

# FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS WORDS

REX GOOCH

Letchworth, Herts, England

rexgooch@ntlworld.com

This article is mainly concerned with what I will call Forwards and Backwards words, in which the letters progress forwards through the alphabet to the middle of the word, then backwards. The reverse, Backwards and Forwards words, are also dealt with. However, to begin, I recapitulate the simpler cases of words in which each successive letter occupies a later position in the alphabet (which, clearly, I must call Forwards words), and those in which each successive letter occupies an earlier position in the alphabet (Backwards words).

In a number of categories, there are many common words, so making a reasonable party game. Of course, should you get hooked on it, you might call it "Uppers and Downers"!

## Forwards Words

These, and Backwards words, have been dealt with in the past (eg Susan Thorpe's [reverse] alphomic words in *Word Ways*, August 1995). That article specialises in a number of aspects, such as alphabet-spanning words (which start with an A and end with a Z, or vice-versa), not dealt with in this article.

We may wish to insist that each successive letter is actually later in the alphabet (strictly increasing, eg ABHOR), or we may choose to allow repeated letters (monotonically increasing, eg AFFIX): for the sake of space, the lists will contain a selection of the latter, ie both types. The reader may jettison those with repeated letters if desired. Forwards words are not very common, although there a number of everyday examples.

word length	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL
strict	201	47	9	1		258
monotonic	489	149	29	1	1	669 (includes row above)

The numbers and lists exclude words which consist merely of repeated letters such as OOOO, ZZZZ. A selection follows:

### 5-letter words

ABBEY	ABBOT	ABHOR	ABORT	ABUZZ	ADDER	ADEPT	ADIOS
ADOPT	AEGIS	AFFIX	AFOOT	AGIST	AGLOW	ALLOT	ALLOW
ALLOY	ANNOY	BEEFY	BEFIT	BEGIN	BEGOT	BELLS	BELLY
BELOW	BENNY	BERRY	BETTY (verb)	BIJOU	BILLS	BILLY	BITTY
BLOOP	BLOWY	BOOST	BOOTY	BOSSY	CELLO	CHILL	CHIMP
CHINO	CHIPS	CHIVY	CHOPS	CHOUX	DEEMS	DEIST	DEITY
DELLS	DEMOS	DERRY	DILLY	DIPPY	DIPSY	DIRTY	DITTY
DIVVY	DOORS	DORTY	DOTTY	EMPTY	FILLY	FILMS	FILMY
FIRST	FISTY	FLOOR	FLOSS	FORTY	GHOST	GILLY	GIMPY
GIPSY	GLORY	GLOSS	HILLS	HILLY	HINNY	HIPPY	
HO-OOO (Ch)		HOOPS	HORSY	ILOST (vf)	INOPY	JOTTY	KLOPS
KNOOP	KNORR	LOOPS	LOOPY	LOSSY	LOSTY (vf)	LUVVY	MOORS
MOPSY	MOSSY	NOOPS	NOTTY	OOOPS (vf)			

**6-letter words**

ABBESS ABBOTT (TEA, or many names in OED text) ABDEST ABHORS ACCENT  
 ACCEPT ACCESS ACCOST ADDERS AFFLUX ALMOST BEGINS BELLOW  
 BIJOUX BILLOW BIOPSY BLOTTY CHILLS CHILLY CHINTZ CHIPPY  
 CHITTY CHIVVY CHOOSY CHOPPY CLOTTY DEHORT  
 DEIMOS (satellite of Mars) DIMPSY EFFLUX EFFORT FILMOT FLOORS FLOOSY  
 GHOSTY GLOOPY HILLOR KNOTTY OOOOPS (vf)

**7-letter words**

ADEFLOR (TEA) AGNOSTU (TEA) ALLOQUY BEGHOST BILLOWY CHINNOR (Oxon)  
 DEGLORY EFFGILL (in UK) EGILOPS FILLOTT (vf) GILLOPY (vf)

**8-letter words and longer**

AEGILOPS (8 letters) CHILL LOSS (9 letters, TEA)

**Backwards Words**

word length	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL
strict	213	44	4			261
monotonic	470	183	38	3	1	695 (includes row above)

Please refer to the notes for Forwards words, and note how very similar the numbers are. A selection follows:

