

# KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor. All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of the issue. Guest editors will appear occasionally.

## Palindrome Test

In the November 1995 Kickshaws, I picked 26 words at random and anagrammed them into other words. In this Kickshaw, I tried to recycle the same words into palindromic lines, but only half of them worked. Does this mean that anagrams are twice as easy to make? Or that palindromes are twice as difficult?

As might be expected, many of these palindromes have a surrealistic glow emanating from them:

Ham, sir? A bra be BARBARISM (ah!)  
 Top slot, I pace CAPITOL spot  
 DEVASTATION? No, I tat, saved  
 No! It, a cud: EDUCATION  
 Do cast, FISHERMAN. A Mr. (eh?) sifts a cod  
 HABITUAL ape? Palau ti? Bah!  
 O, no, Mike! Not one KIMONO  
 MALCONTENT, net no clam  
 Ed UNDERFOOT? Oof! Red nude  
 Not love lit a love: VOLATILE volt on  
 WEDDING, I sign "I'd dew"  
 YARDBIRD era bared rib dray  
 ZODIAC, aid Oz!

## Acrostic Equations

An acrostic is a set of words whose initial letters also spell a word. The initial letters of the math problem TWENTY + EIGHTY - NINETY spell out the answer to the problem, TEN. Not counting trivial variations like TWENTY-FOUR + EIGHTY-ONE - NINETY-FIVE, do others exist?

## Mistakes in Logic

How many mistakes can you find in the sentence THEIR ARE FIVE MISTAKS IN THIS SENTANCE, appearing in Richard Lederer's *The Play of Words*? The answer is four--three misspellings (THEIR, MISTAKS and SENTENCE) and the number FIVE since there aren't five mistakes. But

what happens if you correct it by replacing FIVE with FOUR in the Lederer sentence? Now how many mistakes are there?

### Nude Love Story

In the chain below, each word letter-shifts the letter in the word above it (O in STORY follows L in LOVE three places in the alphabet, R in STORY follows O in LOVE the same three places, etc.). The twelfth word, STORMY, similarly links to the first word, NUDE, resulting in an unbroken circle. It's a review of a 1990s X-rated sequel to the 1960s movie Love Story:

N U D E  
L O V E  
S T O R Y  
S E X Y  
B O A T  
C O R E  
H A R D  
W O R K  
V I E W  
O N L Y  
W I F E  
S T O R M Y  
N U D E

### Autological or Heterological

Some words describe themselves. PRINTED is printed, ADJECTIVAL is an adjective, VISIBLE is visible.

Some words don't. They refer to something else. WRITTEN, ADVERBIAL, INVISIBLE, TASTY, LOYAL and BLUE don't describe themselves.

Such a division of words creates intricate problems in language and logic. The biggest problem arises from Grelling's paradox, which assumes that an adjective is either autological or heterological. AUTOLOGICAL describes itself, and thus it's autological. But HETEROLOGICAL?

If HETEROLOGICAL describes itself, then it's autological. But if it's autological, it isn't heterological. Then it doesn't describe itself. That makes it heterological. But...

Originally the terms were restricted to adjectives, but, as Dmitri Borgmann pointed out in *Beyond Language*, there's no reason to limit it to one linguistic category. NOUN is a noun. LETTERS are letters. SWIFTLY can be read swiftly.

As you might guess, some words challenge the logic of such categorization...

LONG, a short word, is heterological. But LONGER is longer than long, and LONGEST is the longest of the three. Those two are autological.

SHORT works the opposite way. It's a short autological word. But SHORTER, which is longer than SHORT, is heterological. The same goes for SHORTEST, which is the longest.

MISREAD is heterological unless you misread it.

UNREAD was autological a moment ago.

CLEAN is autological until you smudge something on it.

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, LAST, and FIFTH are almost all autological. LAST is heterological since it doesn't come last. This could be remedied by switching it with FIFTH, but that would make FIFTH fourth and thus heterological.

