

## SHELLING PEAS ANALYSIS

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With a game like Shelling Peas where open sources are allowed, the score can usually be extended by scouring progressively more obscure references. For the purposes of this investigation I have limited myself to the following major works:

Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (DOST)  
 English Dialect Dictionary (EDD)  
 Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary (FWNSD)  
 Middle English Dictionary (MED)  
 Oxford English Dictionary (OED)  
 Scottish National Dictionary (SND)  
 Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd Edition (Web 2)

All words quoted are taken from the OED unless otherwise indicated. Words have been included according to the criteria outlined by Peter Newby in the preceding article. Here are the allowable words I have found for the Shelling Peas competition:

IT pit, tip; pipt (Web 2), tipp [tip]  
 AT apt, pat, tap; papt [pap, vb, FWNSD], tapp  
 TO opt, pot, top; popt (Web 2), topp [top]  
 AY pay, pya, yap; papy, payp (DOST), pyap (SND), yapp; pappy  
 ALE aepl [apple], alpe [alp], apel, aple [apple], eapl (ASD),  
 laep [lap, EDD], lape, leap, lepa (Web 2), pael (EDD), pale,  
 peal, pela, plea; appel [apple], apple, lappe [lap],  
 leapp [leap, EDD], palpe [palp, vb, quot], papel (MED),  
 pape (EDD), pepla [peplum, Web 2], plape (SND); papple  
 TOE opte [ope, vb, quot], peto (Web 2), poet, pote, tope;  
 epopt, popet, toppe [top]; poppet  
 DEAL daplē, laped, padel [paddle, EDD], padle, palde, paled,  
 pedal, plade (EDD), plead; appled, dappel, dapple, lapped,  
 palped, papled (EDD), plaped (SND); pappled (EDD), plapped  
 EDITOR diopter, dioptrē, peridot, proteid, protide (Web 2),  
 pteroid, torpide [torpid], tripode [tripod]; pteropid  
 STEREO petrose, poretes [porret, quot], ropetes (MED, quot);  
 pepperpots (OED, quot)

The STEREO base word provides a good opportunity to demonstrate the various types of words considered unacceptable:

ESTOPER (ESTOPPER) old French verbs mentioned in the  
 derivation of 'estop'  
 POPESTER coinage for the follower of a pope (compare 'popster')  
 POTERES unrecorded plural of a Middle English noun (bef. 1500)  
 RESTOPE to stope (dig for ore) again, logical but inferred only  
 STEROPE a capitalized word in FWNSD

TO SPEER a two-word term shown in various OED citations

The potential score using these particular nine base words presently stands at 129, but I suspect improvement is possible. One can achieve only 27 points with common everyday words, and 61 using current non-dialect ones, so a pass-mark of 20 seems reasonable. Don't be embarrassed by missing easy words; when I took the test I overlooked POET!

What are the most fruitful combinations possible? According to my research they are as follows:

- 2 YE pey, pye, yep, pyep [peep], pype, yepp [yap, EDD];  
peppy, pyppe [pip] (15 points)
- 3 ALE given above (35 points)
- 4 SALE alpes [alp], aples [apple], elaps, laeps [lap, EDD],  
lapes, lapse, leaps, lepas (Web 2), paels (EDD), pales,  
palse (MED), peals, pelas, plase, pleas, salep,  
salpe [salp], saple, sepal, slaep [sleep], slape,  
sleap [sleep], spael (EDD), spale, speal,  
splae [splay, EDD]; appels, apples, lappes [lap],  
palpes [palp], paples (EDD), plapes (SND),  
slappe [slap, quot], sapple (EDD); papples (45 points)

Perhaps someone would like to investigate the optimum 5-letter and 6-letter examples.

The most Ps that can be transadded to a legitimate base word is four, in the case of STEREO to PEPPERPOTS and TELESIA to PIPE-STAPPLE (Web 2). PIPPLE-PAPPLE (EDD, SND) has 6 Ps, but it is unfortunately hyphenated in all citations of use and therefore disqualified, which is a pity as it goes nicely with the base word LEALIE [leally].

As for the longest productive base word, can anyone better the 20-letter REMISREPRESENTATIONS to which a P can be affixed to make PREMISREPRESENTATIONS (both words in Web 2)?