

# ALPHABETIC TRIGRAMS AND TETRAGRAMS

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Many words contain a trigram comprising three consecutive letters of the alphabet. The most commonly occurring are DEF (DEFine, DEFeat, DEft, etc.) and STU (STUck, STUd, paSTUre, etc.).

However, alphabetic tetragrams are far rarer. There is probably only one everyday word that has such an orderly foursome: underSTUdy.

For the purposes of this exercise, only a single example is given for each alphabetic group. Proper names are acceptable, but not initialisms like KLM (airline) or QRS complex (Web 3). Foreign words like the Flemish IJJKLake, mentioned in the OED etymology of the noun 'leech', and the early Dutch GHIJl (OED, under 'gyle') are not allowed, either.

Also, the relevant letter set cannot be broken by a hyphen or space, which disqualifies terms such as staR-STUdded and fiLM NOir.

If you know of examples for any of the missing combinations, or can improve an existing one, please let us know. Beware of misprints, though! For instance, the US PhoneDisc records people supposedly surnamed PQRebski, PQRtell, PQRtorreal and SiNOPQli. These are almost certainly errors for Porebski, Portell, Portorreal and Sinopoli, but with apparently genuine names like Funofpbupk and Przypyszny, it makes you wonder.

## TRIGRAMS

ABC	crABCatcher	any of several herons that eat crabs, for example the boatbill (Web 2)
BCD	aBCDarian	an early variant of 'abecedarian,' one engaged in teaching the alphabet (OED, 1691 quotation)
CDE	eCDEmic	pertaining to a disease observed far from the area in which it originated (RHD)
DEF	graDEFinder	any instrument that measures grades or slopes (Web 2)
EFG	trEFGordd	in old Cymric law, a single community constituting a taxable unit--typically nine houses, one plough, one oven, one churn, one cat, one cock, and one herdsman (Web 2)
FGH	aFGHani	a coin and monetary unit of Afghanistan, equal to 100 puls (RHD)
GHI	dunGHill	a heap of dung; a vile abode, or any mean

HIJ	HIJinks	situation, condition or thing (Web 2) boisterous celebration or merrymaking; unrestrained fun (RHD)
IJK	rIJKsdaalder	a cupronickel or silver Dutch coin equal to 2 1/2 guilders (RHD)
JKL	teJKL	a surname listed 30 times on PhoneDisc
KLM	WinKLMann	a surname listed 16 times on PhoneDisc
LMN	aLMNer	variant of 'almoner,' an official distributor of alms to the needy (OED)
MNO	staMNOs	a widemouthed Greek vase with handles on the shoulders (Web 2)
NOP	moNOPode	one of a fabulous race having a single foot, used as a sunshade (Web 2) [see illustration]
OPQ	pOPQuiz	a quiz given without prior announcement or opportunity to prepare (Web 3)
PQR		
QRS	saQRS	persons with the surname Saqr, such as the 12 listed in PhoneDisc
RST	liverwuRST	a sausage containing lots of liver (Web 2) [note that this word has R,S,T,U,V,W within the space of only ten letters]
STU	teSTUdo	a movable shed to protect soldiers engaged in siege operations (Web 2)
TUV	TUValuan	an inhabitant of the Commonwealth State of Tuvalu, formerly the Ellice Islands (OED)
UVW	zUVWlla	surname of T. Zuvwlla of San Francisco, in the 1997 Phone Disc [Is this name genuine?]
VWX		
WXY		
XYZ	hydroXYZine	an antihistaminic compound used to treat allergies, nausea and anxiety (RHD)
ABCD	ABCDarian	see BCD
BCDE		
CDEF		
DEFG	DEFGnée	a surname listed six times in the 1991 Brussels, Belgium telephone directory
EFGH	dEFGHi	surname of the alphabetical Ab.C. Defghi, a former resident of Villa Park IL, according to <i>Ripley's Mammoth Believe It Or Not</i> (1956) [this name looks contrived]
FGHI	baFGHI	surname of Abbas Bafghi of Carson City NV, in PhoneDisc [Is this name genuine?]
GHIJ	GHIJsen	a surname listed four times in the 1994 Amster- dam, Netherlands telephone directory
HIJK	sHIJKa	the surname of three Michigan residents listed on PhoneDisc
IJKL	rIJKLand	the surname of U.A. Rijkland in the 1994 Amsterdam telephone directory, and of H.F. Rijkland in the 1995 Rotterdam directory

JKLM

KLMN

LMNO

MNOP

cheLMNO

oMNOPon

town in north-central Poland (TAW)

a mixture of the hydrochlorides of the opium alkaloids (OED Supplement)

NOPQ

OPQR

PQRS

QRST

RSTU

superSTUd

a man of (reputedly) superior sexual potency or accomplishments (OED)

STUV

STUVer

early form of 'stiver,' a small Dutch coin (OED)

TUVW

UVWX

VWXY

WXYZ

## REFERENCES

OED

Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition, 1989

RHD

Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd Edition, 1987

TAW

Times Atlas of the World, 1967

Web 2

Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd Edition, 1934

Web 3

Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1976

