

WILL'S PENNIES

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The March 1993 issue of Games magazine "Pencilwise Extra" presented the following puzzle by Will Shortz. Cover one letter with a penny, then take the other six letters on the two lines intersecting at that point and anagram them into a word. For example, cover 15 and anagram 3+7+11+13+14+16. Shortz informs me that this puzzle was invented by Jules Roth and examples published in Tip-Top puzzle magazines in the 1960s.

1	2	3	4	C	N	T	A
5	6	7	8	R	T	R	A
9	10	11	12	E	C	O	S
13	14	15	16	U	A	S	H

Solving this puzzle is too easy for **Word Ways** readers, but the plan provides a good challenge for the constructor. Specifying that all words must be common, Shortz managed to allow finds from covering 10 of the 16 pennies. The number of words found is not important. My computer found 33 of which Shortz accepted 23 as common. However, I was not able to use more than the same 10 pennies.

Let's see what we can make out of this concept. Here are a few constructions. Common is a subjective term so let's avoid the issue by allowing any lower-case word. I have used 20,800 6-letter words from the various Merriam-Webster dictionaries plus Chambers. The first five of the following allow finds from 15 of the 16 pennies (one penny shortz). All use 14 different letters. The sixth allows mostly common words.

H T N O	C H I N	E S C O	N S C E	S C U D	A U I T
P O R E	S D U R	L I U A	R L G O	N M I H	R N L O
U A I S	E E T O	O R M T	A U I T	R P A O	S Y C E
C D L E	O M A L	E P Y N	O D H E	O E T E	O D M E

puncto	inshoe	locoes	coarse	uncord	suitor
dahoon	minced	copier	uncled	spumed	dainty
liroth	chaunt	mousey	neighs	dicast	talcum
sethen	orchil	stance	centos	chouse	.....
rouche	doucer	.....	lagoon	morish	saloon
depart	rheums	pulsar	gourds	phenic	dourly
pinole	triads	amylic	orchil	hutman	micron
porose	unsold	ultion	reglet	monied	relent
phasic	octose	remelt	turion	napoos	.....
studio	method	impost	distal	amoroe	dunces
lunars	.....	outcry	caught	roupit	limeys

.....	relent	maroon	.....	harped	coyest
upheld	camels	openly	harden	resent	dreams
locate	haloed	resiny	housel	coempt	.....
cinder	ultimo	cupmen	geodic	.....	docile
closed	romano	teapoy	hooted	hooted	mooted

There is no reason why someone cannot devise a scheme allowing finds from all 16 pennies or using 15 different letters, but it may be impossible to do both. Let's see what **Word Ways** experts can do.

For an easier challenge, try this pattern. Both of these examples use two e's in order to allow mostly common words. It is not very difficult to work in 12 different letters. Five or seven point stars also allow 6-letter words. With this six point star, we can require that the six outer points also anagram to a word or two.

