

## WORD ENDINGS FROM THE OED

DARRYL FRANCIS

Sutton, Surrey, England

"There's been a spate of articles in Word Ways about long words from the Oxford English Dictionary--you know, the longest word beginning with A, then B, and so on up to Z, words using only letters, words with hyphens, words with other characters, main entries, and words buried in illustrative quotations--the whole lot!"

"Ummm, I've seen them. There can't be anything more to add to the subject of long words from the OED, can there?"

"Well, it's strange you should say that, but there is a bit more!"

"Like what?"

"All the previous articles have concentrated on the initial letters of words. But suppose you wanted to draw up a list of the longest words in the OED ending with each of the 26 letters."

"I guess. So you've got a list of 26 words, all different final letters? Are these main entries, or words from illustrative quotes, or what?"

"I stuck to main entries only, and used only words spelled with letters, so there are no hyphens, no apostrophes, no numbers, no Greek letters, nothing but the letters A to Z! But I must admit to bending the rules slightly for the very first word on the list. It's spelled with a diphthonged *Æ*, which I've counted as two letters."

"Okay, then, let's see this list."

"As well as listing the words, I've also included their lengths, for comparative purposes. And I've calculated the average length as just under 20 letters, 19.7 in fact."

"Haven't you had enough of long words from the OED?"

"Yep! I guess maybe it's time to move on to something else."

	Words (letters only; main entries)	Length
A	hypergammaglobulinæmia	22
B	microcoulomb	12
C	radioimmuno-electrophoretic	26
D	immunosympathectomized	22
E	octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane	28
F	handkerchief	12
G	contradistinguishing	20
H	chromolithograph	21
I	Acanthopterygii	15
J	litargirij	11
K	undersheriffwick	16
L	psychoneuroendocrinological	27
M	antidisestablishmentarianism	28
N	floccinaucinihilipilification	29
O	scherzandissimo	15
P	handicraftsmanship	18
Q	nestaliq	8
R	spectrophotofluorometer	23
S	pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis	45
T	transubstantialist	23
U	shehecheyanu	12
V	kalashnikov	11
W	jennyrickshaw	13
X	pneumohydrothorax	17
Y	psychoneuroendocrinology	24
Z	mittelschmerz	13
		19.7