

WUTHERING FLAPDOCKS! YET MORE BISOGRAMS

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A word in which no two letters are the same is often called an isogram. In an article in the August 1998 Word Ways, Eric Chaikin coined the term *bisogram* to identify word pairs in which no letter occurs more than once. High-quality bisograms are essentially defined as those which contain only uncapitalized unhyphenated unabbreviated words which are listed in boldface type in Webster's Third; appropriate noun plurals and verb tenses of such words may be inferred when they are not specified, but other inflected forms (notably those adding -ly) may not be so inferred. Gerund plurals also may not be inferred.

The best (and so far only) known high-quality 20-letter bisogram is BLACKSMITH GUNPOWDERY, which was first reported by the editor in the February 1977 Word Ways. In his August 1998 article, Eric Chaikin for the first time presented some fifty high-quality 19-letter bisograms, and additional examples have been reported in Word Ways since then. This article, which summarizes the results of an unsystematic and incomplete manual search of Webster's Third, slightly extends the roster of known high-quality 19s and also introduces a listing of 18-letter bisograms.

But first, it should perhaps be mentioned that no new high-quality 20s were discovered in this search. The gunpowdery blacksmith, humpbackedly frosting on a chill winter's day as he shoes a prongbuck hamfistedly and applies patchworks, defuzingly, to damaged artillery shells (called throwbacks in the munitions trade), remains unrivaled in his class (as well as outstanding in his field). Two near-bisograms which would have been high-quality 20s had Webster's Third only spelled both of their terms solidly are FLIGHT DECKS/JURYWOMAN and ZANTHOXYLUMS/BIRD PECK.

These thirteen new high-quality 19s were found (the second word of each bisogram is written in lowercase):

AFTERSHOCK	jumpingly	GUNPOWDERY	backshift, mahlstick
BACKGROUND	phyletism	HUCKSTERING	amblypod
CARBETHOXYLS	jumping	PROCUMBENT	gawkishly
EXHORTINGLY	mudpacks	PTERYGODUM	blackfins
FLEXOGRAPHY	disjunct	WHITEFLY	backgrounds, campgrounds
FURTHCOMING	lazybeds		

Among the near-misses, these would have been high-quality 19s had not an inopportune space intervened in one of their terms: BAGY-WRINKLE/JUMP SHOT, FETCHINGLY/SQUAWK BOX, FLIGHT DECK/JURYWOM-

AN and NEIGHBORLY/DUCK STAMP. And this quintet of 19s would be high-quality if inflections listed in Webster's Second were acceptable: AFTERSHOCK BUMPINGLY, PLAYWRIGHTS UNMOCKED, PROJECTINGLY BUD-MASH, SQUAWKINGLY BROTTCHED and UNCOPYRIGHTED FLAMES.

I must confess to a certain fascination with the way in which nature often manages to contrive apt or picturesque word pairings in bisograms. At 20 letters, of course, there is the improbably apposite gunpowdery blacksmith, while at 19 letters we encounter Eric Chaikin's uncombed playwrights (whom we might imagine to be lying gawkishly procumbent on sofas by their typewriters), ungainly overflying humpbacks and even a dread huckstering amblypod (a supposedly extinct elephant-like animal with both tusks and horns). But in this arena, at least, the longer bisograms appear to have nothing whatever on their 18-letter cousins. Among the several hundred examples of the latter that I have collected may be found the likes of frumping blockheads, naughty pickleworms, hulking myxobacters, flouting pachyderms, bumpkinly watchdogs, ladybugs' pitchwomen, extrabold chipmunks and goldback whiterumps, not to mention muzjik lycanthropes in squawky bedclothing who, deploying bushcraft, jokingly thumbscrew a stupefying blowhard to the tune of a thumbscrewing polka as greyhounds backflip with a jumbling aftershock and unmoved playwrights (dumbly stenographic after sniffing fuming carbethoxyls) unforgivably sketch a copyrighted junkman as he carts tumbledown hayricks and blighted fancyworks off in behowling dumpcarts to his backup goldsmithery near a whitefly campground which is a mere objurgated flyspeck amid the thumping dayflowers and wuthering flapdocks.

Although 18-letter bisograms are far more abundant than 19s, they are still relatively uncommon, and may therefore be of some interest. In the list of 444 Websterian 18s which follows, all of the words (including a few in which plurals or tenses have been inferred) are Webster's Third except for the asterisked words, which may be found in Webster's Second.

