

KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws editor at drABC26@aol.com. Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

The Top Ten Favorite Words of 2004

Last year, the Merriam-Webster Company asked people who visited their website to list their favorite words. From thousands of submissions, the ten words entered most often appear here, in order of popularity:

1 defenestration	4 discombobulate	7 juxtapose	10 flibbertigibbet
2 serendipity	5 plethora	8 persnickety	
3 onomatopoeia	6 callipygian	9 kerfuffle	

When I first read the words in the M-W list, I wondered how some of them could have been chosen so often. I would never have thought these words would be familiar to enough people to wind up in the top ten. I had to look up the definitions of four of them! I can only conclude that the English-speaking world is being taken over by extraterrestrial linguists—a 21st century scenario similar to the 20th century movie “Invasion of the Body Snatchers”, but the new Body Snatchers are assimilating our language so rapidly that only the most esoteric words hold any fascination for them. Fellow readers, it’s time for a reality check! You are invited to send your list of top-ten words to be printed in the next Kickshaws. If your list has fairly common words, you are an Earthling, and you have nothing to fear but fear itself. But if your list has strange, bizarre, suspiciously alienesque words, well, America and the rest of the English-speaking world had better go on red alert! Apparently the word has gotten out that the English language welcomes words with open arms and blank pages. Pretty soon all the failed poets and other literary riff-raff from the four corners of the Milky Way Galaxy will be scattering their words on Merriam-Webster’s innocent little playground or dumping them all over the Oxford English Dictionary’s happy-go-lucky tree house. By this time next century, don’t expect there to be just 26 letters in the alphabet. Maybe 26,000 letters, and maybe 154 quadrillion words! At that point, the world will face its biggest crisis yet. Not a nasty plague, not evil comets crashing to earth, not a hideous absolute-zero ice age, not any of the run-of-the-mill, dime-a-dozen, lily-livered, ho-hum, been-there-done-that doomsday prophecies. No, this time it’s grimly real and really grim. There will be so many volumes of the Galactic English Dictionary that no one will be able to grow food, drive cars, wave to their friends, kiss their lovers, or play Nintendo anymore. Books will be everywhere, and they will be alive, thanks to all that sneaky interstellar technology. They will be smarter than humans. They will be walking down the streets, going into their homes, eating dinner, and finally, most ignominiously, they will write on humans. Human beings! People will become their desks. If you could see my desk, you would know what a terrible fate is in store for those poor people of the 22nd century. It Boggles the mind and Scrabbles the soul.

Farewell, Johnny Carson

Carnac the Magnificent died today. He was the “King of Late Night,” and his passing truly marks the end of an era. Carson’s career was magical. He was charismatic and comical as well as politically powerful. His “Tonight Show” monologues did more than entertain—they helped shape the opinion of the nation. In 1974, his quips helped overturn the career of the only US president whose last name is composed of letters that read the same upside down. He was married four times. Johnny’s first three wives were named Jody, Joanne, and Joanna. It is ironic that the marriages to the J ladies ended in divorce. Each one’s name has three letters in common with JOHNNY, but his fourth wife’s name, Alexis, has no letters in common. Carson had a fiery career, as his last name without its first letter shows. He was magnificent.

Ebay Novel

Instead of auctioning off souls in a jar, Blessed Virgin cheese sandwiches in plastic baggies, or temporary advertising space on human foreheads, I’m offering a different kind of auction on eBay. My auction is for co-authorship of a novel. The winning bidder will write a novel with me via email, instant messaging, and other electronic means. The opening bid is \$26,000. If you would like to look at this auction, go to eBay.com, type DR ALPHABET in the search box, and click on it. That takes you to a screen with one or more auction listings. Click on the listing titled “WRITE the EBAY NOVEL with DR ALPHABET.” That takes you into the complete listing, which explains the project, gives biographical and bibliographical information, shows a few pictures, and includes emails from readers along with my replies. If you would like to email a question to me about the auction, you can click on the email box located on the auction screen. Your question will be displayed with my reply in the auction listing. You can sign your email or leave it anonymous. If you mention Word Ways in your email, the magazine’s name will appear in the listing for as long as the auction lasts. I plan on renewing it until someone bids—even if it takes two or three years. Then the eBay Novel begins.

