STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE

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So sang Bing Crosby. In the current context, however, it describes the chopping of a word into two halves, each half with the same number of letters. Hence only words with an even number of letters can be considered. The letters of the first half and second half, respectively, of a parent word are rearranged to make two new words, the offspring. But not just any words. The two offspring have to be related logologically. For example, one of the offspring may consist of straight line letters whilst the other consists of curved letters; or the two may both be Miami words. This article examines a range of offspring genres. By implication, certain of the parent words are of interest in their own right, for example those in which one half consists of straight line letters and the other half curved letters. Selected examples are given. Most of the unreferenced words can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition. Place names are taken from The United States Board on Geographic Names. Locations are populated places unless indicated otherwise. The words offered are categorised according to letter design, letter pattern, letter content, and letter order.

LETTER DESIGN

1. Straight and Curved offspring

In each case, one offspring is made from straight line letters and the other from curved letters.

MENI.SCU  
MINE + CUSS
TEMAT.OSSOU
(Mali)
MATTE + OSUSO
(a mask)  (Ibo language = sweat)

The second example here is an all-locational one, as ‘inane’ is also a place name.

OSCU.LATE
COUS + TALE
SOUSU.ANINE
(Mozambique)
SUSUO + INANE
(Buku Susuo is a mountain in Indonesia)

2. Tall and Narrow offspring

One of each pair of offspring is made from tall letters (bdghklpqty) and the other from narrow letters (acemnorsuvwxz). The dotted letters i and j are not admitted in either capacity here.

typh.oons
hypt + soon
(hypped)
lytyl.nesse
(t littleness)

lyyth + sense
(Finland)
smoo.thly
moos + lyth
(= lith, a limb)
unsau.ghtly
unsaus + lyght
(S.American 2-toed sloths)
(light)
3. Horizontally, and Vertically, Symmetrical offspring

One offspring in each case is made from letters which exhibit horizontal symmetry (BCDEK) and one from letters which exhibit vertical symmetry (AMTUVWY). Letters which exhibit both of these types of symmetry (HIOX) are not admitted.

KEB.AYA
  (type of tunic)
BEK  +  YAA
  (beak)  (one)

ATT.A.CKED
TATA  +  DECK

LETTER PATTERN

1. Miami offspring

Each member of the four pairs of offspring conforms to the Miami letter pattern 12?12.

RE-REF.I.NING
  SASSA.RARAS
REFRE  +  INGIN
  (refer)  (engine)
ASSAS  +  RASRA
  (assets)  (India)

ARRAIGNING
  DEDELIGNING
ARIAR  +  NGING
  (El Ariar - depression in Algeria)  (Cameroon)
DEIDE  +  NGING
  (died)

These two parent words are both pair isograms (2 of each different letter).

2. Isomorphic offspring

In addition to being Miami words, REFRE and INGIN (above) are isomorphs, sharing the same letter pattern 12312. In both examples below, not only are the two offspring isomorphs, they also have the same vowel-consonant patterns. Further, GABAG and LETEL are palindromic isomorphs. Note also that the letters of RAPPA and DELLE are in the reverse order in which they occur in the parent word APPAR.ELLE.

APPAR.ELLED
  BAGGA.TELLE
RAPPA  +  DELLE
  (to beat, rap)  (deal)
GABAG  +  LETEL
  (a gas-bag - Gaelic)  (well - Chad)

LETTER CONTENT

In 1, 2 and 3 below, all the letters of the offspring are pertinent; in 4, 5 and 6 this only applies to some of the letters.

1. Roman and Non-Roman offspring

In each case, one offspring is made from Roman Numeral letters (IVXLCDERM); the other is not.

DIVISORS
  CLIMBERS
VIDI  +  ROSS
  MILC  +  BRES
  (milk)  (brass)
XILI.NOUS
  (of cotton)
ILIX  +  ONUS
  (= ilex, the holm-oak)
2. First and Second Halves of the Alphabet offspring

One offspring is made from the letters A - M, and the other from the letters N - Z.

3. Odd and Even Letters of the Alphabet offspring

These words are scarce because all the vowels occupy odd number positions in the alphabet.

4. Monoconsonantal offspring

Both these parent words are inferred. Papoose is a genuine variant of papoose, a North American Indian young child. If the child is a girl, perhaps she could be called a pappoose. Nounness is defined as 'the quality or nature of a noun'. Sweetness, 'the quality of being sweet' can be pluralised to sweetinesses; hence, by inference, nounnesses.

5. Monovocalic offspring


6. **AEIOU offspring**

An AEIOU word is one in which each of the five major vowels occurs just once, in any order. The following two double AEIOU parent words house one AEIOU set in each half of the word so that each offspring is an AEIOU word.

- **RADICULONE.UROPATHEIES (both in Dorland’s MD)** PSEUDOINTRA.LIGAMENTOUS
- **COLIAUNDRE** + EUTROPHIAS  DENTIPAROUS + GELATINOSUM
  (collander)  (a medical word)  (producing teeth)  (a medical word)

**LETTER ORDER**

1. **Pair Isograms make Reversal offspring**

These four parent words are pair isograms. Specifically, they are split pair isograms with the letters of the first half of the word rearranged to make the second half of the word. Each parent gives rise to two offspring which are reversals.

- **BALE.ABLE** + **ELBA SITE + ETIS GINS + SNIG DINE + ENID**
  - (**ABLE**) + (**ELBA SITE**) + (**ETIS GINS**) + (**SNIG DINE**) + (**ENID**)

- **MANZI.NZIMA** (hill - Zimbabwe)
- **NAZIM + MIZAN** (military viceroy or governor in India-Web2)

2. **Alphomic, and Reverse Alphomic, offspring**

In each example below, the first offspring is an alphomic word (letters in alphabetical order), and the second is a reverse alphomic word (letters in reverse alphabetical order).

- **ESCA.LLOP** + **DEAN.SHIIP** + **COLLEC.TION**
  - (**ACES**) + (**POLL**) + (**ADEN + HIPS**) + (**CELLO + TONIC**)

Each of these three parent words is also capable of making two alphomic offspring*

- **FOILINGS** + **STOC.KTON** + **TEND.ERED**
  - (**FILO* + (**SNIG GINS* + **)COST* + (**TONK KNOT* + **)DENT* + (**REED DEER**

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An alternative to the ‘straight done the middle’ concept is to divide a parent word into three parts, each with the same number of letters. Then, as before, rearrange each set of letters to make a word according to some specification. For example, each of the offspring below is monovocalic.

- **UNGU.ARA.NTEED** + **MALAD.MINIS.TERED**
  - (**UGUN + RANA + DEET**) + (**MADAL + NIMIS + DETER**
  (Nigeria)  (frog genus)  (died)  (type of drum)  (Latin: excessively)