ATOM isn't an atom; it's many atoms. It's also heterological. Pluralized, ATOMS is autological.

UNFINISHED was autological till I finished typing it. If I delete a letter it will be autological again.

JUMBLED is heterological unless it's spelled LMUBDEJ or BJDMLEU or any other way that uses the same letters.

INCORRECT is heterological. But if you put your thumb over the IN, then what you see is autological.

ERASED isn't autological until you erase it, and then it isn't anything. The same goes for BLANK, GONE, INVISIBLE and a few more missing words.

LEFT and RIGHT are autological. RIGHT and LEFT, however, are heterological.

UPSIDE-DOWN is heterological. If you turn the magazine upside-down, the word becomes autological, but only when it's completely upside-down.

ONE is autological as a word and heterological as a group of letters. FOUR works the opposite way.

END is heterological at the beginning of a sentence but autological when it appears at the END.

Technically speaking, every word is autological because it's made of letters of the alphabet. Each letter refers to itself. Look at any word--DOG, for instance. D refers to D, O to O, and G to G. Not one heterological letter in the bunch!

## Tales of the Phonetic Word Wheel

In 1948 the Milton Bradley Company published the Phonetic Word Wheel, designed to aid in reading and spelling. It consisted of a set of concentric wheels of different sizes, each with letters around the edge. Most of the "words" thus formed can't be found in any dictionary, but they do provide inspiration for writing stories in nonsense dialect:

### BLOOKED

I'm a squickle who wopes at the strocket factory. Me flenders have grease all over the kedges, but I don't give a swaught.

Me boss comes up behind me and says "Mark the nold in your greel!"

"Me greel's noldless, sir," says I, and I goes back to swabbing the grease off me flenders.

He leans over me and says "Your kedges might be noldless, but your greel's not!"

And then he zumps away.

Now one afternoon I'm working me yinners to the bone, never eating lunch, never. Me greel's getting full of jides, and a loud hum fills the shrangle.

Just then a sout comes up to me and says "Guess who blooked yesterday?"

He yights back and forth with his thill all in an uproar about someone blocking, and me, I'm in no mood to listen. But when he starts thopping over the hum, I decides I'll be a wrickle in his marrow basket.

"I blooked!" says I. "Yesterday, today, and tomorrow!"

"No, be serious," says he.

So I bamps him on the goom, and he zumps away.

Next thing up, a big burly swice struns me from behind in a friendly sort of way and says "Guess who blooked yesterday?"

He wrables against the flenders, tapping his yedges kind of nervous-like, and flexes his whink, and me, I'm still in no mood, so I decides to be a wrickle in his marrow basket, too.

"I blooked!" says I again. "Yesterday, today, and tomorrow!"

And he says, "No, be serious."

So I bamps him on the goom, extra hard this time, and he zumps away.

Next thing up, a little tiny fute jances his arm at me and runs over and says "Guess who blooked yesterday?"

I was getting a mite manced by now. I mean, me and the fute never hangled together, never towed a scalk, never even traded flenders, so I puts down me baw and looks him straight up and down, and again he says "Guess who blooked?"

And still I says, only louder, says I "I blooked! I blooked yesterday, today, and tomorrow!"

"No," says he in a soft, trin voice. "Please be serious."

And I goes to bamp him on the goom, but I sees his goom is missing!

"You," says I in a deep sad voice.

"Yes," says he with a painful look in his yange. "I--"

"--blooked," says I with a swern in me throat.

Then he nods and turns and slowly zumps away.

Next thing up, me boss pokes me on the flenders and says "Mark the nold in your greel!"

And I wants to bamp him on the goom, but I thinks of the poor fute, and I don't.

