

YES, WE HAVE NO ASCENDERS (PART 2)

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In the first part of this article (May 1999), we presented words consisting solely of ascenders (bdfhiklt), descenders (gjpqy), -body letters (acemnorsuvwxyz), or ascenders or descenders. In this part, we consider words consisting of cyclic mixtures of the various types. For example, Darryl Francis gave SINICIZING and LUTEINIZING as alternating body letters with any of the other types; in the former, the pattern begins with a body letter and in the latter, with an ascender. There are many possible cycles using two or three types, especially when the type of the first letter is taken into account.

1. ASCENDERS OR DESCENDERS, ALTERNATING WITH BODY LETTERS

Ascenders/descenders and body letters encompass a choice of vowels and consonants, thus making long words possible.

Start with Ascenders or Descenders (all known words of 12+ letters)

14 bubububububu (Dict Jamaican English)

13 trivial-minded, to fetch a frisk, to fetch a fetch, printed wiring, inquiring mind (Bloomsbury Thesaurus), hohohohohohohoh (Joyce: Ulysses), hatchet-shaped?, fairyring spot?, driving-spring, daisychaining

12 trimyristate (Web2), to lay siege to, to lay claim to, to get up again, to be in gate to, psycholagnic (Stedman), latch-strings, hepatopetals (Stedman), hatchet-stake, driving chain, degradingolade (Chambers)

11 tubatulabal?, to go into bat, to get wind of, teleprinted, quintaining, quiet-minded, quick-winged, quick-spring, quick-minded, psychopetal, psycholepsy, psycholatory, psycholagny, psychofugal, pedagoguish, pedagoguing, patriolatory (Web2), palm-fringed, luteinizing, luteinising?, latch-string, kriskringel (var form), hepatofugal (Stedman), gulch-mining, fairy-shrimp, Dutch violet, driving wind, depopulated, brickshaped (Chambers), key-stringed, impulsivist, holotrichal (Web2), hepatopetal (Stedmn)

Start with Body Letters

13 statute fringe, sluicing claim, mining-statute

12 wicked-minded?, violet-stoled?, violet-ringed, symbololatory, symbol-minded, Stoke Gabriel (place), statute brick, squint-minded, slate-pointed, shakebag club?, myriad-minded christolatory, chaindriving?

11 ulotrichale?, strychninic (Web2), statute pole, statute fair,

sprintskate (Bloomsbury Thesaurus), springehole (var form), springchair?, sialagoguic (Web2), obstetrists (Stedman), myristoleic (Stedman), myelopetals (Stedman), mining claim, cystolutein (Stedman), cyclobutoic (Stedman), Christ's-hair, cholofulvin, akatalepsia (Chambers), akatakataka (Mangavera), akapakapaka (Mangavera)

2. ASCENDERS OR DESCENDERS (minus I), ALTERNATING WITH BODY LETTERS (including I)

Both ascenders/descenders and body letters have a good choice of consonants, but ascenders/descenders are restricted to one vowel (Y). Despite this, words of good length can be found. Useful endings such as -ATE, -ITE, -DATE(D), -LATE(D), -LIKE and -ATRY may be legitimate, depending on the length of the word.

Start with Ascenders or Descenders (all known words of 11+ letters)

DE- and DI- make a helpful start.

14 lobato-digitate, like begets like, bububububububu (Dict Jamaic Eng)

13 to fetch a fetch, hohohohohohoh (Joyce:Ulysses), hatchet-shaped?

12 pedatilobate, hihat cymbals (Bloomsbury Thesaurus), hepatopetals (Stedman), hatchet-stake, halopsychida?. delitabilite (var form)

11 tulip-shaped, tubatulabal?, topstitched, to go pit-a-pat, to bide tryst, psychopetal, psycholepsy, psycholatry, psycholagny (Stedman), psychofugal, polehatchet, pole-futchel, pitch a bitch (Bloomsbury Thesaurus), pedatilobed, patibulated?, hepatopetal (Stedman), hepatofugal (Stedman), habilitated, dilapidated, depopulated, defatigated, debilitated

10 to go to bits, to buy chips, psychodida?, pilot-whale, pilipilula (Web2), pedipulate, pedal cycle, patibulate, palatelike (Web2), pagoda-like, likelehede (var form), lepidolite, latibulate, kotukutuku (Web2), katabolite (Web2), hogepotche (var form), habilitate, dilapidate, depopulate, depeditate, delitigate, delapidate, defatigate, debilitude, debilitate, botryolite, bilobulate (Stedman), biligulate (Stedman), bidigitate, bed of state, bagigekite

Start with Body Letters

SP-, ST- and SY- make useful starts.

