

COLOR TRANSPOSALS

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In the November 1988 *Kickshaws*, Benjamin Zimmer presented the following list of transposals (marked with an asterisk) and transadditions of the names of the seven colors of the spectrum:

VIOLET olivet*
 INDIGO voiding, windigo
 BLUE bule*, lube*
 GREEN gener*, genre*, neger*, negre*
 YELLOW mellowy
 ORANGE onager*
 RED erd*

It seemed a shame that no transposals were presented for indigo and yellow. That's a situation that can be remedied by noting the following transposals.

A legitimate transposal of INDIGO is DIGOIN. My 1969 copy of *Webster's Geographical Dictionary* lists the French placename DIGOIN, a commune in the west of the Saone-et-Loire department, in eastern central France, on the river Loire, and manufacturing pottery and porcelain. No doubt later editions also show this placename. *The Times Index Gazetteer* also lists DIGOIN, giving its latitude and longitude as 46 degrees 29 minutes north, 3 degrees 54 minutes east.

Two legitimate transposals of YELLOW have come to light, LOWELY and WOLLEY. LOWELY occurs in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, which shows it as a 16th century variant spelling of the adjective LOWLY, as well as a 14-16th century variant spelling of the adverb LOWLY. WOLLEY is listed in *The English Dialect Dictionary*, where it is shown as a variant of the adjective WALLOW, meaning tasteless, insipid, weak, watery. WOLLEY is also a British surname. It appears in *A Dictionary of British Surnames* (by P H Reaney, 1966), where it is shown as being related to Woolley and Wooley, and it appears several times in *A Dictionary of Universal Biography* (by Albert Hyamson, 1966), where Edward, John and Richard Wolley are noted. And just to prove that the surname is still in current use, there are at least half a dozen entries for WOLLEY in the current London telephone directory. Of course, the other point worthy of note is that WOLLEY is not just a transposal of YELLOW but a reversal!

Plugging the gaps in the original seven-color list was satisfying, but I felt there was room here for further research. It occurred to me that it would be interesting to seek out the longest color

name, beginning with each letter of the alphabet in turn, for which a valid transposal could be found. How long could color names become, how obscure would the colors be? As well as noting the color names and their transposals, I have indicated dictionary sources and given an idea of the color concerned.

	Color name	Dict	Transposal	Dict	Color definition
A	aphrodite	W3	atrophied	W3	= a light bluish green ...
B	Bermuda	W3	rumbaed	RHD	= geranium pink = a deep pink ...
C	carminette	W3	remittance	W3	= carmetta = vermilion ...
D	Durango	W3	aground	W3	= cartouche = a moderate brown ...
E	eglantine	FW *	inelegant	W3	= pink
F	feulamort	W2	formulate	W3	= feuille-morte = a color, red-yellow in hue ...
G	grenadine	W3	engrained	W3	= a moderate reddish orange ...
H	harvest	W3	thraves	W3	= a brownish orange ...
I	Isabella	W3	sailable	W2	= a moderate yellowish brown ...
J	jasper	W3	japers	W3	= a blackish green ... [Not to be confused with jasper green, jasper pink or jasper red.]
K	Kendal	W2	ankled	W3	= the color of Kendal, or Kendal green, a cloth colored green ...
L	limestone	W3	milestone	W3	= hair brown = a dark gray ...
M	mandeline	W2	Mendelian	W3	= an obsolete variant of "mandarin" = mandarin red (= a color, reddish red-yellow in hue ...) & mandarin orange (= a color, red-yellow in hue ...)
N	neutria	W2	urinate	W3	= an obsolete variant of "nutria" = a color, red-yellow in hue ...
O	Orleans	W2	loaners	W3	= annatto = the color salmon ...
P	Palestine	FW *	penalties	W3	= dull pink
Q	quite	W2	quiet	W3	= an obsolete variant of "white" = the neutral or achromatic color of highest brilliance
R	rosetan	W3	treason	W3	= pearl blush = a brownish pink ...

S	sage green	W3	re-engages	W2	= a variable color averaging grayish yellow green ...
T	Tuscan red	W3	underacts	W3	= a moderate reddish brown ...
U	umber	W3	brume	W3	= raw umber = a moderate to dark yellowish brown ...
V	verditer	W3	redivert	W2	= blue verditer (= azurite blue = a moderate blue ...) & green verditer (= malachite green = a moderate yellowish brown ...)
W	white	W3	withe	W3	= the neutral or achromatic color of highest brilliance
X	xeres	W2	sexer	W3	= sherry = sherry brown = a color, red-yellow in hue ...
Y	Ysabel	W2	belays	W3	= a variant of "Isabel" = Isabella = a brown, yellowish red-yellow in hue ...
Z	zenith	W3	Zhiten	TIG	= a light purplish blue ...

W2 = Webster's New International (Second Edition);

W3 = Webster's Third New International;

FW = Funk & Wagnall's New Standard [* Note that the various colors from Funk & Wagnall's are taken from an extensive list of colors at the entry SPECTRUM. Many of these are not defined as colors at the corresponding main entries.]

TIG = Times Index Gazetteer of the World.

What longer color names are possible? I note that UMBER could be replaced by UNDERTONE (transposed to UNDERNOTE), and although this is defined as "a subdued color", it is not a specific color as such. No doubt there will be improvements where it is necessary to strain the definition of color.

In the August 1986 issue of The Enigma, the monthly magazine of the National Puzzlers' League, Murray Pearce anagrammed NATIONAL SCHOOL-BUS CHROME to the apposite phrase AH, NO SUBTLE H.S. CAMION COLOR. Can anyone do the same for U.S. ARMY ULTRAMARINE BLUE, also listed in Webster's Third as a color name?

Any other bright ideas for playing around with color names?