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For five-letter words, over 60 per cent of words are heterograms, fewer than 2 per cent are isolanos, over a quarter onalosis, and each word has almost 13 neighbours on average—over two per letter. On the other hand, there are not many more than half the number of words to choose from compared to six-letter words. Also it is not possible to have sequential replacement between reversals: from ABCDE to EDCBA would proceed via EBCDE, EDCDE, then EDCDE again, and an implicit condition of all our ladders is that no word should be repeated, so we will not find reversals between words with an odd number of letters. We therefore find about 200 ladders that are technical Connoisseur’s Ladders, compared with just one for words of length six. In these ladders, the terminal words are heterograms, the word at one end being a permutation of the other with corresponding letters different, all words in the ladder are different, and letters are replaced in order. Given that there was a plentiful supply of semantic Connoisseur’s ladders for six-letter words, we can guarantee that there are very many of length five, but there are too many to fit into a short article, so, apart from a few examples at the very end, we will be content to see if there is a technical ladder which also qualifies as a semantic one. Such judgment is subjective, and it is a lot to expect a good semantic ladder from a mere selection of 200, but if you were a witch in the time of the Inquisition you might think that SPAIN and PAINS were synonymous, or at least apt. SERIC RICES actually means silk riches, from a period when silk was a major item in diplomacy and Byzantine Imperial grandeur. Other apposite pairs need similar thought or research, which I have attempted to report in the lists: how else would one find a connection between monkeys and salmon? And do some people think sealyhams are fabulous? What about the Persian superbeing superdrinker? Furthermore, the outlook is brilliant when desire rides! We can also reveal that GIs n Vietnam were not the first to use narcotics. As the old saw goes, many a true word is spoken in ladders!

In “Snakes and Ladders” in the May 1998 Word Ways, there was one example of an ideal ladder between heterograms with the terminal ladders mutual permutations, but the terminal words were not semantically related, and letter replacement was not sequential.

Given the restricted choice of ladders, it is difficult enough to find a common word at each end, let alone those in between.

Words in the following lists are OED headwords or obvious derivations thereof unless marked otherwise. The first word in the ladder is earlier in the alphabet than the last. Ch = Chambers, OSPD = Official Scrabble Players Dictionary, Pecon = Palindromicon, Tert F = Tertiary Faunas, and vf = variant form. The same place names may occur in different counties.

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Connoisseur’s Ladders with terminal words which are permutations of one another (about a
quartet of those found)

**forward replacement**

- AREST (vf = arrest) — TREST — TEEST — TEAST (vf) — TEART — TEARS
- CURES — SURES — SERES — SECES (OED under cease) — SECUS — CHF — PULL — SECUR (OED = sicker)
- CUTER — RUTER (vf) — FERTER (Pcon) — RECER (Pcon) — RECUR — RECU
- DO SER — RO SER — RESER (Pcon, surname) — REDER (vf) — REDOR (OED) — REDOS (OED = reredos)
- HATES — SATES — SETES (vf) — SEAES (vf) — SEATS — SEATH (= seathe, a fish)
- KEATS (poet) — SEATS — STATS (OED) — STETS — STEAS (vf) — STEAK
- LAMES (vf = lamb ...) — SAMES (vf) — SEAMES (vf) — SEALS — SEALM (vf = psalm)
- MASSES — MANES — SANES — SENES (vf) — SEMES — SEMAS (vf) — SEMAT (vf = undershin)
- MEATS — SEATS — STATS (OED) — STETS — STEAS (vf) — STEAM
- PERIS (OED = Persian superbeing) — PERIR (Ch, Old Fr whence persil) — PERER (OED) — PE PER (vf) — PIPER (vf) — SIPER (immoderate drinker)
- REVIN (vf = raven) — REVIR (OED) — REVER — RENER (OEd) — RINER (OED) — VİNER
- REVIS (vf = ravish) — REVIR (OED) — REVER — RESER (Pcon) — RISER — VI SER (vf = vizier)
- Telegraphic Ladders with terminal words which are permutations of one another (about a
quartet of those found)