## Spy Songs

Aldridge Ames was perhaps America's most talkative spy. After being convicted for delivering classified information to Russia, ex-CIA agent Ames gave an in-prison interview on CNN's "Larry King Live". Halfway through the program, a commercial for "The Best of Englebert

"Humperdinck" song collection came on. Many of the song titles and lines were incredibly appropriate comments on the Ames interview:

Please Release Me, Let Me Go  
 You're Just Too Good to be True, Can't Take My Eyes off of You  
 The Shadow of Your Smile  
 There Goes My Reason for Living  
 Two Different Worlds, We Live in Two Different Worlds  
 There's a Kind of a Hush All Over the World Tonight

#### KGB Watchers

Kremlin-watcher Peter Newby alleges that the KGB produces its code-names for agents and "assets" (traitors) from some of the letters of their surnames. "Whilst this has administrative advantages, it often results in 'names' bearing little or no relationship to either the character or the sex of the person in question. Sometimes more than one person has the same code-name though doubtless they distinguish between (say) London FRED and Washington FRED by some bureaucratic device. By this method Judas Iscariot could be either OSCAR or RAT, even though RAT might be applied equally to Fidel Castro (personally, I prefer TSAR)."

It might be too obvious to give Willard Espy the code-name SPY. Can you identify the Word Ways moles RICO, WEB, LEE, NAG, IAN, ARI, ERIC, DORIC, REG, ROME and GOD?

#### Ragworms

Peter Newby reports that Britain's Daily Mail is currently running a series of mystery sightings and unexplained happenings, including a sea monster first reported in 1876. A 1985 sighting by one Shelia Bird, "[a] former teacher [who] is a professional observer of Cornish life, with a punctilious eye for detail" stated "It's Morgawr! I explained about the sea monster Morgawr (an anagram of Ragworm) and how he had been seen by fishermen." It would be fascinating to have a similar Bird's-eye view of other mythical beasts such as the FIG BOOT (in the U.S.A.) or YE IT (in the Himalayas) and, of course, the ragworm's sister in Loch Ness, SEINES (large nets)!

#### Anglo-Americanese

Peter Newby found a sentence in a book about the activities of the Allied air warriors which began "The two aircraft in the lead dove..." He commented "Until I'd adjusted my brain to your version of our mutual tongue, [it] had me wondering just what kind of huge metallic bird was employed as a heavier-than-aircraft carrier in those dramatic days. Eventually I realized it was a pigeon-towed Red hedgehog glider. (It is retained in the New Bybwen dialect for the hedgehog, hence RED IL GLIDER.)

"When Ben Pewtery read the same book, his difficulties came from the phrase '...when a bootheel poked a hole in the bottom of the boat'. He soon realized how traumatic it must have been for the U.S.A.A.F. airmen when the dreaded Booth eel started eating their rescue vessel.

"Finally the book (Stalag Luft III) was passed to Walter Fretlaw who noticed a commercial drow, Klim, a powdered milk which arrived in Red Cross parcels for the POWs. As it was new to him he wondered where it originated and if it still exists."

#### A Question of Precedence

Thanks to his devotion to the OED, Ben Pewtery has solved one of the great mysteries: Which came first, the CHICKEN or the EGG? Apparently the CHICKEN first surfaced in literature circa 950 A.D., fifty years before the EGG appeared in print. True, their spelling forms differed greatly from those of today but the ancestral EGG, he claims, came from a fifty-year-old CHICKEN.

#### Multiple Apostrophes

Frederick Crane writes "The Word Ways Index lists only one entry under 'multiple apostrophes'--'fo'c's'le...Someone should do a treatise on the more general subject. Can anyone beat to'ga'n's'l (or its possessive to'ga'n's'l's)? It's not in the dictionary, but it must be a legitimate word, as I found it in a Louis L'Amour novel, and he was a sailor for a time himself. It's easy to understand why these hyperapostrophic words were so popular among seafarers--by the time the bo's'n finished calling out 'Furl the topgallantsail!' the ship would have been blown hopelessly ailt, with the loss of all aboard."

