

WORD RECORDS FROM WEBSTER'S THIRD

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This article contains a list of words with interesting logological properties from Merriam-Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1961) and 12000 Words: A Supplement to Webster's Third (1986). Only uncapitalized, unpunctuated, bold-face entries or their inflected forms are covered. Borderline cases are bracketed. The word records are drawn from the following three sources:

Lnnn = page nnn of Language on Vacation (1965), Dmitri Borgmann
 Bnnn = page nnn of Beyond Language (1967), Dmitri Borgmann
 mm-nnn = page nnn of volume mm of Word Ways (published in year 1967 + mm)

The classification of word records has received considerable attention in *Word Ways* (cf. 8-180, 9-161, 11-74, 12-3,83,181, 16-35). Perhaps the most complete classification is reflected in the Editor's Cumulative Indices (5-249, 11-51, 17-179).

Dictionary entries comprise a spelling, a pronunciation, an etymology and a meaning. Spellings are most amenable to wordplay, and have received the most complete treatment. A word is a string of letters that can be viewed in its entirety (long words, palindromes, tautonyms), partially (internal palindromes, doubled letters), or as an unordered set (isograms, polygrams, pyramidwords). Attention can be paid to the choice of letters: they can come from various places in the alphabet or on the typewriter; they can be vowels or consonants; they can have various symmetries; they can be common or rare letters; or they can come from puzzling places like chemical names, state abbreviations, or a telephone. Words can be compared to other strings, for example the alphabet or other words. Various operations can be performed to transform words into other words in their entirety (reversal, deletion, insertion, substitution, transposition) or partially (words within words). Sets of words with unusual properties can be constructed (squares, ladders, girders, networks). This article is concerned with single words, as opposed to sets of words, so this form of wordplay will be left for a follow-up article.

There is no agreed taxonomy of wordplay for the other three parts of a dictionary entry. Selected areas have received attention in *Word Ways*: pronunciation (syllables, silent letters), etymology (acronyms), and meaning (plurals, synonyms).

Spelling

longest word (1-33,4-56,80,5-82,7-6,11-166,174,12-38,13-117,151,15-234,16-24,93,
17-26,115,20-37,182,214,21-26,22-205) TRINITROPHENYLMETHYLNITRAMINE (29)
[PNEUMONULTRAMICROSCOPICSILICOVOLCANOCONIOSIS (45)]

1. Letter Patterns

Entire Word

longest palindromes (18-6) KINNIKINNIK (11)

for each beginning letter (L6,286,11-210,12-93) ADINIDA, BOOB, CIVIC,
DEIFIED, ECCE, ?, GAG, HAGIGAH, IGIGI, ?, KINNIKINNIK, LEVEL, MALAYALAM,
NAURUAN, OTTO, PEEP, QAZAQ, REVIVER, SEESEES, TERRET, ULU, VAV, WOW, ?,
YARAY, ?

for each middle letter (4-133,210,5-6,15-50,208,16-22) REPAPER, SAWBWAS, ECE,
MURDRUM, PEP, DEIFIED, SAGAS, AHA, REVIVER, KAJAK, KINNIKINNIK, ALA, KUMUK,
ADINIDA, BOB, SAPAS, ?, NAURUAN, SEESEES, ROTOR, ALULA, CIVIC, EWE, SEXES,
MALYALAM, KAZAK

longest tautonym (13-43) TANGANTANGAN (12)

for each letter (L175,13-39,15-241,19-27) ATLATL, BELLABELLA, CHIQUICHQUI,
DUMDUM, EE, FROUFROU, GANGGANG, HOTSHOTS, IPILIPIL, JUJU, KHUSKHUS,
LAPULAPU, MAHIMAH, NAGNAG, OO, PLOUPIOU, QUINTA, RIRORIRO, SWEESWEE,
TANGANTANGAN, ULAULA, VALVAL, WALLAWALLA, ?, YARIYARI, ZOOZOO

longest head 'n' tail ARGLEBARGLE (11)

for each middle letter (1-249,3-48,107,4-132,170,5-6,24,181) MUCKAMUCK,
ARGLEBARGLE, OVERCOVER, OKEYDOKEY, AREAR, ?, MAGMA, OUTSHOUTS, TRINITRIN,
ANJAN, EKE, KHALKHA, PAMPA, TARANTARA, INGOING, APA, ?, VERVE, HOTSHOT,
ICTIC, SHUSH, EVE, ABWAB, MANXMAN, EYE, ?