**5-letter words**

FEEDD (vf) GEDDA (Pull) HEDDA (pname) IIGGE (vf) JIBBA (Pull) KHEDA KIFFE (vf)  
 LICCA LIFED MECCA NIGGA OGEED ONLIE OOHed (OSPD)  
 PLICA PLIED POKED POLKA POMME POOKA QOLLI (FTD)  
 ROCCA ROKED ROLIC ROMIC SKIED SKIFF SNIFF SOLED  
 SOLFA SOLID SONIC SPEED SPIED SPOKE SPOOF SPOOK  
 SPOOL SPOON TONED TONGA TONIC TONKA TONNE TREED  
 TRIED TROKE TROLL UNFED UNLED UPPEd URGED VOLGA  
 VROOM WICCA WOODED WRONG YOKED YUCCA ZONED ZOOID  
 ZYMIC

**6-letter words**

JIGGED KHEDDA (vf) LIGGED (vf) MIFFED NIGGED POLLED PONICA POOLED  
 RIGGED ROLFED ROLLED ROOKIE ROOMIE SPLIFF SPOKED SPONGE  
 TOFFEE TOLLED TOOLED TSONGA UPFEED URONIC VOLLEE (vf)  
 VOMICA WIGGED WOLFED YOLKED YTTRIA YUPPIE  
 YVONNE (vf or pname) ZONKED ZOOMED

**7-letter words**

OONHEED PIGFEED SNIFFED SPONGED SPOOFED SPOOKED SPOOLED  
 SPOONED TROLLED USKIBA (vf) VOLLIED (vf) VROOMED  
 WOOLLED WRONGED YSPONNE ZYXOMMA (NZ)

**8-letter words and longer**

ROLLFEED (8) SPOONFED (8, no hyphen!) TROLLIED (8) SPOON-FEED (9)

**Forwards and Backwards Words**

Forwards and Backwards words are divided into half: in the first half, the letters are in strictly ascending alphabetic order; and in the second half they are in strictly descending alphabetic order. They may be visualised approximately as an inverted V. An example is AGYRIA. For words of

even length, there need be no relationship between the central two letters. By contrast, the central letter in a word with an odd number of letters is defined as being common to both sequences, so must be nearer the end of the alphabet than any other letter in the word.

One possible constraint, applicable only to words with an even number of letters, is that the two central letters be the same (doubled letters), eg COTTON.

A second possible constraint (alphabetic halves) is to require the letters in each half of the word to come from different halves of the alphabet (though it is logically necessary to exclude the central letter in odd-length words from the alphabetic constraint). There are clearly two possibilities: A-M then N-Z (eg CHURN), or N-Z then A-M (eg OPTIC). Even-length words of the type A-M:N-Z are essentially those reported as "to and fro" words by Susan Thorpe in the August Kickshaws (eg CHIUSO): their first letter is necessarily the letter nearest the start of the alphabet, and their right central letter is the letter nearest the end of the alphabet. Similarly, words of even length with the N-Z:A-M constraint have the lefthand central letter as nearest the beginning, and the last letter as nearest the end of the alphabet.

The result is that odd-length words can be divided into A-M:N-Z, N-Z:A-M, and Other. Even-length words can be divided into those with doubled letters, A-M:N-Z, N-Z:A-M, and Other.

word length	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
alphabetic halves A-M:N-Z	68	14	1				
alphabetic halves N-Z:A-M	80	13					
doubled letters	n/a	226	n/a	6			
Total (includes Others)	1988	1867	298	154	19	5	1

Except for the rarer cases, the following are a selection of more common words:

#### 5-letter words with Alphabetic Halves A-M:N-Z

ABUTS      ACTON      BISON      CHURN      DEVON      ELSON (Pull)FLURN      FLY-UP  
GLUTS      HIWUN (vf)      ILTON (Somerset)      KLUTR (Old Norse, cf Old Eng clut, Eng clout)

#### 5-letter words with Alphabetic Halves N-Z:A-M

NORMA (square or pname)      NOTED      OPTED      OPTIC      OSTIA (Pull)PRYME  
QUYKE (vf)      RUVID      STUKA (vb or German plane)      STYLE      STYLI  
SUZIE (pname)      TUZLA (Bosnia)      TWYLE      WYZLE (vf)