The Rainbow Colors

VIBGYOR is the mnemonic using the initial letters of the names of the seven rainbow colors from the lower to the higher light-wave frequencies. Often overlooked, the mnemonic using the last letters of the colors makes more sense: TO ENWED. The mnemonic ROY G. BIV represents the colors in the opposite direction. Its last-letter mnemonic is a female name: DEW N. EOT. The list below shows the color names arranged in VIBGYOR order. Each is accompanied by one or more things that make it unique within the seven. VIOLET, the first of the VIBGYOR colors, is chock full of magic—at least twice as much as any other rainbow color. It hums like an incredible letterplay machine.

- VIOLET begins with Roman numeral VI (6), and VIOLET has six different letters. It comes in sixth on at least six lists: (1) alphabetic by first letter, (2) alphabetic by last letter, (3) alphabetic by third letter, (4) alphabetic when letters of each word are arranged in reverse alphabetic order, (5) sums of alphabetic values, (6) letter weights (average letter value). It transdeletes to another color name, OLIVE, which leads into the transdeletion pyramid VIOLET OLIVE EVIL LIE EL E. Its letters can be sorted into two equal groups in an astonishing variety of ways: (1) half of its letters are consonants, half vowels, (2) half are first-half letters, half last-half letters, (3) half are even-numbered letters, half odd, (4) half are Roman numeral letters, half aren’t, (5) letters in the first half begin VIBGYOR color names, but letters in the last half don’t, (6) written in lowercase, it alternates between short and tall letters, (7) half of the letters are typed with the left hand,

and half with the right, (8) topologically, half can be printed with a single straight line (angled where necessary), and half cannot, (9) letters in the last half contain vertical lines, but letters in the first half do not. Finally, four letters have vertical symmetry (VIOT), three have horizontal symmetry (IOE). Two have vertical and horizontal symmetry (IO), and one has no symmetry (L).

- INDIGO is a zigzag word which changes alphabetic direction going from one letter to the next. It is the only color name spelled without E. INDIGO and BLUE are the only two color names having no letter in common. It has the most state name abbreviations (IN, ND). INDIGO and VIOLET have opposite vowel-consonant patterns. INDIGO and ORANGE in reverse (EGNARO) have the same vowel-consonant pattern. It has three Roman letters in palindromic order (IDI).
- BLUE divides into consonants on the left but vowels on the right, and even-numbered letters on the left but odd-numbered on the right. The consonants are in alphabetic order and the vowels in reverse alphabetic order. BLUE has the same letter weight as ORANGE, a perfect 10, and the two colors are collectively spelled with ten letters.
- GREEN has its four different letters appearing in another color name, ORANGE. Its first two letters and the first two letters of YELLOW transpose to spell another color name, GREY.
- YELLOW is the loudest color name, redividing into YELL OW! The alphabetic values add up to 92, the highest of the group, and its letter weight is 15.333, also the highest. It has the greatest number of straight lines—15.
- ORANGE forms words by successive deletions of terminal letters: ORANGE RANG AN. In VIBGYOR order it occupies the sixth position and has six letters. As previously noted, its reverse EGNARO has the same vowel-consonant pattern of INDIGO and the opposite of VIOLET. Its last three letters and the first two of RED transpose to spell GREEN.
- RED is the only word with a comparative that is a palindrome: REDDER. It has three letters, and it appears third which the color names are placed in reverse alphabetic order. It alternates consonants and vowels, and odd and even letters. Its letters appear in reverse alphabetic order. It is spelled with letters having one vertical line apiece. It begins with the musical syllable RE and ends with the musical note D. RE is the syllable representing the note D.

The following table shows the various numeric quantities of the letters spelling VIBGYOR words

		Letter Values	Sum	Letter Weight
Violet	6	22 9 15 12 5 20	83	13.833...
Indigo	6	9 14 4 9 7 15	58	9.666...
Blue	4	2 12 21 5	40	10
Green	5	7 18 5 5 14	49	9.8
Yellow	6	25 5 12 12 15 23	92	15.333
Orange	6	15 18 1 14 7 5	60	10
Red	3	18 5 4	27	9
All	36		409	11.3611...

A Tiny Whirlpool of Language

None means ZERO, the first digit in the decimal system, which uses combinations of the ten digits 0-9 to form the numbers. Removing the first letter from NONE leaves ONE, which begins with O, the symbol for ZERO, which means NONE. The ninth letter of the alphabet is I.

