

HETEROGRAMS WITH NO ADJACENT LETTERS

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In the November Colloquy, Sir Jeremy Morse postulated that TAPERINGLY is the longest heterogram having no alphabetically-adjacent letters. By this he meant no two letters in the word are adjacent in the alphabet--for example, if the word has an O in it, it cannot have an N or P. However, I at first interpreted it to mean no bigrams of the form AB,BC,...YZ, a much weaker restriction. So here are two puzzles for the price of one!

The longest OED headword analogous to TAPERINGLY is the 11-letter PARCEL-TYING, two short of the theoretical maximum of 13. Some 10-letter examples: KERYGMATIC, PECUNIARLY, TRIVALENCY, CAPERINGLY, PHLYCTENAR, UPCRAWLING, PRACTIVELY, ESCAPINGLY, WATERINGLY, PANEGYRICK(vf), WET PACKING, WING PLAYER, and LIVERY COAT. The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary adds LACQUEYING, and Webster's 2nd, ANTICLERGY.

The longest OED headwords with no forbidden bigrams are the 15-letter WEALTH-PRODUCING and BUCKTHORN FAMILY; ENDOLYMPHATICUS is in Stedman's Medical Dictionary. Some 14-letter examples: SHROUDING-PLATE, SHROUDING PLACE, SULPHO-BENZAMIC, HYDROMAGNETICS and HYDROCALUMITES. Stedman's adds PHLEBODYNAMICS, ENDOLYMPHATICS, VESICULOGRAPHY and PSEUDANKYLOTIC; Webster's 2nd adds SULPHO-GERMANIC and BENZHYDROXAMIC; and the Bloomsbury Thesaurus adds CLOTHES MARKING and RHYMING COUPLET. And how about Gershwin's RHAPSODY IN BLUE?