Subset of Word

longest internal palindrome (L25,7-24,89,18-12,20-99) (SENSUOUSNES)S (11)

longest internal tautonym (11-221,12-23,13-39,88,15-18)

M(ETHYLETHYL)PYRIDINE (10)

longest repeated prefix (11-147,213,12-24) (MICROMICRO)FARAD (10)

most consecutive doubled letters (L166,1-152,218,4-180) BOOKKEEPER (3)

most repeated letters in a word (5-23) POSSESSIONLESSNESSES (9,S)

longest n-cadences (2-cadence = alternating monotony) (17-26)

HUMUHUMUNUKUNUKUAPUAA (2x8) EFFERVESCENCE (3x5) STRESSLESSNESS (4x4)

NONCONTAMINATION (5x4)

2. Letter Counts

longest isogram (L296,7-33,9-54,18-67) DERMATOGLYPHICS (15)

pair of words (6-111,172,10-42,21-27,84) BLACKSMITH GUNPOWDERY (20)

three words (10-42) HUMPBACKS, FROWZY, TINGLED (22)

longest pair isogram (L14,128,1-201,4-136,142,5-25,111,205,6-13,212,7-33,
15-136,16-156,219,18-140) SCINTILLESCE (14)

longest trio isogram (7-33,88,15-138,18-140) DEEDED (6)

longest tetrad isogram (1-142,18-140) KUKUKUKU (8)

longest polygram (all letters repeated) (5-49,110) UNPROSPEROUSNESSES (18)

longest pyramid word (3-109,5-236,13-176,213,15-109,125,154) REMEMBERER (10)

highest ratio length/letters (L158,298) KUKUKUKU (4) SENSELESSNESSES (3.75)