Substituting I for O changes NONE to NINE, the last of the digits. I is the Roman numeral for ONE, which begins O, which means NONE, which means ZERO...This is one of the tiny whirlpools of language.

Cheapskate Monthly

Ove Michaelsen found a journal called the Cheapskate Monthly. And why shouldn't there be? It doesn't sell well because its clientele are cheapskates. How about some other periodicals whose names illustrate their contents? Here are nine that I found in the Mad Magazine section of my mind.

Procrasti Monthly nator	Clastrphbic Times
Dysmonthic Lexly	Sleepwalker's Nightlyzzz
Absent-Minded Quar	P-P-P-Paranoid Annual?
Buuuuuuuuulemic Dispatch	
Obsessive Compulsive Obsessive Compulsive Obsessive Compulsive Bi-Monthly	

A Tale for the Thick-Skinned

According to Peter Newby," Dr. A. Noel Leonard, the director of new Bybwen's Ooze Zoo, led a safari to capture an African pachyderm known as a ylp, or, to the less well-informed, an elephant. Vital to the success of the emission was a Mexican named Pepe, the qualified marksman who possessed the expedition's tranquilizer gun. For a month they sought the big beast in vain. Then, suddenly, they came across a magnificent bull ylp which put all but the esteemed director and his Mexican assistant to flight. Calmly, the good doctor turned to his assistant and said 'Ply trade, Pepe. Dart ylp!'"

Trunk Call

"Whilst most folk are aware of the tendency of the ass to BRAY," says Peter, "how many are aware of the capacity of the ylp to create anagrams? In the days of yore, the elephant was said to BARY!"

Hannibal 'Usbandry

"With what did Hannibal cross the ylps?" Peter asks. "Various animals have been suggested over the centuries, chief among these being some sort of mountain goat, though just as strong a case has been made for the humble ass. Now, Darby Belsire proposes the OLFEND as being the most likely large domestic creature to have been put to the service of that historic Carthaginian. Probably better known as a brand of cigarette, this cameline beast of burden has a long history of employment by the Arabs."

Rhyming Cities

At least two Iowa cities are made of two syllables that rhyme: SPILLVILLE and SWALEDALE. There must be many other cities around the world with names like these. The editor notes MAHWAH, MILVILLE and BROWNTOWN in New Jersey—does it have a DOWNTOWN? Are there any in your state, country, continent, or hemisphere?

Once Upon a Time...

"Once upon a time" is a tautology, says Anil. "Whoever heard of twice upon a time?"

Thanks a Lot!

Anil points out that “Webster’s 2nd defines *pilandite* as ‘a leucocratic porphyry with phenocrysts, a groundmass of anorthoclase, and a little amphibole” and adds “Well at least I know what ‘a’, ‘with’, ‘of’, ‘and’, and ‘little’ mean.” I checked the definition and it concludes with “Cf. HATHERLITE”, a word that can’t be ignored. I turned to the H’s and there it was, glowing in its puzzling enigmaticity. Webster’s went all out and defined *hatherlite* as “an anorthoclase-hornblende-augite-syenite”. Simple clarity would have sufficed, but Webster’s includes the frills at no extra charge. Like Anil, I can say that I at least know what “an” means.

As I was Going to St. Ites

The pilandrite-hatherlite discussion in the previous kickshaw led me to compose the following on the old bones of a famous nursery rhyme:

As I was going to St. Ites
 I met a man with pilandites.
 Each pilandite had hatherlites.
 Each hatherlite had augites.
 Each augite had syenites.
 Anorthoclase-hornblende-augite-syenites,
 How many were going to St. Ites?

Change of State

Anil proposes the following way to convert one US state to another: “The letters of Kentucky can be rearranged to KNETYCUK and—if the border guards are a bit lax—can pass as Connecticut! (If that fails, try KNEKYCUT.) Likewise Iowa can pass as Hawaii (OWAI) and, if the guards are sleepy enough, Ohio can pass as Idaho (IOHO) and Carolina as California (CALIORNA). Any others? Well for dead asleep guards both Nebraska and Kansas might pass as Arkansas (ARKBENSA, AKNSSA), Washington as Wisconsin (WIGTONSHAN), Georgia as Oregon (OREAGIG), California as Florida (FLORIINCAA) and New Jersey as Virginia (WERJENSYE). But surely the most fickle state of all is Utah which can pass as *any* UTHA state! Except Michigan—no one can CHAIN GIM!”