#### Polygonal Balance

Susan Thorpe notes that a polygon is defined as "a closed plane figure bounded by three or more straight sides..." This is reinforced by assigning A=1, B=2, etc., and totalling to discover that EACH POLYGON HAS (149) A THREE-SIDES MIN. (149). The following plane figures are particular kinds of polygons:

THE TRIGONS (135)...THREE-SIDED KIND (135)  
 A TETRAGON (101)...FOUR-SIDED (101)  
 ONE PENTAGON (126)...HAS FIVE SIDES (126)  
 THE HEXAGONS (126)...SIX-SIDERS (126)  
 ALL HEPTAGONS (130)...ARE SEVEN-SIDED (130)  
 AN OCTAGON (90)...EIGHT-SIDED (90)  
 THE NONAGONS (132)...NINE-SIDED ONES (132)  
 THOSE DECAGONS (135)...TEN SIDES/EDGES (135)  
 HENDECAGON IS (104)...ELEVEN-SIDED (104)  
 EVERY DODECAGON (143)...TWELVE SIDES (143)

# ALPHABET MUSIC

A Code for Letters and Numbers



A B C D E F G H I



J K L M N O P Q R S



T U V W X Y Z .;:- !?...



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Example:



Y o u a n d I s i n g .

## Martha D. Washington Crossed It, Too

In *Making the Alphabet Dance*, David Shulman anagrammed "Washington Crossing the Delaware" in a sonnet. Reading this stirring account, Jan Anderson of New York City imagines (to a swing beat) what would have happened had Martha been there to set the record straight:

... So read "Woman" into that gross ditch,  
Troth'd to man so grand-i-ose, a switch  
Went too drastic, o damn right! A hoss  
What's not rid go and tote him across!

It's so! I rowed. Cord-hang that man sot!  
Him so scar't o' water didn't, no. Has got  
No wash rag -- o, don't it itch smart? Does  
That drat cod not swim, o garish nose?!

Credit as oath: Mr. Washington stood  
Toastin' Mrs. (and others). I watch good.  
Tied wig to man, charts t' hoss on road...  
Coat hid sot's snor'ng. I, Martha, rowed.

## The Ancient Scribe

Jan Anderson also supplied the following transaddition for the delectation of Word Ways readers.

A scribe of Egypt penned this ancient, precious scroll.  
Ra, his Dedication for the tale he told:  
"Ark awaits! The Boatsmen hold. Osiris, Isis,  
Hark! as clouds of gods proclaim: The Pharaoh rises!"  
Shark, imported skins, his paper. Now they're tattered.  
Rakish hieroglyphics over all he scattered.  
Shakier his hand went as he covered meters.  
Hawkrise saw him bent at work, ignoring greeters.  
A-whiskery, the Goddess Bast approving purred,  
"Bar-whiskey for him!"

That's the last coherent word.

## Linett's Ist-List

Charles Linett and Karen Royden write "Someone who sells herbs calls himself an herbalist. A palm reader is sometimes called a palmist. It makes you wonder whether someone whose friends are all named Arthur would refer to himself as an artist. Here are some peculiar interpretations for standard old words that you might find fun."

CAPITALIST one whose typewriter shift-lock key is stuck  
MOIST the opposite of those who are fond of doing with less  
ASSIST fan of the callipygian  
ORGANIST female counterpart of the assist



SUBSIST one fond of underwater vehicles or large sandwiches  
 COLONIST one with an affinity toward the proctological  
 CELLIST one who specializes in biology  
 CONSIST one fond of former prisoners  
 CUBIST one who likes baby bears  
 DENTIST one who works in an auto body shop  
 FLORIST a carpet installer  
 FOIST one who believes in "know thine enemy"  
 HEIST one who likes males  
 RIGORIST a mortician  
 TUBIST one who eschews showers  
 COLUMNIST one fond of the Parthenon  
 EXIST one who used to be fond of something

### Double Doubles Revisited

The last Kickshaws featured Double Doubles, a gimmick from a NY Times crossword puzzle illustrated by SAL SALUTES UTES or MAN MAN-DATES DATES. Howard Richler has come up with a bunch more of these:

