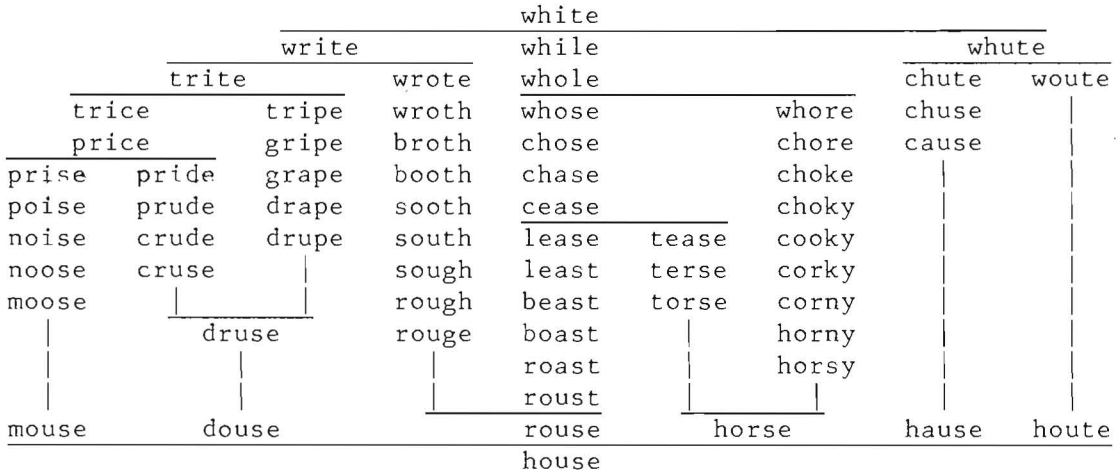


CLIMBING THE WHITE-HOUSE LADDER

LEONARD GORDON
Tucson, Arizona

In a recent radio contest, Will Shortz asked for a Carrollian ladder from WHITE to HOUSE using all common words, and not allowing four-letter words pluralized with S. The central ladder below is the solution he accepted. Let's see what one can do using less-common words from various dictionaries, or capitalized words.



Except for the two ladders on the right, all words in the above are in the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary. Most are also in Webster's 9th Collegiate (DRUSE is in lower case in OSPD, capitalized in the 9th). The ladder through PRISE is all within the 9th (PRISE is a chiefly British variation of PRIZE). The ladder through WROTE is all in the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary (1989), but WROTH is listed as archaic. My spell checker (WordPerfect) allows all words except WROTH, PRISE, CHOKY, COOKY and TORSE. The six-step ladder on the right is all in Webster's Second Unabridged; the four-step ladder (the minimum length possible) is in the Oxford English Dictionary.