**reverse replacement**

- ADRET (OED = slope facing sun) — ADRED (vf) — ADRAD — ADEAD — AREAD — TREAD
- DELIA (pers name) — DELIE — DELDE (vf) — DEIDE (vf) — DAIDE (vf) — LAIDE (Fr ugly!, or, worse, OED under lay)
- DESIR (vf = desire) — DESIS (vf) — DESES (vf) — DESDES (OED) — DIDES (vf) — RIDES
- ERAND (vf = errand) — ERANE (OED) — ERADE — ERNDE (vf) — ENDE (vf) — RAND (vf = high ground or SA currency)
- FERIT (vf = feared) — FERIE — FERTE (vf) — FEI'TE (vf) — FI'TE (vf) — RIFTE (vf = rift)
- HEALT (vf = lame, crippled) — HEALE (vf) — HEA TE (vf) — HEHTE (vf) — HAHTE (vf) — LAHTE (vf leap 1225)
- KEARN (vf = Irish foot-soldier) — KEARE (vf) — KEAKE (vf) — KERKE (vf) — KARKE (vf) — NARKE (Grk, whence narcosis etc)
- KEANTS (OED = raven) — KEANTS (vf) — KANT (vf) — TAINT (vf)
- NOWIT (vf = nowt, nothing) — NOWIN — NOWON (Pcon) — NOT ON (Ch) — NITON — WITON (vf = wit)
- PERIS (OED = Persian superbeing) — PERIR (Ch, Old Fr whence persil) — PERER (OED) — PEPER (vf) — PI PER (vf) — SIPER (immoderate drinker)
- REVIN (vf = raven) — REVIR (OED) — REVER — RENER (OEd) — RINER (OED) — VİNER
- REVIS (vf = ravish) — REVIR (OED) — REVER — RESER (Pcon) — RISER — VI SER (vf = vizier)
- SEALS (vf = salt) — SEALS — SEAES (vf) — SELES (OED) — SALES — TALES. Old sea tales?
- SEALLY (Sealy Ham terrier, OED sealyham) — SEALS — SEAES (vf) — SELES — SALES — YALES (OED = fabulous beast)
- SETIL (vf = sit) — SETIS (vf) — SETES (vf) — SELES — SEILES (OED) — TILES
- SITEN (vf = sit) — SITES — SITIS (vf) — SINIS (Pcon) — SENIS (Ch, Latin whence senate) — TENIS (OED = tennis). Table tennis?
- STIRE (vf = stir) — STIRS — STIES — STRES (vf) — SIRES — TIRES. So does whisk!
- TOWER — TOWEE (vf) — TOWTE (vf) — TOOTE (vf) — TROTE (vf) — WROTE
- TWAIN — TWAIT (vf) — TWANT (Web2) — TWINT (Pull) — TAINT — WAIN (OEd obs vaunt). A good writer?

**Ideal Ladders, between heterograms, with forward replacement**

The following may need to be reversed to reveal the apposite nature of the pairing: sometimes
both directions work. A given word may carry more than one meaning. Intermediate words are
forced by the end words, and are to be found in the usual major dictionaries I use, including OED
variant forms, except where noted at the end.
AEROS (choc bars)—MANKY
AIRED—TEARS
ALIKE—CREDO
ALIEN—FIRE—SCAMP/SWAMP
ARIES—BALMY/BARMY/FLAKY
SIDE—BALMY/BRASH
AUNTS—BALMY/BARED/BARMY/DALEK (Dr Who enemy)/DAUNT/HARDY/HARPY/LATEX/ATED/DATELY/SEAMY/MOLY/

PITHY/PORNY
BACON—TOXIC
BAKES—MINTY/MOLY/SIROP
BANES—DEMON/LUCKY
BATED—SHINY
BADWY—CONGA
BEARS—HORNY/TIRED
BELTS—COILY/CUTIE/MANIC/MANKY
BIKER—DEMON/MANIC
BILGE—MONKS (OED MONG)
BLUES—SEAMY/SEARY (jazz), SHINY (dress uniform)
BOYES—CAMPY/DANTE (lal poet)/FINKY/LUCY/LUCKY/LNARS/PANTY/PATHO/PUBIC/SEAMY/SICKO/TAPIR
BOTEL—PARIS
BOYER—FLIRT (Charles Boyer, Fr actor)
BOYER—FLIRT (Charles Boyer, Fr actor)
BRATS—PERKY
BRING—CLODS
COUTH—FROGS
COWS—GIRL

CONEY—SHINY
CORKS—DIACEY
CULTS—PERVY/PORNY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CONES—PILOT/TEXAN
CORES—SHARK
CORNOS—HAIRY
COUTH—FROGS
COYES—PERKY/PORNY
CRIMES—FACED
CRUDE—FEATS/FLIPS/ABAND/FORMS
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY
CUNTS—DALEK/DARKY/DEMO/DICKY/DINAH/FELIX/MILKY/MILTY/MINGY/RAPID/TACKY