Iowa Revisited

In the previous kickshaw, Anil said that Iowa can pass as Hawaii (OWAI), but in a similar fashion Hawaii can pass as Iowa by simply reversing its letters (IIAWAH). Note that the two state names are composed of letters having vertical symmetry. Does any other pair of states work so well together?

Dolphin Feedback Contest

Here is a tale of dolphins, courtesy of Anil: “A well-meaning soul recorded some dolphin sounds and later played them back to a pod of dolphins in hopes of communicating with them. Well, it must have worked because they all went quiet and quickly fled the area. Your challenge is to translate that recording. Send your entries to Kickshaws, which will choose the winner. The prize will be your very own pod of dolphins, or else a picture of one. (Not allowed: “Thank you for the giant sea tortoise.”)

Palindromes in Biology

“The anti-parallel complementary strands of the DNA double helix can be considered as encoded reversals of one another, encoded by the $G = C$, $A = T$ (or U in RNA) rule,” Anil writes. “As well, within a single nucleic acid strand encoded reversals of base sequences occur, notably in transfer RNA where they fold back onto each other dictating its vital trefoil-like structure. But recently, direct, not complementary, palindromes have been found in the Y chromosome (see Scientific America for December 2004, p 20). There they are postulated to provide the solution to a major long-term problem: how to screen out the inevitable faults or mutations which arise. Other chromosomes, including the X in females, occur in pairs, which are thought to screen each other. But the Y has no partner so it has to screen itself, which it apparently does via alignment and cross reading of these palindromic sequences. (*Parallel : anti-parallel* themselves, by the way, form a ‘word’ palindrome and a neat double: antonyms—opposites—and synonyms—still parallel!)”

Some More Truthful Equations

“Your ‘Prime Expressions’ in the May 1996 Kickshaws (p 111) equated certain sums with their number of letters,” Anil says. “Combining these with each other and with the other half-equations cited in the August and November 2004 Colloquy, a large number of ‘triplly truthful’ whole equations are possible in addition to the two in the Colloquies. (Triply means that the two sides are equal both in numerical sum and in the sum number of letters, and that these two sums equal each other.)”

1-6 A fourfold equality (six pairings, ie any two of these qualify)

$$\begin{aligned} \text{TWO} + \text{THREE} + \text{FIVE} + \text{FIVE} + \text{FIVE} &= \\ \text{THREE} + \text{THREE} + \text{SEVEN} + \text{SEVEN} &= \\ \text{FOUR} + \text{ONE} + \text{ONE} + \text{SEVEN} + \text{SEVEN} &= \\ \text{FOUR} + \text{FOUR} + \text{FOUR} + \text{FOUR} + \text{FOUR} &= 20 \end{aligned}$$

7-41 In addition (or subtraction) one can generate 35 more equations from your long list of half-equations since two of them equal 0, three equal 9, five equal 8, and seven equal 2 (ie, $1 + 3 + 10 + 21$ pairings). In addition, four of them equal 4, accounted for below.

42 Combining one of yours with one of mine gives

$$\text{ONE} + \text{FIVE} + \text{FIVE} = \text{TWO} + \text{FOUR} + \text{FIVE} = 11$$

43 Still, in all of this there appears only one simple four-term addition, my original (p 186)

$$\text{ONE} + \text{SEVEN} = \text{FOUR} + \text{FOUR},$$

and three four-term subtractions ($1-b = c-d$) from different combinations of three of yours (counted as 39-41 above), $\text{EIGHT} - \text{SIX} = \text{ELEVEN} - \text{NINE} = \text{FOURTEEN} - \text{TWELVE} = 2$

44 There is only one three-term equation: $\text{THIRTEEN} - \text{NINE} = \text{FOUR} = 4$

45-134 Adding these two half-equations to the other two 4’s in your list ($\text{NINE} - \text{SIX} + \text{ONE} = \text{FIFTEEN} - \text{TWELVE} + \text{ONE}$) and to the following ten half-equations which also total four each, makes another 90 combos!

