

# CONSISTENT SESQUIPEDALIANISM UPDATE

JEFF GRANT  
Hastings, New Zealand

The quality of a long word having the same first and last letter is described by Dmitri Borgmann as 'consistent sesquipedalianism'. In Language on Vacation Dmitri displays a list of 26 words, each beginning and ending with the same letter, giving an example for every letter of the alphabet. I have substituted three of the words on this list with shorter ones suggested by Dmitri himself, because the original terms do not comply with my standards of acceptability which will be outlined shortly. The revised list:

ADENOCHONDROSARCOMA	NONUNIFORMITARIAN
BENABINADAB	OBBLIGATO
CHROMOCHALCOGRAPHIC	PARISHIONERSHIP
DISHEXECONTAHEDROID	QARAQALPAQ
ELECTROLUMINESCENCE	RHOMBORECTANGULAR
FRICTIONPROOF	STEREOPHOTOMICROGRAPHIES
GOVERNMENTALIZING	TRANSUBSTANTIATIONALIST
HERMAPHRODITISH	UMZIMKULU
ICHTHYOSAURI	VITUPERATIV
JURAJ	WHEELBARROW
KINNIKINNICK	XYLANTHRAX
LABIOGLOSSOPHARYNGEAL	YOUTHFULLITY
MACROZOOGONIDIUM	ZSCHACKWITZ

Of the 26 combinations, 23 appear in either the 2nd or 3rd Edition of Webster's unabridged dictionary. JURAJ is a Yugoslav given name found in Webster's Biographical Dictionary, UMZIMKULU is a town southwest of Durban in South Africa (Hammond's Ambassador World Atlas, 1954), and A Dictionary of Universal Biography, by Albert Hyamson, informs us that Johann ZSCHACKWITZ was an Austrian jurist and publicist, 1699-1744.

Before attempting to improve on this list I decided to lay out some ground rules. Capitalized words such as place-names and surnames are acceptable, but not hyphenated terms like the Russian locality ODINTSOVO-VAKHROMEVO, which is given in the International Register of Post Offices, 1977 Edition (IRPO). Also not allowed are two- and multi-word terms such as ASCOCOTYLE PITHECOPHAGECOLA, a nematode parasite in the monkey-eating eagle of the Philippines, and DIAMINOTRIHYDROXYDO-DECANOIC ACID, an amino acid obtained from casein, both of which are found in Dorland's Medical Dictionary, 23rd Edition, 1957 (DMD). Full names like that of novelist and poet VLADIMIR VLADIMIROVICH NABOKOV, who is listed in the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd Edition (RHD2), are not permitted, and neither are parts of a phrase, for example INCONVENIENTI, which appears only in the legal term

'ab inconvenienti' (Webster's Second Edition).

Purely foreign words are unacceptable, for instance JIRRIJBANJ-JAWANJJANGAJ, Australian Wubuy aboriginal for 'cockroach'. Also rejected are non-specified inflections such as CYSTOURETEROPYELO-NEPHRITIC, which although logically inferred from cystoureteropyelonephritis (DMD) is not actually shown in any reference to my knowledge. Finally, disallowed are nonce-words like QUOIQUOIQUOIQUOIQUOIQUOIQ in *Finnegans Wake*, by James Joyce, and multiple repetition like the  $\overline{42-Z}$  representation of snoring in a citation in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

After extensive research in a variety of references, some of which would not have been available to Dmitri before 1965, I have been able to find longer examples for all but two letters. In doing so the average word length has gone from  $14\frac{1}{2}$  letters to 19. Any further improvements would be most welcome.

Here is the new list of consistent sesquipedalians from A-Z, together with definitions and sources:

- ALLYLISOPROPYLACETYLUREA a sedative and hypnotic structurally related to the barbiturates, but milder in action (Butterworths Medical Dictionary, 2nd Edition, 1978)
- BAKHEPERUNEB the prenomen of ancient Egyptian king Tutankhamen (An Archaic Dictionary, W.R. Cooper, 1876)
- CHEMOPHARMACODYNAMIC denoting the relationship between chemical constitution and biologic or pharmacologic activity (DMD)
- DISDENOMINATIONALIZED removed from any particular religious denomination (OED)
- ETHYLENEDIAMINETETRAACETATE a salt of ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (Webster's 3rd)
- FOERDERGERSDORF a post office in the Dresden area of Germany (IRPO)
- GROSSHEINRICHSCHLAG a post office in the Niederösterreich area of Austria (IRPO)
- HEILIGKREUZSTEINACH a small community in the Karlsruhe region of Germany (Times Index-Gazetteer, 1965)
- IKKARAIBOLUVAMPATTI a post office in the Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu State, India (IRPO)
- JATPURWAKISHOREGANJ a post office in the Sitapur district, Uttar Pradesh State, India (IRPO)
- KANGERTIVARTIKAJIK a fjord in Greenland (Gazetteer of Greenland, 2nd Edition, December 1983, published by the Defense Mapping Agency, Washington D.C., U.S.A.)
- LABIOGLOSSOPHARYNGEAL pertaining to the lips, tongue and pharynx (DMD)
- MELATIRUVENGADANATHAPURAM a post office in the Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu State, India (IRPO)
- NONINDUSTRIALIZATION no introduction of industry into an area (RHD2)
- OBRATNICHESTVO the return of completely destitute peasants to their old homes, a term unlikely to become as widely-accepted as *glasnost* and *perestroika* (The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 1973)

- PLENIPOTENTIARYSHIP the office of a plenipotentiary, a special ambassador or envoy to some foreign court (OED)
- QIMAGAQRFIGSSUAQ an island off the coast of Greenland (Gazetteer of Greenland, 2nd Edition, December 1983)
- RADIOTELETYPEWRITER a teletypewriter equipped for transmitting or receiving messages by radio instead of wire (RHD2)
- SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS a nonsense-word used especially by children: fantastic, fabulous (OED)
- TRANSUBSTANTIATIONALIST one who holds the doctrine of transubstantiation, the conversion in the Eucharist of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, only the appearances of bread and wine remaining (OED)
- UTHIRANNADANKUDIYIRUPPU a post office in the Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu State, India (IRPO)
- VUISHESLAVTSEV the surname of Russian writer Boris Petrovich Vuisheslavtsev (British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Works)
- WUESTENJERICHOW a post office in the Magdeburg area of Germany (IRPO)
- XECANCHAVOX a small community in Guatemala (Official Standard Names Gazetteer)
- YELIZAVETINSKIY a town in the Krasnoyarsk Territory of Russia (Times Index-Gazetteer, 1965)
- ZSCHOEPPERITZ a post office in the Leipzig area of Germany (IRPO)

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*This is the name of a research project initiated in 1989 by the dictionaries division of Longman, a British publisher. They are interested in gathering citations of new words (or new uses of old words) from the public to aid in dictionary revision. Specifically, they request of the contributor (1) the word, (2) the citation (with date and source if seen in print, preferably accompanied by a clipping or photocopy), (3) comments on the citation (if spoken, including a typical example of its use, as well as an understanding of its meaning), and (4) the name and address of the contributor. Examples of words in which Longman is interested are **bimbo**, **televangelist**, **numerati** and **hypertext** (all from 1988). Send citations or inquiries to Longman Wordwatch, Longman Group UK Ltd, Longman House, Harlow, Essex CM20 2YD, England.*