3. Letter Choices

- longest all vowels (L156,7-98) EAU (3)
- longest word, each vowel once (L160) SUBCONTINENTAL (14) also Y (2-64) ABSTEMIOUSLY (12)
- shortest word, each vowel once SEQUOIA (7) also Y FACETIOUSLY (11)
- longest word, vowels in order (L160) FACETIOUS (9) also Y (2-64) ABSTEMIOUSLY (12)
- shortest word, vowels in order CAESIOUS (8) also Y FACETIOUSLY (11)
- longest word, vowels in reverse order SUBCONTINENTAL (14) also Y ?
- shortest word, vowels in reverse order MUSCOIDEA (9) also Y ?
- longest word with full vowel substitution (1-156,8-190,207,9-17,22-172,216) CL(A,E,I,O,U)CKING (8) also Y D(A,E,I,O,U,Y)NE (4)
- longest one-vowel word (L177) STRENGTHS (9) two-vowel LATCHSTRINGS (12)
- longest univocalic word (L173) DEFENSELESSNESSES (17)
- longest alternating vowel-consonant word (L169) SUPEREROGATORILY (16)
- longest consonant string in word (L178,15-38,83) CATCHPHRASE (6)
- longest word with one consonant (12-55,90) ASSESSES (8)
- two (12-165) INSANENESSES (12)
- longest words with same consonants (11-42,17-76,148,19-217,20-155) DESTRUCTION, DISTRACTION (11)
- longest word (lipogram) without (?) AB HYDROXYDESOXOCORTICOSTERONE (27)
- ABCD PHILOPROGENITIVENESS (20) A-H SUPPOSITITIOUSLY (16)
- A-K TUMULTUOUSLY (12) A-M NONSUPPORTS (11) A-N STUPOROUS (9)
- A-Q SUSURRUS (8) A-S TUTTY (5)
- longest word without (?) E MACRACANTHORRHYNCHIASIS (23)
- ET PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICALLY (21) ETA PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGIC (17)
- ETA! ? ETAIN ? ETAINS (L239) PROMORPHOLOGY (13)
- longest narrow word (ABCDEMNORSUVWXYZ) (L155) NUMEROUSNESSES (14)
- longest tall word (FGHIJKLPQTY) (6-188,12-216) LILLYPILLY (10)
- longest word with vertical-symmetry letters (AHIMOTUVWXY) (12-109) HOMOTAXY (8)
- longest word with horizontal-symmetry letters (BCDEHIKX) (11-237,12-216) CHECKBOOK (9)
- highest ratio of dotted letters (1-169) JINJILI (5/7)
- typewriter words longest on top row (L171,1-25) PROPRIETORY (11) in order (3-176,12-154) WETTISH (7) in reverse order (4-118,12-154) CHAPOTE (7)
- left hand (L171) TESSERADECADES (14) right hand (L171,16-249) POLYPHONY (9)
- alternating hands (16-249) NEUROTOXICITY (13) one finger (L171,16-249) DEEDED (6)
- longest Morse code word (8-171,209,13-159) repeated dots DISSEISEES (21)
- repeated dashes BOTTOMMOST (15) same pattern CHLOROPHYLLINS, CHLOROPHYLLITES (48) palindromes RAPHAELISQUE (32) inverses (12-216) KNEEL, RATTY (5)
- longest word formed from chemical symbols (7-198,9-42) CONSCIENTIOUSNESS (17)
- longest word formed from state abbreviations (9-91) ALKYLAMINE (10)
- longest word formed from piano notes (L167,11-38) CABBAGED (8)
- longest words confused on telephone keypad (8-227,11-215) AMOUNTS, CONTOUR (7)

4. Letter Order

- longest word with letters in order (3-176) AEGILOPS (8) reverse order (11-246) SPONGED (7) alternating forward-reverse (roller-coaster word) (22-175,239) PSEUDOHYOSCYAMINE (17)
- longest word with letters from first half of alphabet (1-35,5-26,5-226) HAMAMELIDACEAE (14) last half (5-226,12-91) NONSUPPORTS (11)
- longest word constant-letter-shifted to another (L139,2-24,11-188,12-243,13-27) PRIMERO-SULPHUR (7) arithmetical-letter-shifted (12-50) DREAM-ETHER (5) constant-shift-with-transposal (shiftgrams) (12-218,13-22,88,182) AEROPHANE-SILVERITE (9)
- longest word with no letters in alphabetical place (12-91) abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz TRINITROPHENYLMETHYLNITRAMINE (29)
- word with most letters in alphabetical place (5-133,140,206,12-59) AbCdEfghIjKl shifted mNOpQrStUvWv ARCHETYPICAL (5) INOPERATIVE (6)
- word with most consecutive letters in order consecutively (L168) UNDE(RSTU)DY (4)
- word with most consecutive letters in order (L168,4-207,7-62,88,188) AMBUSCADE (5,A-E)
- word with most consecutive letters (L168) PERQUISITION (8,N-U)
- highest ratio of consecutive letters/length (L168,4-10,144,5-22,11-36,108,12-169,15-77,151,154,212,16-156) FEEDBACK (6/8)