#### Other 5-letter words

ABUSE      ABYSM      ACRID      ACUTE      AD LIB      AIMED      AISLE      ALOHA  
ALONG      ALPHA      AMONG      AMPLE      AMUSE      ANTIC      APRON      ARSON  
BEIGE      BELIE      BILGE      BIPED      BLOKE      BLOND      BLURB      BLUSH  
BORED      BORON      BOSOM      BOUND      BOWIE      BRUSH      BRUTE      BUXOM  
CELEB      CERIC      CHOKE      CHUNK      CHUTE      CILIA      CIRCA      CITED  
CIVIC      CLONE      CLUNK      CORED      COSEC      COULD      COUTH      COWED  
COXED      CRUMB      CRWTH      DEWED      DINED      DIRGE      DIVED      DIXIE  
DOTED      DOUSE      DOWSE      DOZED      DRUID      DRUNK      ELSIE (pname)  
ELUTE      ENROL      ENVOI      EPSOM (Surrey)      FILED      FIRED      FIXED  
FLUID      FLUKE      FLUME      FLUNG      FLUNK      FLUSH      FLUTE      FORGE  
FOUND      FOXED      GLUED      GLYPH      GNOME      GORGE      GOUGE      GOURD  
HINGE      HIRED      HOPED      HOSED      HOUND      HOUSE  
HOXHA (former Albanian premier)      HOYLE (word, or games rules, or Fred, steady state universe)  
INTRA      INURE      JOSIE (pname)      JOULE      KLUNK      KNURL      KORMA  
LOPED      LOUSE      LOUTS      LOVED      LOXIC      MOPED      MORON      MORPH  
MOTIF      MOULD      MOUND      MOUSE      MOUTH      MOVIE      NOVUM      PRUNE  
QUYTE (Pull)      ORTON (Joe, playwright)      OSTRTE      PRUNE      QUYTE (Pull)      RUYNE      STUNG  
STUNK      STUPA      TWYNE      TWYTE      XYZYX (Pcon, LA coy)

**6-letter words with Alphabetic Halves: A-M:N-Z**

ABIPON BELTON CHITON DILTON (Marsh, Wiltshire)ELMTON (Derbyshire)  
 FULTON (Avon) GILSON (Warwickshire) HILTON (Cumbria, etc)

For words beginning D to H, I found only places! For others, see WW2001-224

**6-letter words with Alphabetic Halves: N-Z:A-M**

NORMED NOSHED ORTIGA STYLED STYMIE

**6-letter words with Doubled Letters**

ABIIBA (palindrome, Pcon, as ADIIDA) ANOONE BEGGED BILLED BILLIE BINNED  
 BOTTLE BOTTOM BUZZED COPPLE CORRIE COTTON  
 DETTOL (proprietary germicide) DIMMED DIPPED DOTTED DOZZLE  
 EQUULI (Sted) FILLED FINNED FITTED FIZZLE GILLIE GINNED HINNIE  
 HIPPED HIPPIE HISSED HOPPED HORRID IOUUTE (vf) JOTTED KOPPIE  
 LOPPED LUVVIE MOPPED MOTTLE MUZZLE NOZZLE PUZZLE  
 RUZZOM (vf) SWYYNE (vf) TUZZLE

**Other 6-letter words**

ABJURE ABOUND ABSURD ABUSED ACETIC ADIPIC ADORED AFRICA  
 AISLED ALMOND ALTHEA (plant or pname) AMOEBA AMUSED ANOMIE ANYONE  
 AORTIC ASTUTE BEGONE BEHOLD BELIED BELONG BELTED BELUGA  
 BEMUSE BENZOL BERTHA BEYOND BILKED BIONIC BISTRO BLOUSE  
 BLOW-UP BORZOI BOSTON (word, also in Lincolnshire) BOWLED BOW TIE CELTIC  
 CENTRE CERUSE CHINED CHOKED CHOREA CHROME CISTIC CITRIC  
 CLOSED CLOTHE CLOYED COPIED COPULA CORKED CORNEA CORONA  
 COSMIC COUPLE COUPON COWRIE DEFIED DEFUSE DELUGE DEMURE  
 DENIED DEPUTE DERMIC DEVOID DILUTE DIMPLE DIPOLE DISHED  
 DOUSED ELOPED ELUTED ENSUED ENSURE ENTOMB ENVIED ENZYME  
 FILMIC FISHED FLORID FLOUTS FLOWED FLUTED FORGED FORMIC  
 FOILED GIRLIE GIRTON (College, village, Cambridgeshire) GLORIA GLOVED GNOMIC  
 GOWNED GRUNGE HINGED HORNED HOUSED  
 HUYTON (seat of former UK premier) IMPURE IMPUTE INRUSH INSOLE INTONE  
 INURED INVOKE JOSTLE JOWLED KORUNA KOUROI (on Parthenon) LOUNGE  
 LOUVRE LOWRIE MOPSIE (vf) MORTON ('s Fork) MOUTON N-TUPLE OSTROG  
 PRUNED QUYTED (vf, = quit) STUPID TUWYTE (lapwing)

**7-letter word with Alphabetic Halves A-M:N-Z**

I found an alleged word ACHWSRQ, which I cannot source.