Al allots lots	Ed, edit it
Al allows lows	Exec execrating rating
Bar bargains gains	Imp impales ales
Celeb celebrates rates	Imp implies lies
Con confronts fronts	Man manages ages
Con contests tests	Plum plummets Mets
Con conforms forms	Pro procures cures
Con confuses fuses	Pro programs grams
Con constrains strains	Pro propounds pounds
Con contemplates templates	Pro protests tests
Con converses verses	Ref refutes Utes
Cons constrain train	Reg regales ales
Cur curtails tails	War warrants rants

### One-Word Poetry

In the 1960s poet Aram Saroyan downsized his poetry from a few lines to one line to one word. His minimal poetry reached a peak, and a peek, with his one-word poem "lighght", an eye-catching variation on its dictionary counterpart. It won an \$800 literary award which may represent the most money a single poem has ever earned in a day--nearly \$114.29 per letter.

In the 1970s one-word poetry had its own magazine, Matchbook, edited by Joyce Holland. Matchbook's one-inch-square pages were stapled inside fully-functioning matchbooks. Each issue featured nine words--real or coined, short or long.

Here is a selection from the magazine. The last (and longest) word listed below appeared as a fold-out.

anagramarama (Darrel Gray)	insex (Juliet Clark)
apocatastasis (Allen Ginsberg)	john (John Sjoberg)
armadildo (Bill Zavatsky)	Joyce (Andrei Codrescu)
borken (Keith Abbott)	lungng (David Hilton)
coughy (Pat Nolan)	markle (Allen Kornblum)
razzmatazz (Paul Violi)	meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee (Duane Ackerson)
cerealism (Fletcher Copp)	metaphoria (Rosemarie Waldrop)
colaminers (Michael Lally)	Monther (Gerald Malanga)
cosmicpolitan (Morty Sklar)	poium (John Weiners)
electrizzzzz (g.p. skratz)	psychasm (Tom Veitch)
electrelocution (Scott Wright)	puppy (aram saroyan)
embooshed (Cinda Wormley)	puppylust (P.J. Casteel)
feltit (George Mattingly)	shirty (Peter Schjeldahl)
flabbergassed (Dick Paterson)	sixamtoninepm (Kit Robinson)
groblems (Edwin Denby)	tictactile (ira steingroot)
gulp (Pat Paulsen)	underwhere (Carol DeLugach)
hairanoia (Tom Clark)	unvelope (Steve Toth)
Heeelp (Allan Appel)	Whirrrrrrd (Alan Davies)
immaculation (John Batki)	zoombie (Sheila Heldenbrand)
whahavyagotthasgudtareedare (Trudi Katchmar)	

#### A Toolbox for the Logologist

PUZLPAK, a set of word-puzzle solving programs written in BASIC and compiled in Microsoft DOS, is available from Chuck Fendall (Recroom Recware, PO Box 307, Pacific Grove CA 93950) for \$25 (\$28 outside of US or Canada). Four versions are available, depending on the dictionaries included (OSPD-Web 10, OSW-Chambers, OSPD-OSW, or OSPD-OSW-Web 10). They can be run directly from a 5.25 or 3.5 diskette, or installed on one's hard drive (up to one megabyte needed).

There are three programs. In JWORDW (Jumbled Words), one specifies one or more letters (repeats allowed) and one or more wild cards (any letters), as well as minimum and maximum output word lengths. For example, specifying an n-letter word plus one blank, and output words of length n+1 will generate all transadditions of a word. XWORDW (Crosswords) is a positional analogue, useful for filling in crossword puzzles or finding all words ending in -gry. AGRAMW (Multiple-Word Anagrams) is the most versatile program, listing all multiword anagrams of a given letter-set, much like Anagram Genius reviewed in Feb 1996. By specifying word lengths in the anagram set, AGRAMW can be used to complete partial Jotto solutions (specify two five-letter words using 10 different letters, and ask for three more five-letter words from the remaining alphabet). Readers will no doubt find many other uses for this program.