17 otopalatodigitals (Stedman)

16 otopalatodigital (Stedman)

12 whole holiday, white petaled?, symbololatry, shakebag club?, chit-chit-chat, adstipulated

11 stitch-while, stipule-like (Chambers), statute pole, stabilitate, spatula-like, ship of state?, myelopetals (Stedman), Chapel Stile (place), akatakataka (Mangavera), akapakapaka (Mangavera). adstipulate

10 white-tiled, white-piped, white-label, systolated, symbolatry, stipulated, stipitated, staystitch, stabstitch, spotstitch, slipstitch, statolatry, spatulated, slit-shaped, shut up shop (Chambers), opitulated, obstipated, myelopetal (Web2), myelofugal (Stedman), idololatry, epilogated, elapidated, egelidated, clutch slip (Bloomsbury Thesaurus)

3. ASCENDERS, ALTERNATING WITH DESCENDERS

The lack of any vowel other than Y pushes us toward older English spellings, and gives but a small yield.

Start with Ascenders

5 tytyl, tykyl, tydyf (var form), lytyl (little, OED), Dyfyd (Welsh)
 4 tydy (var form), lyly (Longmans), lyfy, kydy, kyby, hyly, hylp,
 dgtp (Mdicall), dgdp?, byly (var form), byby (Longmans0

Start with Descenders

6 phytyl
 4 ylyk, ykyl, ykyd (var form), yhyd, ydyt, ydyl (var form), plyt,
 plyd, phyt (Medical), phyl (Longmans), glyt, glyd (var form),
 glyb (var form)

4. CYCLE OF ASCENDER, BODY LETTER, DESCENDER

Two-thirds of the letters are of the less-frequent types, and their position in the word is ordained; therefore the haul is bound to be small, especially considering one should have at least six letters to demonstrate two cycles. The absence of seven-letter solutions is interesting.

9 taptaptap (Web2)

8 tryfoyle, keybugle

6 twyley (var form), taphog, toy dog, toyboy, top dry, top dog,
 teydey (var form), tap-tap, tapley?, tap-boy, tag day, loglog,
 lay-day, layboy (Web2), laptop, Lapley (place), lap-lap, lap-dog,
 key-log, kept up, hoyday, hop-top, hop-dog, hop-bag, heydey
 (Pulliam), heyday, Hayley (forename), hay-day, haybag, Hagley
 (place), Fryday (var form), fog-dog, fag hag, fag-day, duplay?,
 dugdug (Web2), doyley, dog tag, dog-leg, dog-hep, dog-day,
 dog-boy, deploy, dayhop (Amer Heritage Dict), dayday?, day-but,
 day-boy, dapdap?, dag-boy, Bugley (place), bug-boy, brybry,
 boytoy?, bog hop, bog-hay, beg beg, bayley (var form),
 baylay (var form), bay-bay (Web2), bagley (Stedman), baglap

5. CYCLE OF DESCENDER, BODY LETTER, ASCENDER

7 polpody, gadgety

5 yelped, yak yak (Bloomsbury Thesaurus), yah yah, qwhyet (var
 form), putput, pulysh, pulyol, pulyal, pulped, pulpal, potgut,
 polyol, polyad, Pol Pot, Pelynt (place), pat-pat, palyet, palped,
 palpal, palgat (Web2), judged, jubjub, gulped, gulgul (Web2),
 gukguk, gadget, golpol, galyot, galyet, galyak (Web2), galgal
 (Web2), gadget (var form), gadget, gabgab (Web2)

A number of easily-recognised words of length 5 exist (YELPS, PULPS, PUDGE, POLYA, PODGE, PALPA, JUDGE, GULPS), but you need six letters to complete two cycles.