**Other 7-letter words**

ABJURED ACETONE ACRYLIC ADORNED BEGONIA BEMUSED BENZOIC BILTONG  
 BLOUSON CENTRED CHINKED CHOROID CLOTHED CLOWNED DELTOID DELUGED  
 DEMONIC DILUTED DIMPLED DISUSED EMPTIED ENSURED FLORIDA LOUTED  
 GLORIED HISTONE IMPUTED INSURED JOSTLED KNOTED LOUVRED  
 MORWONG NORYSHE ORYZOID (Sted) STUYRNE (= stern)

**8-letter words with Doubled Letters**

BDELLIDA (but perhaps should end just D or DAE) BEFOOLED BEHOOLFE (vf)  
 BLOSSOME (vf) CHIVVIED GLOSSOID

**Other 8-letter words**

ACENTRIC ACHROMIC BELONGED BENZYLIC BIOPSIED CENTROID  
 CHORUSED COSTUMED DEFORMED DELOUSED DIOPTRIC EMPURPLE  
 FORTUNED FORTY-ONE GLORY-PEA HIRSUTED INSTROKE INTURNED  
 LOST LIFE (BI) MORWYNGE

**Other 9-letter words**

ADJOURNED BIOSTROME CELOSOMIA/C CENTUPLED CENTURIED DISTURBED  
 DISTURNED (and other DIS...EDs) ENPRYSONE (OED imprison) FIRST-POLE (ridge piece)  
 HIRSUTOID (Sted)

**Other 10-letter words**

ADENOTOMIC CHOP-STROKE ENPRYSONED IMPRYSONED INPRYSONED

**Other 11-letter word**

BELOSTOMIDA (should end -AE?)

**Backwards and Forwards Words**

Backwards and Forwards words have letters which go strictly backwards through the alphabet in their first half but strictly forwards in their second half, and may be visualised as a V, eg NICER. Comments and possible constraints are similar to those given above for Forwards and Backwards words, with the following amendments. For even-length words of the type A-Z:M-N, the left central letter is nearest the start of the alphabet, and the last letter is nearest the end, eg HEARTY. For even-length words of the type M-N:A-Z, the right central letter is nearest the start of the alphabet, and the first letter is nearest the end, eg RONDEL.

word length	5	6	7	8	9
alphabetic halves A:M:N-Z	95	12	2		
alphabetic halves N-Z:A:M	72	11	1		
doubled letters	n/a	240	n/a	20	
Total (includes Others)	1716	1571	109	8	1

These results are similar to those of the Forwards-Backwards case, except for the smaller number of words, in this case, of length 7 or more.

Except for the cases where any word is rare, the following is a selection of more common words:

**5-letter words with Alphabetic Halves A-M:N-Z**

EBANO (Pull) ENANY FEARS FEAST GEARS HEAPS HEART  
 HEAVY IDANT JEANS KHANS LEANS LEANT LEAPS LEARS  
 LEARY LEAST LIBOR (bank rate) LIERS MEANS MEANT MEATY  
 MIAOU/W MIDST

**5-letter words with Alphabetic Halves N-Z:A-M**

POACH ROACH RODEL (Western Isles) SNACK SNAIL SPACE SPADE  
 TRACE TRACK TRAIL USBEG VRAIL WRACK YODEL  
 ZWADE (Dutch, so swath)

**Other 5-letter words**

ECADS FECES GECKO HEADS HEADY HEALS HEDGY IGADS  
 JEBEL KEACH KECKS KICKS LEACH LEAFY LEAKS LIBEL  
 LICIT LICKS LIGHT MEALS MEDES MICKY MIGHT NEARS  
 NGAIO NICER NICKS NIFTY NIGHT NIHIL OLDEN  
 OMAGH (recent massacre, N Ireland) OMENS ONCER PEACE PEACH PEAKY  
 PEALS PEARS PEATY PIANO PICKY PIERS PIETY PIGMY  
 PLACE PLAIT PLANE PLANT PODGY POESY POINT  
 Q-KELT (Ch, type of Celt) REACH REACT READY REALM REAMS REBEL  
 REDOX RIALS RICIN RICKS RIDER RIDGY RIGHT RIGOR  
 ROADS ROAST ROBES ROBIN ROBOT ROCKY RODEO  
 RODIN (sculptor) ROILS ROMPS SCABS SCALP SCALY SCART  
 SCARY SEAMY SEARS SHACK SHADE SHAFT SHALT SHAN'T

