | 26. EASTLANDER |
| 10. HARRIET'S MOM | 27. POLISH ARMS |
| 11. SCORING HELP | 28. NUCLEARISM |
| 12. SEAMING | 29. OVISQUEQUE |
| 13. SUBSEER | 30. RIPE ALMONDS |
| 14. SANDLIKE | 31. CRASS ACTION |
| 15. ARS MAGNA | 32. SPARTAN LOSS |
| 16. HARDCASE | 33. DREAD WORLDS |
| 17. D. MADISON | 34. ANTIPOSITRONS |

Most of the scrambles are self-explanatory, but a few deserve elaboration. ROSS CACTI are prickly plants found growing only in Morristown, New Jersey. ANTIPOSITRONS are electrons - considered from the standpoint of a universe consisting entirely or mostly of antimatter. OVISQUEQUE is a halting Latin dative plural construction aptly translated as "and...and...eggs." You will find this word very handy when ordering ham and eggs at your neighborhood diner - providing the waitress knows classical Latin!