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SIX} - \text{TWO} + \text{ZERO} &= \text{SEVEN} - \text{THREE} + \text{ZERO} = \text{NINE} - \text{SIX} + \text{ONE} = \\ \text{NINE} - \text{EIGHT} + \text{THREE} &= \text{NINE} = \text{FIVE} + \text{ZERO} = \text{ONE} + \text{THREE} = \text{ZERO} = \\ \text{SEVENTEEN} - \text{FOURTEEN} + \text{ONE} &= \text{NINETEEN} - \text{SIXTEEN} + \text{ONE} = \\ \text{EIGHTEEN} - \text{FIFTEEN} + \text{ONE} &= \text{EIGHTEEN} - \text{FOURTEEN} + \text{ZERO} = 4 \end{aligned}$$

Needed Words

Anil has a list of words that he wishes were in general usage for practical reasons. He has decided to place them before the Kickshaws public as a possible way of displaying these new coinages while realizing how extremely difficult it is for one to come up with a word that everyone uses. Of course, this is easy to accomplish if you're a well-known celebrity or rap group, or even a president who uses words in ways they weren't originally intended to say sentences that weren't originally imagined. Here are some of Anil's words.

atc. "Etc." means "*and* others, *and* so forth" but I often need a word meaning "*or* so forth", "*or* some such", "*or* something similar instead". I use "or etc." but feel downright unclean when I do because that has the ridiculous meaning of "or and others". I propose the analogous Latin phrase *aut cetera* "or others." I abbreviate it "atc." rather than the unwieldy "autc." This also makes it more easily recognizable as a parallel to etc. But even autc. would be better than nothing.

ito We have the word "respectively" to mean "in that order" when comparing two lists, but I pine for a term as short as the German expression "bzw" (abbreviation for *beziehungsweise*, "relativewise"), which is so used. I proposed this analogous abbreviation of the English "in that order". It's also modeled on the English abbreviation "ilo" for "in lieu of" which is in Web 3.

I make these proposals not expecting them to be adopted but to vent my frustration that there are no such words. I ask readers to do likewise, offering up their own pet peeve "needed words" or abbreviations. Maybe together we can compile a little dictionary and force it on the public, or on Messieurs Merriam and Webster, Funk and Wagnalls, Random and House, or Oxford and English

Punctuation Changes

In most cases, punctuation is much less a problem in English than the words that it punctuates. However, there are times when a simple punctuation mark doesn't have the power to do the job. Here are two punctuation marks I'd like to see.

Tilde hyphen: When a word that ordinarily uses a hyphen, such as hip-hop, appears at the end of the line and has to be continued on the next line, it isn't always clear whether the hyphen belongs in the word all the time or if it is just added to a word normally unbroken by a hyphen because the word's at the end of the line. Is the word hip-hop or hiphop? The solution is a tilde hyphen: hip~hop retains a regular hyphen when it appears within a line. But if there is a normal hyphen in hip-hop at the end of the line, then hiphop is a solid unhyphenated word in the middle of a line.

Slash line: Some poems are printed in stanzas that are separated by blank lines. When one stanza ends at the bottom of the page and another starts at the top of the next page, it gets confusing. Are the two stanzas meant to be a single stanza? Using a slash line would solve the problem. It would serve like a hyphen when (for instance) a four-line stanza has to be broken into two parts, as follows. Note that without the slash line the poem reads as two stanzas, the first three lines long, the second one line long.

Twinkle, twinkle, little car
How I wonder what you are.
From this distance, who could say

Cadillac or Chevrolet.

Scrabble Acronyms

“In response to the February Kickshaws,” says Anil, “I had a go at writing Scrabble acronyms that actually describe Scrabble itself, or an aspect of it. I’m sure one could do better with a bigger effort, but you may, if you’re a lenient grader, like one of these two quickies.”

Set Certain ‘Runes’ And Bring Big-scoring Lexical Enjoyment
Seven Chips, Rearranged, Allow Branded Board Logological Expression

Reigning Cats and Dogs

Jay Ames sends the following two lists showing his definitions for words beginning with a CAT or a DOG. This raises a question: there is a Catwoman in the comics and the movies, but why is there no Dogman?