5. Operations on Words

- deletion (L110,9-161)
 - longest beheadable word (6-198) P(REDETERMINATION) (16/15)
 - longest for each letter (6-88,181,198,213,13-159,14-219,15-155,16-96,220,7-85) APATHETICALLY, BLITHESOME, CHASTENING, DEMULSIFICATION, EMOTIONLESSNESS, FUTILITARIANISM, GASTRONOMICALLY, HEDRIOPHTHALMA, IDENTIFICATION, JUNCTIONAL, KINAESTHETIC, LIMITABLENESS, METHYLACETYLENE, NEOPALEOZOIC, OENANTHALDEHYDE, PREDETERMINATION, QUINTA, REVOLUTIONARILY, SELECTIVENESS, TREASONABLENESS, UPRAISER, VINDICATION, WHENCEFORWARD, XANTHOPHYLLITE, YOURSELVES, ZOOSPORIFEROUS
 - longest beheadable down to a single letter (6-198,12-154) PRESTATE (8)
 - longest curtailable word (not a plural) (7-168,9-62) (BULLETIN)G (9)
 - longest curtailable down to a single letter (7-168,9-62,11-152) ?
 - longest alternately beheadable and curtailable word (8-87) ASHAMED (7)
 - longest arbitrarily beheadable and curtailable (all subsequences words) (7-168,213,8-87,174) SHADES (6)
 - longest terminal ellision word (L118) D(EPILATION)S (11)
 - longest letter subtraction down to a single letter (L116,6-210) STRANGLING, STRANGING, STANGING, STAGING, SAGING, AGING, GING, GIN, IN, I (10)
 - longest charitable word (subtract letter anywhere) (4-171,5-53,109,8-109) PLEATS: LEATS,PEATS,PLATS,PLEAS,PLEAT (6)
 - shortest stingy word (no deletion possible) (5-54) PRY (3)

insertion (9-161)

longest hydration (double reheadment) (6-198) (D,R)EVOLUTIONIST (12/13)

longest hospitable word (insert letter anywhere) (4-171)

CARES: SCARES, CHARES, CADRES, CRIES, CARETS, CARESS (5)

shortest hostile word (no deletion possible) (5-54,5-109) SYZYGY (6)

deletion and insertion (9-161)

longest word both charitable and hospitable (5-54,8-109)

AMY: AM,AY,MY;GAMY,ARMY,AMOY,MYL (3)

shortest word both stingy and hostile (5-54) IMPETUOUS (9)

substitution (9-161)

longest onalosi (substitution in every position possible) (3-108,4-171,5-54)

PASTERS: MASTERS,POSTERS,PALTERS,PASSERS,PASTORS,PASTELS,PASTERNS (7)

shortest isolano (no substitution possible) (2-62,3-108,4-171,12-153,13-28)

ECRU (4)

longest word, all letters changed to other letters in minimum number of steps, yielding another word (?) THUMBING-THUMPING-TRUMPING-TRAMPING-TRAPPING-CRAPPING-CRAPPIES-CRAPPOES (8)

longest word girders (9-150) BADGER/SUNLIT, BUDLET/SANGIR (6)

movement (L110,9-161)

longest word allowing exchange of letters (metallage) (L99)

CONSERVATIONAL, CONVERSATIONAL (14)

longest head-to-tail shift (L93,3-24,7-176,238,8-47,112,233,11-216,12-153)

SPECULATION, PECULATIONS (11)

longest double head-to-tail shift (L92,8-112,11-216)

STABLE-TABLES-ABLEST (6)

longest complete cyclic transposal (L93) ATE-TEA-EAT (3)

transposition (L80,290,3-24,136,9-21,85,14-60,88,17-220,19-207,20-23)

longest reversal (L38,288,14-93,151,218) DESSERTS,STRESSED (8)

longest well-mixed transposal (11-173,14-93,22-3,100)

CINEMATOGRAPHER, MEGACHIROPTERAN (15)

longest transposition list (L86,292,9-216,10-21,12-153,172,214,218,4-137,149,153,218,15-22,106,16-93)

APERS, APRES, ASPER, PARES, PARSE, PEARS, PRASE, PRESA, RAPES, REAPS, SPARE, SPEAR (12)