SHEIK	SICKO	SIDES	SIGHS	SIGHT	SKEIN	SKIMP	SKIMS
SLABS	SLACK	SLAIN	SLANT	SLAPS	SLEPT	SLIMY	SLIPS
SMACK	SMART	SMELT	SNAFU	SNAGS	SNIPT	SOAPY	SOBER
SOCKS	SOFTY	SOILS	SOLOS	SPAIN	SPARS	SPELT	SPENT
SPIKY	SPORT	TEACH	TEAMS	TEARY	THAIS	THEFT	THEIR
TIBET	TIE-IN	TIERS	TIGHT	TOADY	TOAST	TOILS	TRACT
TRAIN	TRAMP	TRAPS	TRIMS	TRIPT	TSARS	ULCER	UMBER
UNDER	UNHIT	UNITY	USERS	VIALS	VIDEO	VIGIL	VIGOR
WEANS	WEARY	WHACK	WHELP	WICKS	WIDEN	WIDOW	WIGHT
WRAPS	WRENS	WRIST	XIANS (Xian, China)		XOLOX (Mexico)		YEARS
YEAST	YOMPS	YUCKY	ZEALS	ZIBET			

**6-letter words with Alphabetic Halves A-M:N-Z**

HEANOR (Derbyshire) HEARTY KEANOS (Anc Grk root of ocean) KHANSU LIENOR  
MEANOR

**6-letter words with Alphabetic Halves N-Z:A-M**

PONADE RONDEL SPOACH TROCHI UTRACK Y-TRACK (Ch)

**6-letter words with Doubled Letters**

FEDDER (vf)	GEBBET	GEDDER	GEDDIT (Ch)	HEBBEN	HEDDIR	JIBBER
JIGGLY	KIBBER	KIDDER	LEBBEK	LIBBER	MEDDES	NEDDER
NIGGLY	ONE-ERS	PEBBLY	PEDDER	PIGGIN	POLLUX	
QIBBEL (Hebrew, whence cabbala)		REDDEN	RIBBER	RIDDEN	ROBBER	SEA-AIR
SHEENY	SHEERS	SLEEKY	SLEEPS	SLEETY	SOCCER	SOFFIT TEDDER
TIDDLY	TIFFIN	TROOPS	UREERU (Pcon)	VEDDER	VOFFIS (vf)	
WHEELS	WIDDER	WIGGLY	WOBBLY	WOLLOP	YEDDER	YOBOS
ZOCCOS (Ch)		ZWEEPY (vf)				

**Other 6-letter words**

EDACIS (Latin root of edacious)		FEALTY	FECKLY	GECKOS	GEDACT	HEADER
ICACIN	JIB-GUY	JIHADS	KEBABS	KIBITZ	LEADEN	LEAD-IN LIBELS
LIEDER	LIFERS	MEADOW	MIDAIR	MIGHTY	NIACIN	NICELY NICEST
NICETY	NIECES	OLD BOY	OLDEST	OLEFIN	ONCERS	ONCOST PEACHY
PECANS	PEDALOX	PEDANT	PIANOS	PIDGIN	PIECES	PIG BIN PIGSTY
PLACET	PLAINS	PLEADS	PLENTY	PLIANT	PLIERS	PLIGHT POLDER
POMADE	PONCHO	PONDER	READER	REALTY	REBELS	RECAN RECENT
REDACT	RED-HOT	RHEIMS (France)		RICHLY	RIDERS	RIGORS ROBERT
RODENT	RODEOS	ROMANY	ROMEOS	SCALPS	SCANTY	SEA-COW SECANT
SHACKS	SHADOW	SHANTY	SHEARS	SICILY	SICKLY	SIGNOR SKEINS
SKIERS	SKIMPY	SLACKS	SLICES	SLIDER	SLIEST	SLIGHT SMACKS
SMARTY	SMEARS	SNAILS	SNEAKY	SO BE IT	SOLACE	SOLDER SOLELY
SOLEMN	SOMBER	SPACES	SPADES	SPECKS	SPHINX	SPICES SPIDER
SPIGOT	SPLINT	SPOILT	TEA-BOY	THEBES (= Theban)		THE BIZ (BI)
THEIRS	THEIST	THEORY	TID-BIT	TIDILY	TIGERS	TOASTY
TOBAGO (vf or W Indies)	TOKENS	TOMBOY	TRACER	TRACEY (pname)		TRADES
TRAINS	TRAMPS	TREATY	TREBLY	TREMOR	TRIBES	TRICKY TRICOT
T-SHIRT	ULCERS	UNBELT	UNEASY	UNFAIR	UPMOST	URACIL URCHIN
URGENT	USABLY	USHERS	UTMOST	VICARS	V-NECKS	V-SIGNS WEAKLY
WHACKO	WHELPS	WIDENS	WIFELY	WONDER	WREAKS	WRECKS WRIEST
WRIGHT	WRISTY	YEASTY	YODELS	YOICKS	YOKELS	YONDER ZEALOT
ZONARY						