AFTERSHOCK dumpling, flumping,
fumbling, jumbling, plumbing
AFTERSHOW bumpkinly, jumpingly
AMBROTYPE/S duckling, duckwing
BACKFLIPS enwrought
BACKFLOWS extruding
BACKSWORDING zythum
BACKSWORD/ING duplex
BACKVELDS inwrought
BARODYNAMIC klephts, zestful
BATCHWISE flunkydome
BATHYSEISM wrongful
BECOMINGLY updrafts
BEDCLOTHING squawky
BEHOWLING dumpcarts
BLACKSMITH unforged*

BLACKSMITHERY found, pound,
undog, wound
BLACKTONGUE shrimpy
BUCKETING hydroflap, swordplay
BUCKETING/S flaxdrop, moldwarp
BUCKSAW grimthorped, providently
BULWARKS hypnotized, phytogenic,
pythogenic
BUMPINGLY* aftershow, headstock,
headworks, rockshaft, shoecraft,
shortcake, whetrocks
BUMPKINLY forthgaze, overwatch,
shoecraft, watchdogs
BUSHCRAFT deploying, exploding
BYSMALITH unfrocked
CAMPPIGHTS unworked

CARBETHOXY dumpling, flumping
slumping
CARBETHOXYL dumping, jumping,
CARBETHOXYLS duping, fuming,
fuzing, juking, puking
CHIPMUNKS afterbody, extrabold*,
goldwater, waterfowl
CHIPMUNK/S afterblow, afterglow,
batfowler*, dayflower
CHOKEDAMPS blurting
CHOKESTRAP fumbling, jumbling
CHOKINGLY drumbeats
CLERGYWOMAN tubfish
COMPLEXIFY draughts, kvutzahs,
stunkard
COMPLEXING barukhzy, futharks,
kvutzahs, yawshrub
COMPUTABLY gherkins
CONFIGURATED lymphs
CONTRAPLEX dumbfish
COPIGMENTS barukhzy
COPYRIGHTABLE dunks, funks,
junks, munds
COPYRIGHTED junkman
CRYPTOGAM knivesful
DAYFLOWERS thumping
DAYFLOWER/S mutchkin
DEATHWORMS buckling, plucking
DEMULSIFY patchwork, throwback
DEPLUMING backsword, backworts,
boschvark, rockshaft, throwback
DERMATOGLYPHIC bunk, buns,
busk, funk, junk, knub, nubs,
snub, sunk
DERMATOGLYPHICS bun, fub, fun,
nub
DERMATOPSY buckling
DEUTSCHMARK blowing, bowling,
flowing, fowling, jowling,
plowing, wolfig
DEVOURING schmaltzy
DOUBLETHINKS crampy
DRUMBEAT/ING shylock
DUPLEXING backworts, boschvark,
rockshaft, throwback
DUPLEXITY boschvark, chamfrons
DYSTROPHIC fogleman
EMBLAZING ductworks
EXACTINGLY jodhpurs
EXCULPATING droshky

EXHORTINGLY backups, bucksaw,
mudpack
EXPANSIBLY* ductwork
FANCYWORKS blighted
FANCYWORK/S multiped
FECUNDITY lampworks
FLAPMOUTHED cryings
FLAUCHTBRED smoking, spoking
FLEXOGRAPHY muzjiks
FLUKEWORMS batching, patching,
yachting
FLUSKERING matchbox
FLYWEIGHT/S backdrop
FORMIDABLY ketchups
FRUMPING blockheads, deathblows,
headblocks
FRUMPISHLY backdown, downbeat,
downtake, takedown
FUMEWORTS* hackingly
FURTHCOMING bespawl, bywalks,
lazybed
FURZECHAT goldspink
FURZECHATS bodingly, bowingly,
dopingly, jokingly, mopingly*,
movingly
GAVELKIND/S wrymouth
GOLDENBACK frumpish
GOLDENBACKS furmity
GOLDENBACK/S triumph
GOLDSMITHERY backup
GOWPENFUL dithyramb, yardstick
GOWPENFUL/S birthday, jackbird
GREYHOUND/S backflip
GUNPOWDERY blackish, jackfish,
jawsmith
GUNPOWDER/Y schmaltz
HUMPBACK defrosting, destroying,
fosterling, toweringly, wrestingly*
HUMPBACED frosting, jostling,
loftings, strongly, strowing
HUMPBACKS flowering, longevity,
overlying, revolting
HYPANDRIUM fetlocks
IMPONDERABLY skutch
JACKFRUIT/S phlegmon
JUDGESHIP workmanly
JUMPINGLY backsword, backworts,
boschvark, headstock, headworks,
rockshaft, shoecraft, shortcake,
showbread, throwback, waterbosh,
whetrocks