ANGRIEST, ANGRITES, ASTRINGE, GAIRTENS, GANISTER, GANTRIES, GRANITES,

INGRATES, RANGIEST, TEARINGS (10) [SATING(ER), SIGNATE(R), TANGIER(S) (3)]

ANORETICS, ATROSCINE, CANOTIERS, CERTOSINA, CONARITES, CREATIONS, REACTIONS, TRICOSANE (8)

transposition with deletion, insertion, or substitution (L110,9-161)

longest well-mixed transdeletion (22-100)

SONOLUMINESCENCES, UNECONOMICALNESSES (17/18)

longest word transdeletable to a single letter (L119,4-73,6-210,12-141,5-153,21-75) CONCENTRATIONS-CONSTERNATION-CONTORNIATES-TRANSECTION-

STENTORIAN-TRANSIENT-ENTRAINS-NASTIER-ASTERN-TEARS-SATE-TEA-AT-A (14)

longest Baltimore transdeletion (word transdeletable on every letter)

(L122,1-213,22-58) IDOLATERS: DELATORS, SOTERIAL, DILATORS, ASTEROID, STOLIDER, SOREDIAL, DILATORS, DIASTOLE, TAILORED (9)

shortest word that cannot be transadded to another word (4-109) SYZYGY (6)

longest well-mixed transubstitution (22-100)
MICROELECTROPHORESIS, SPECTROCOLORIMETRIES (20)

words within words (L110,11-74)

longest non-trivial charade (4-116,8-41) IN-DISC-RIM-IN-A-TI-ON (16)

longest forward and reverse charade (L111,9-186)

MAT-HE-MA-TI-CAL, LAC-IT-AM-EH-TAM (12)

longest snowball or rhopalic (9-103,11-19,113) T-EM-PER-AMEN-TALLY (15)

longest reverse rhopalic (11-113,178) HETERO-TRANS-PLAN-TAT-IO-N (21)

highest ratio of subwords/length (logogram) (5-141,12-170)

FIRESTONE: RE, TO, ON, NO, IF, FIR, IRE, RES, TON, ONE, NOT, RIF, FIRE,
IRES, REST, TONE, FIRES, STONE, SERIF (20/9)

longest charlinkade (11-150) FORESTALL: FOREST, ALL; FORE, REST, TALL (9)

longest alternade (L170,9-104) TRIENNIALLY: TINILY, RENAL (11)

shortest three-letter-minimum word deletions (7-177,9-173,12-217,13-26)

PILGRIMAGE: RIM, GAG, PILE; GRIM, LAG, PIE (10)

Pronunciation

1. Syllables

longest for each number of syllables (3-77,148,173,7-22,12-91,151,153,215)

one SCRAUNCHED (10) [SQUIRRELLED (11)] two SCRATCHBRUSHED (14)

one, for each letter (15-164,211) ARCHED, BROUGHAMS, CRAUNCHED, DRAUGHTS,
EARTHED, FLINCHED, GROUCHED, HAUNCHED, ITCHED, JOUNCED, KNIGHTS, LAUNCHED,
MOOCHED, NAUGHTS, OINKED, PREACHED, QUICKTHORNS, REACHED, SCRAUNCHED,
THOUGHTS, UMPHS, VERSESMITHS, WREATHED, XANTHINES, YEARNED, ZOUAVES

two, for each letter (15-164,211) ARCHFIENDS, BREAKTHROUGHS, CLOTHESHORSE,
DRAUGHTBOARDS, EARTHTONGUES, FLAMEPROOFED, GREATHEART, HAIRSBREADTHS,
INTRALLED, JUNETEENTHS, KNICKKNACKS, LIGHTWEIGHTS, MOOSETONGUES,
NIGHTCLOTHES, OUTSTRETCHED, PLOUGHWRIGHTS, QUICKTHORNS, ROUGHSTRINGS,
SCRATCHBRUSHED, THROATSTRAPS, UNSTRETCHED, VERSESMITHS, WHERETHROUGH,
XANTHINES, YOURSELVES, ZEITGEISTS