**7-letter words with Alphabetic Halves A-M:N-Z**

LIBANOS (Anc Grk, whence olibanum) LECANOR (?)

**7-letter word with Alphabetic Halves N-Z:A-M**

TROCHIL

**Other 7-letter words**

GEDACKT	HEBACHI (vf)	MIDAIRES (OSPD)	NICANOR (pname, eg OED needful)		
NIGAGIN (commercial preservative)	OLFACTY	OLIGIST	PEDALOS	PICADOR	
PLEADER	PLIABLY	PLIADES	POLDERS	PONCHOS	PONDERS
RONDELS	RONDINO	SLICKLY	SMIDGIN	SNIDEST	SOLDERS
SOMEHOW	SPICILY	SPIDERY	TREACLY	TEADER	TRICEPS
TRICKSY	TRIDENT	UNKEMPT	USEABLY (OSPD)		VOCABLY
VOIDERS	WOMB-JOY	WONDERS	YOKELRY	YONDERS	ZOLAIST
Z-PLASTY					

**8-letter words with Doubled Letters**

SHEDDENS (Strathclyde)	SHEDDERS	SKIDDERS	SKIDDIKS (EDD)	SLEDDERS
SLIBBERY	SLIDDERS	SLIDDERY	SMIGGINS	SNEDDENS (EDD)
SNIBBINS (EDD)		SNIFFILY	SNIGGINS (Scot Nat Dict)	SPIFFILY
SPIGGITY (vf)	SPIGGOTY	TRECCHRY (vf)	TROLLOPS	TROLLOPY
				UNMEEKLY

**Other 8-letter words**

FEDAHIST (TEA)		LIBADIST (Roget)		LIFEBELT	OLEAGINY
PICADORS	PIEDFORT	PLEADERS	POLKA-DOT	RONCADOR	ROME CITY
RONDINOS (Ch)		SLIDABLY	SOD CABIN	SOLECIST	SOLEMNTY
SOLICITY	SOLIDEST	SPLICERS	SPONGILY	THE DEITY	TIE-BACKS
TONICITY	TREADERS	TRIADIST	TRIDAILY	TROJANRY	UNDAINTY
UNHEARTY	UNIFACES	URBACITY	VOLCANOS	WOLF-BELT	YONDMOST
ZUMBADOR					

**Other 9-letter words**

PONCA CITY (near Wichita)	RONCADORS	SPONDEIOS (Anc Grk, whence spondee)
TRIDAKNOS (Anc Greek, whence tridacna)		
TRONADORS (sing. is Mount, see OED orohydrography)		UNHEADERS (OED unhead)
UNHEADEST (OED unhead vb)	UNLEADEST (OED unlead vb)	

**10-letter phrase**

POLICE MOTU (Bl)

All words are in the OED or Webster 2, except those marked Bl = Bloomsbury Thesaurus, Ch = Chambers, EDD = English Dialect Dict, FTD = The Food Trade Directory of Trade Marks and Brand Names, 1961, Lo = Longman's Dict, NZ = Nomenclator Zoologicus, OSPD = Official Scrabble Players Dict, Pcon = Palindromicon, pname = personal name, Pull = Pulliam, Roget = Roget's Thesaurus, Sted = Stedman's Medical Dict, TEA = The Electronic Alveary, vf = OED variant form, ? = unsourced.