

FIVE-LETTER OVERLAP WORD CHAINS

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During the past two years, **Word Ways** has presented several of my articles on directed word chains. These are chains of overlapping words, directed in that they are read in one direction only. I have studied two types of directed chains: (1) ana-gram-mar chains in which every letter of every word is used in one other word, and (2) those with a greater degree of overlap in which one or two letters of each word are used in more than one other word. The August 1992 Kickshaws presented examples of a third type, in which some letters are used less than twice. The November 1992 Colloquy presented a "wild" type, with long overlaps of irregular length. I have not studied either of the latter.

This article describes chaining 8-, 9-, and 10-letter words together. Every word overlaps the previous by 5 letters. 10-letter words were not allowed to join each other so there are no ana-gram-mar links. My database consists of 36,000 8-letter words, 29,000 9-letter words, and 20,000 10-letter words, all lower case. The high ratio of 8-letter to 10-letter words reflects initial use of the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary. About 2,500 of these 85,000 words can be joined together by 5-letter directed links. The following table contains ones which are fairly well connected to each other, or to at least one other word not in the table. Capitalized words form the core.

adaptable	colonising	KINGSIDES	roomstead	SIDESTEPS	standpipes
adoptable	crossings	LANDSIDES	ROOTSTOCK	singsongs	standstill
aniseeds	crossword	landslips	saucemen	slapsauce	starstone
anticlines	DIESTOCK	landstorm	screwballs	slapstick	statehouse
backshift	DOWNSHIFT	letterings	screwheads	slapsticks	staterooms
backsides	dressings	linesides	screwstock	slavelands	steadiest
backslaps	eyestrings	LIONSHIPS	screwworms	slaveowner	STEPSTONE
backspace	grassings	locksteps	semantic	slipslops	stickballs
backspeer	HEADSHIPS	logicising	shadetails	slopsauce	stoclwater
backstall	headspace	mateships	SHAKEDOWNS	soapstone	stilette
ballstock	HEADSTALL	otherwhere	shellbacks	sondelis	stonebirds
birdseeds	headstamp	pipestone	shellducks	songstress	STONEBROOD
bookstall	headstand	plankings	SHIFTABLE	spacemen	stonecress
bookstore	headstick	polestars	SHIPSIDES	spaceships	stonehands
BROODIEST	HEADSTOCK	preadapt	shootable	spacewoman	STONEHEADS
cheroots	herdswoman	preadopt	shooter	speerings	STONERROOTS
chinaroots	hornstone	ranchero	shotshell	stackyards	stoneseeds
chinawoman	houseman	ranchwoman	SIDESHAKE	STALLIONS	stonesmith
cockshoot	KINGSHIPS	ringsides	sideslips	stampedes	storehouse

storerooms	stormcocks	TABLELANDS	turnstile	urbanise	waterings
storeships	suitable	tailstock	tweediest	verseman	womanise
stormbirds	swordtails	tickseeds	urbanest	wardships	wormseeds

Here are some chains. Short fragments show how beginner or ender words join the central body. Long chains show typical use of the highly connected words. As before, the table was generated by computer, and chains were developed by hand.

conjugally	heathendom	anoestri	executer		
gallycrows	endomorph	estridge	cuterebra		
	crowsteps	morphemic	ridgepoles	rebranch	
	stepstone	hemicentra	polestar	ranchwoman	
handshake	downswing		starstone	womanise	
shakedown	swingbacks		birdseeds	aniseeds	
	downstate	backsword	seedstalk		
	statehouse	swordtails	stalkiest		
hereunder	houseman	tailstock	kiesters		
undercooks	semantic	stockyards			
	cookstove	anticlines	yardstick		
	stovepipes	linesides	stickwater		
downshift	pipestone	sidesteps	waterings		
shiftable	stonebirds	stepstone	ringsides		
	tablelands	birdstone	stonewoods		
	landscape	stonegalls	woodsmoke		
hatcheck	scapegoats	gallstone	smokejacks		
checkrooms	goatstone	stoneheads	jackscREW		
	roomstead	stonebrood	headstock	screwworms	
	steadiest	broodiest	stockings	wormseeds	
overcloud	diestrous	diestock	kingships		
cloudburst	trousers	stockturns			
	burstone	turnscrew			
	stonecress	screwballs			
	cressaunt	standpipes	ballstock		
	sauntering	pipestems			
	eringoes	stemsons			