On October 30, 1994, puzzlemaster Will Shortz of the Weekend Edition on National Public Radio challenged his listeners to construct chain-link sentences, ones in which the last two letters of each word are repeated as the first two letters of the succeeding word. He gave his audience extra time, allowing them two weeks in which to send in answers before announcing the winner on November 13. The winner, followed by the four runners-up, was:

Can an anteater erase several almost stonelike Kenyan anthills? (Jeff Monasch)
Broadcast station once certified educates estimable legions (Brett Coty)
Head administrator organized education on online networks (Herb Harris)
Those sensitive Verdi divas assail illiterate tenors (Kathleen Mears)
Rush showed editorial alarmism, smeared educational alliance ceaselessly (Dale E. Yeo)

Certain letter-pairs are frequently encountered as endings but offer limited possibilities for starts; the entries contained more than their share of LLAMAS, of ICICLES and ICHTHYOLOGISTS, or of EDIBLE LEGUMES. A HEAD ADMINISTRATOR organized (or orchestrated) EDUCATION. Worthies such as CLAUDE DEBUSSY, GEORGE GERSHWIN or SETH THOMAS took their bows. On the other hand, common words like AND, HAD or YOU were nonexistent, as were most words ending -ING (those that did so inevitably led to Asian-Americans surnamed NG).

Most sentences started strong but soon degenerated into random walks of meaning, much like palindromes. Consider the various solutions found for the promising start TWO WOMEN:

Two women enter erotic icehouse, seduce celibate tenor (John Ebert)
Two women engineer erratic icicle levitation (Alice Hartsuyker)
Two women enticed Edwin into township Ipswich church (Mary Coats)
Two women engineer erotic icon on one newel (Herb Hayes)
Two women entertain international allies (Jennie Mitnick)
Two women enjoy oysters (Dorthy & Pridie Priail)
Two women enjoyed edible legumes, essential although ghastly (Linda Wal- lauer)

Three readers worked current events into their chains:

Ito to tolerate television onlookers (Peter O. Gaylord)
Quayle learned 'edible' lesson once certain inaudible letter eradicated (Toby Gotfried)
Clinton, once certain in invincible lead, admonishes essential allies 'estop opponents!' (Paul Blue)

A few listeners raised the ante, looking for three-letter overlaps:

The thespians answered "Redeliver verbal ballads" (Richard D. Cannon) Each achievement entangles lesser service (Penny S. Larson) Guerrilla llamas massacre crepuscular larva (Phil Bornemeyer) The theatrical calendar dared Redford ordinarily (Louise Oliver)

One chain-link sentence was constructed in Spanish. Another listener noted that the Latin sentence TE TERO, ROMA, MANU NUDA; DATE TELA, LATE TE (I am pulverizing you, Rome, with my bare hands; give up [your] weapons, conceal yourself), supposedly uttered by Alaric the Visigoth in 410, used every letter in an overlap. A few were logological:

Scrabble least stymies esteemed educators (Stacia Wyman) Tina's Aswan anagram amared Eddie (Mary Rose) Can an anagram amuse senile lexicographers? (Veena B. Mendiratta) Incisive verbiage generates estimable lexicons (Rona Schneider)

Finally, a collection of chain-link sentences notable for their imagery:

Elsa sat at attention on onyx (Tom Harris) Pine needles escape pedestrian annihilation once cedar arrives (Tom Harris) Lone neurotic iceman annoyed Edith, then enticed Edna naughtyly (Keith Bradway) Wine never erases essential aloneness (Carol Nolan) Rye yeast starts tsetse sex experiment (Robert Eisenberg) Our urine never erodes Eskimo morals (Robert Galeja) Grandma makes essential aluminum umbrella labels (Jerry Abrams) Keynesian anarchist stops psalmist stories (David Graves, Tom Singer) Doctor Orlando does estrogen enhancements (Laura Pena)

We welcome Melvin into toilet etiquette (Dean Dalrymple) Winter erases estimable leafage generally (Debbie Monroe) Cuzco conquistador organizes essential alpaca caravan (Thomas Maguire) The hearse sealed Edwin inside; death thus ushered Edwin into tomorrow (Linda Johnson) First Stanley eyed Edith: then enraptured Edwin intervened (Fred Bortz) Frankenstein intimidated Edith through ghoulish shenanigans (Lillian Range) Active vermin inhabit Italian antiques establishment (Marie Vodicka) Horse sense seemed edifyingly lyrical, almost starlike (Leigh Smith) Madonna - naked! - edifies Estonia's asexual aldermen (Robert Eisenberg) Casual (albeit itchy) hyena nabbed edible lemur (Mitch Mirsky) Penelope's escargot otherwise seemed edible (Clay Marklin)

Marvelous "DEAFNESS to R" by =, and verify that one can step into an intermediate word. Part of a group of -ing, there. Partially depicted; its smaller nets are in my wordfinders.

There areни crampits-crampl slamming-slabbing crampitscramp flapping-flap flapping-cramp plumping-plump plumping-plump plumpingcramp crampoes-crampl crampoes-crampl crampoes-crampl crampoes-crampl crampoes-crampl crampoes-crampl crampoes-crampl

The largest is DEAFNESS to R, by =, and verify that one can step into an intermediate word. Part of a group of -ing, there. Partially depicted; its smaller nets are in my wordfinders.

8-LETTE

LEONARD GORDO
Tucson, Ariza

My first co
In "Word Nets and 6­
Aug 1990 I br
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Leonard 8-lette

My first computational letter and 6-Aug 1990 I broke the limit of my computer's size. I upgraded the size of my wordfinders to 9-letter words in which all the ladder was known. Of my 47,655 words, no other word is made only of one of the letters in my wordfinders.

The largest word is DEAFNESS to R, by =, and verify that one can step into an intermediate word. Part of a group of -ing, there. Partially depicted; its smaller nets are in my wordfinders.

There are numerous words like:

- crampits-crampl
- slabbery-slab
- crampl
- crampit
- slabbing-slab
- flapping-flap
- flapping-cramp
- plumping-plump
- plumping-cramp
- crampoes-crampl
- crampoes-crampl
- crampoes-crampl
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