CURED—DEBUG/SPANK/TEALS  CURLS—HAIRY/PALE/MAIDS  CURLY—WANDS
CURSE—MAIDS/MATES/MATHS/MEATS/MONKS  CUSHY—HACKS
CYRUS—PINED/SAGER/SULKY  CZARS—TIRED
DAMES—FUSTY/HONKY/SEAMY/SERIC/TEXAN/TON-UP  DALES—HEMPY/HERBY/WISPY
DANES—LUCKY/VEGAN  DARE—NOISY
DATES—FELIX/PERVY/ONY/PRONY/RISKY/SEAMY/TON-UP  DARKY—LEARS
DAWNS—LOIRE/LOUSY  DAUNT—FRATS
DEALT—TWINS  DEALS—PILOT/WILL.
DECKS—HOLED  DARI—RADIO/RAYES
DENTS—PITON  DEMON—SATED/SIRED
DICIES—FELIX  DIANE—LAIRD/indhoven/LOUTY
DICKS—HAIRY/HONED/LURED/MANIC/MUSED/PAIN/Y/PAVED/RANDY/SOAPY/TURDY
DITIES—PARED/PORKY/POSER  DINER—FORUM/REPAS/VEDIC
DINES—LAIRD/SEUM/v(ampire)/VEGAN  DIPSY—TOWNS
DIVES—JONAH/RAPID  DOLTS—HINDU/PUNIC
DAMES—TACKY (eg Millennium Dome?)  DONT’S—MISER/PITHY/PITON
DORES—HAPPY/LUCKY  DORPS—NARCO
DOTES—PANTO/PANTY/PATK  DOTER—RADIO/SAVOY
DOZES—MARO  DRAFS—FELIX
DRIVE—WARNS/WARPS (Star Trek)/WEARS  DRUSE—GORED
DUCKS—HAIRY/HARDY/MIRE/SOAP (in bath)  DUELS—FELIX
DUETS—SEAMY/SHOWY  DUKES—LOXY/MACHY/MINGY/PERRY/PINKO
DUMAS—PITHY  DUMPY—HEAS (lavatories)
DUNCE—NOISY  DUNK—HARES/HOFS
DUNES—NOMAD  DUSKY—LAIRD/LAIRS
DUKN (Duran Duran pop group)—FAMED/GAMES/TOURS  DUSK—LAIRD/LAIRS
DUSTY—LAIRS  DYE—FLAS
DYKES—FINKY/FUSTY/HARDY/HONKY/MACHY/MANKY/MINGY/MURKY/SEAMY/SICKO/TACKY/TON-UP  DYES—PERVY/PORNY/SEAMY/SICKO
DYNES—HERZT  EMIRS—SEAIMY/SHOWY
EMITS—SLURP  EMIS—LUNAR
FACTS—PIANO/PITHY  FAIR—LOUSY
FAKES—LIMBO/LOGIN/LUCKY/MINOS/IN (camera)/MINO/MOLAR/SERIC  FAKE—PUNCH/PUNKS
FARTS—POSER  FAKE—REAP/SPICY
FATHERS—POSER  FERT—PINKO/TEXAN
FAURE (vforFrComposer)—LEADS/LEAPS/LOANS/LOINS/SCAMP/SCIVY/SPICY/SWAMI/SWIFT/TOED/TOWNY  FARES—SEAMY/WILMA (Flintstones)
FEARD—GOWNS  FAESA—PERVY/PORNY/SEAMY/SICKO
FELIS (genus, cat)—MANKY  FEART—PLOYS
FERDY (Duchess of York)—GAWPS  FRAK—PERYY/PINKO/TEXAN
FET—RANTS  FROST—TAKES
FEE—LAIRD  FROZ—MENT
FIBRE—LAUSD/LOUSY  FUDGE—MINTY
FILE—LAUDS/LOUSY  FUNKY—GAUDI (architect, see Barcelona)/PIKES
FILES—TACKY  FUSTY—LAIRS
FINES—LUCKY/NARCO/TOPAY/VALID/FINKS/LURED/RACED  FORES—HICKS/HANTS/HARES/HOLE/S/JOES/LORES/ROES/LYRES/MOLES/MORES
FIRE—TAMAL/TEARS  RANDY—HICKS/JOCKS/LICKS/MICKS
FIRE—TAMAL/TEARS  RANDY—HICKS/JOCKS/LICKS/MICKS
FIRE—TAMAL/TEARS  (the Celts again)
Intermediate words that are more difficult to find:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOECK</td>
<td>OED sarcoid 1941 quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEBUD</td>
<td>Bloomsbury Thesaurus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRING</td>
<td>is in Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GARAN</td>
<td>Ch crane, Welsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINK</td>
<td>Northern dialect chink Ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATSE</td>
<td>Ch matzo, Yiddish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMAS</td>
<td>Sanskrit whence namaste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PALTA</td>
<td>OED sarcocol 1712 quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTA</td>
<td>OED scud 1845 quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAPIS</td>
<td>OED rope 1400 quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGUS</td>
<td>Ch Latin whence presage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMIRS</td>
<td>OED SMUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VENER</td>
<td>Ch whence venery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANEH</td>
<td>Ch KANEH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DORES</td>
<td>in Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRINK</td>
<td>Electronic Alveary, name in OED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHOSE</td>
<td>(Longmans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGIS</td>
<td>abbr legislate, or Latin whence legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEGAS</td>
<td>Ch Grk whence acromegaly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAETS</td>
<td>EDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIRUS</td>
<td>Ch true spelling of Pyrus pear tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RABAR</td>
<td>Pcon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAPPS</td>
<td>is in Somerset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIVY</td>
<td>Ch under skive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURUS</td>
<td>OED ennoble 1565 quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURAN</td>
<td>Ch Persian, whence Turanian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEBED: inferred.
FRANT: is in East Sussex
GAMAN: Ch Norse whence game
HABIN: is in West Sussex
LOUTH: is in Lincolnshire
MILAS: OED above 896 quote
PALE: OED palse
POKEL: Ch Ger whence pickle
RAPIS: OED rape 1502 quote
RIBER: is in Derbyshire
SELON: Roget, OED intension 1826 quote