JURYWOMAN stepchild
 JURYWOMEN backflips, backlight,
 backshift
 JUXTAPOSED cymbling
 JUXTAPOSING freckly
 KHIDMUTGAR convexly
 KYMOGRAPHIC blunted, bundles,
 unblest, zestful
 LADYFINGER buckshot, campshot
 LAZYBED/S quickthorn
 LEXIGRAPHY bundocks
 LUMBERJACK fishpond, pondfish,
 township
 LYCANTHROPE/S muzjik
 MUDBANKS hypergolic, xerophytic
 MUDLARKS phytogenic, pythogenic
 MUDPACKS hoveringly, neighborly
 MUSKFLOWER batching, patching,
 yachting
 MYXOBACTERS hulking
 OBJURGATED flyspeck
 OBSERVANCY mightful
 OVERFLIGHT/S mudbank, mudpack
 OVERFLYING buckwash, hackbuts,
 humpback, mudpacks
 OXYWELDING buckstay, humpback,
 pushcart
 OXYWELDINGS buckram
 OXYWELDING/S bumtrap, futhark,
 hackbut
 PACHYDERMS flouting
 PADLOCKING thumbers
 PATCHWORKED fluming, fluxing
 PATHFINDERS buxomly
 PHAGOCYTIZED flunks
 PHLEBOGRAM disjunct
 PHYMATIC underblows, underflows
 PICKLEWORMS naughty
 PINCHGUT/S dayflower, mayflower
 PITCHFORKS unblamed, unglazed
 PITCHWOMEN ladybugs
 PLAYWRIGHT uncombed, unmocked*
 PLAWRIGHTS dockmen, jukebox,
 unboxed, unmoved
 PROFUNDITY jacklegs
 PROGNATHISM buckled
 PROJECTINGLY* squawk
 PSEUDONYM backlight, jacklight
 PTERYGODUM blackfin, blackish,
 jackfish

PUNCTIFORM lazybeds, skewbald
 QUESTINGLY backdrop
 SCHEMINGLY zubrowka
 SMOKEFARTHING duply
 SPHYGMIC unwordable, unworkable
 SQUAWKINGLY* botched, botcher
 frothed, potherb, project,
 torched
 STENOGRAPHIC dumbly, jumbly
 STUPEFYING blowhard, holdback
 SUBJECTIFY markdown
 SUBVERTING flapdock
 THRONGFUL* zweibacks
 THUMBLINGS copyread
 THUMBROPES fadingly, wakingly*,
 wavingly
 THUMBSCREW doppingly, jokingly,
 pyingado, pyinkado, wakingly*,
 wavingly
 THUMBSCREWING flaky, polka
 THUMPINGLY bedrocks, casework,
 jackrods
 THWACKINGLY* deforms, devours
 TRUMPING blockheads, headblocks
 TUMBLEDOWN crayfish, graphics,
 grayfish, hayricks, jackfish
 UNBEWITCH flaxdrops
 UNBLIGHTED paroxysm
 UNCOPYRIGHTED* balks, balms,
 blaws, flabs, flams, flaws, lambs,
 jambs, wakfs, waqfs, walks, whams
 UNDERPITCH folkways
 UNDERSTOCK gawblimy
 UNFORGIVABLY sketch
 UNFORMED backlights, jacklights
 UNPROVED backlights, campfights,
 jacklights
 UPHOLSTERY backwind, wingback
 VETCHWORM daubingly, quakingly
 VEXINGLY patchworks, throwbacks,
 touchmarks
 WATERBUCKS doppingly, hopingly,
 moppingly*, movingly
 WAVERINGLY buckshot, campshot
 WHETROCKS plumbagin, pylangium
 WHIPSOCKET gurdy man
 WHITEFLY background, campground
 WHITERUMP/S backdown, goldback
 WORKPLACES thumbing
 WRACKFUL hypnotized, hypnotizes
 WUTHERING flapdocks

XYLOGRAPHIC debunks, dumbest,
 dustmen, junkets
 ZANTHOXYLUM bricked, frisked,
 pricked, scribed, sickbed
 ZANTHOXYLUM/S bicker, bridge,
 dicker, picker, wicker

ZANTHOXYLUMS griped, picked,
 priced, ridged, wicked
 ZINCOGRAPHY beflums, dumbest,
 fumbled, fumbles, stumble,
 tumbled, tumbles
 ZYGANTRUM boschveld, sicklepod
 ZYMOSTHENIC bulwark

How many high-quality long bisograms are there, altogether, in Webster's Third? In the absence of a scientific sampling only seat-of-the-pants estimates are possible, but based upon perceived frequencies of occurrence I would guess that probably just the one 20, around ninety 19s, and perhaps fifteen hundred 18s are to be found there. If the last figure is approximately correct, then my experience of finding about eight 17s (which I did not record) for every 18 which turned up suggests a total population of 17s in Webster's Third of roughly twelve thousand.

What about the possibility of superlong bisograms? If the search is expanded beyond Webster's Third, can the English lexicon supply instances of 21-letter or longer bisograms? This would seem a fairly unlikely prospect, but even so it is not necessarily an impossible one, as the following examples employing several remotely-plausible coined words may demonstrate:

"I suppose we ROCKSHAFT workers are somewhat promiscuous," Tom said BEDJUMPINGLY.

"Is this how you swing a BACKSWORD?" Tom asked FEZTHUMPINGLY.

After failing on his twentieth attempt to FEZJUMP BACKSWORDINGLY, the novice saber dancer was thoroughly JUMPVEXT.

These are 21- and 22-letter faux bisograms; is it possible to cobble up a 23?