shortest for each number of syllables (3-46,77,148,5-27,14-113,151,216,
15-18,84) two AA (2) three AREA (4) [O'IO (3)] four IEIE (4) five OXYOPIA (7)
six ONIOMANIA (9) [AMIOIDEI (8)] seven EPIDEMIOLOGY (12) [OMOHYOIDEI (10)]
eight EPIZOOTIOLOGY (13) nine EPIZOOTIOLOGICAL (16) ten EPIZOOTIOLOGICALLY
(18) twelve HUMUHUMUNUKUNUKUAPUAA (21)

2. Silent Letters

longest sequence (5-150) BROUGHAM (4, UGHA)

for each letter (B46,6-164,15-90,152,212,20-47) AISLE, COMB, INDICT,
HANDSOME, TWITCHED, HALFPENNY, GNOME, MYRRH, BUSINESS, MARIJUANA, KNOCK,
TALK, MNEMONIC, AUTUMN, PEOPLE, PSYCHE, CINQCENTS, FORECASTLE, VISCOUNT,
HAUTBOY, PLAQUE, FIVEPENCE, WRITE, TABLEUX, PRAYER, RENDEZVOUS

homophones, for each letter (10-26,83,152,11-89) O(A)R, LAM(B), S(C)ENT,
LE(D)GER, DO(E), WAF(F), REI(G)N, (H)OUR, WA(I)VE, HAJ(J)I, (K)NOT, HA(L)VE,
PRIM(M)ER, DAM(N), J(O)UST, (P)SLATER, ?, CAR(R)IES, (S)CENT, TARO(T),
B(U)Y, ?, T(W)O, ?, RE(Y), BIZ(Z)

Etymology

acronym words, for each letter (17-210,23-37) ASDIC, BOFF, CYBORG, DEW, ELHI, FIDO, GOX, HELA, IBUPROFEN, ?, ?, LASER, MASER, NITINOL, ?, PARSEC, QUANGO, RADAR, SCUBA, TEPA, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ZIP

Meaning

1. Plurals

shortest plural plus S is singular (B63,3-195,4-8,4-80,14-145,218) BOS (3) ending, for each letter (3-169,198) MEDIA, BOB, MOTOZINTLEC, SQUID, SWINE, RIFF, HOG, FISH, RADII, FUNJ, ELK, KWAKIUTL, CHERUBIM, WOMEN, BUFFALO, SHEEP, QARAQALPAQ, DEER, KICKSHAWS, TROUT, GHU, TIV, MOW, MAUX, GROSZY, ULUJUJZ

2. Synonyms

synonymous reversals (8-111) BIT=GIRL=TIB

1000 MOST OBSCURE WORDS

Having previously catalogued 1000 practical, important, and challenging words, Norman Schur has now turned his attention to obscure words. With his fourth book of the series (published in 1990 by Facts on File for \$29.95), he has likewise shifted his intent: instead of helping people expand their vocabulary and "improve their verbal equipment," he now seeks primarily to entertain.

The book contains about 500 half-page essays, each typically discussing two or three related words. (The remaining 500 are followed by simple "See ----" instructions; is it really necessary to give 14 litho- words leading to lithotrity?). He gives etymologies, apt quotations and anecdotes relating to the main entry in a delightfully discursive style; it's clear that he's the sort of person who delights in browsing the dictionary wherever it may lead.

*What words does he consider obscure? I was pleased to discover my old favorite, **Ucalegon**, a neighbor whose house is on fire, and **moazogotl**, a cloud formed under foehn conditions on the lee side of a mountain, which has long intrigued me as a headword in Webster's Third. And what about **prosopoeia**, a plausible quote put into the mouth of a real (often dead) person, and **zumbooruk**, a swivel cannon mounted on a camel's back? You get the idea.*