CATABOLIC strong soap for felines	DOGBANE mountain herb, Scots doggie bone
CATABOLISH like a cat bowl: messy/empty	DOGBERRY park droppings
CATACAUSTIC lye/soda pussy	DOGCART he/she who totes pooches-in-arms
CATACHRESIS Croesus’s cat	DOGCOLLAR neckwear for parsons/priests
CATACOMBS feline grooming aids	DOGDAYS special playtime for pooches
CATADROMOUS road heppy cat	DOGE doggie palazzo in Rome
CATAFALQUE pussy-hawk cross	DOGEARED also known as cauliflower lobes
CATALAN Spanish cat	DOGFIGHT somethin’ flyboys get into
CATALEPSY cat fits	DOGFISH hybrid critter
CATALINA skinnier moogle	DOGGER BANKS depository for fishermen
CATALO short-legged as a Dachsi	DOGGEREL doggie ditties
CATALOG claw sharpener	DOGGISH very smelly when wet
CATALYST feline Debrett	DOGGO lie about/lie about everything
CATAMARAN two-hulled moogle	DOGGONE pooch left for parts unknown
CATAMOUNT horny Tom	DOGHOUSE married man’s bolt hole
CATAPHYLL Phyll’s pet pussy	DOGMA a real bitch, unquestionably
CATARACT wheezy feline	DOGMATIC bitch’s biter
CATASTASIS settled cat	DOGNAP trim the hound’s hide
CATATONIA where mousers retire to	DOGPADDLE for swatting its butt
CATERPILLAR scratching post	DOGRIB generally not for barbecuing
CATERWAUL feline Wailing Wall	DOG STAR Lassie, Old Yeller, Rin Tin Tin

Constrained Rewriting

How easy is it to rewrite a text by excluding certain parts of grammar without changing the meaning or the sound of the language too much? Here is a quick subjective study comparing constrained rewriting. In the first part, three familiar lines were rewritten without a different part of grammar each time. The resulting trios are listed beginning with the hardest to write and progressing to the easiest. (An omission indicates that the line needed no rewriting.) In the second part, Shakespeare’s “Tomorrow” soliloquy was rewritten without verbs and then without nouns. In all of these rewrites, replacing nouns was the most difficult by far, followed by replacing adjectives and then by replacing verbs. Participles and gerunds were allowed as long as they didn’t fit within a verb form: “I, writing this”, is all right but not “I am writing this”. Replacing prepositions was surprisingly simple. In writing new text, it would seem that nouns would still be most difficult, followed by verbs. The other parts of grammar would be much easier since they usually aren’t necessary for writing correct sentences.

No nouns

Now is when all good male ones should come to aid those who vote similarly
 The quick brown vulpine something jumps over the lazy canine something
 Shall I compare thee to that which is summery daily?

No adjectives

Now is the time for all of the do-gooders who are men to come to the aid of the party that
 they belong to
 The fox of brown quickly jumps over the dog of laziness

No verbs

Now! The time for all good men! To the aid of their party!
 The quick brown fox. What jumping movements! And over the lazy dog!
 In the future, I, comparing thee to a summer's day?

No pronouns

Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party to which the aforementioned men
 belong
 Shall the author compare the reader to a summer's day?

No prepositions

Now is the time that all good men should come and aid their party
 The quick brown fox jumps the lazy dog
 Shall I compare thee and a summer's day?

No adverbs

The present is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party

No articles

Now is that time for all good men to come to aid their party
 This quick brown fox jumps over that lazy dog
 Shall I compare thee to some summer's day?

No Verbs

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
 Creeping in this petty pace from day to day,
 And all our yesterdays lighting fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!
 Life! But a walking shadow, a poor player
 With struts and frets! His hour upon the stage,
 And then—no more! It, a tale
 By an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.

No Nouns

Futuristically, futuristically, futuristically,
 Creeping in pettily, pacing daily,
 All our temporal somethings have lighted foolish ones
 To journey to dusty, death-like nothing. Out, out, briefly glowing!
 Living, and walking darkly, playing poorly,
 Who struts and frets hourly, he is staging
 And then is seen no more! It is story-like,
 Told by one who is stupid, full, loud and furious,
 Signifying nothing.

The Prime Ministers, More and More

Sir Jeremy Morse sent some improvements on Jim Puder's article "The Prime Ministers, More or Less". In the article, Jim added or subtracted one or more letters from each Prime Minister's name and transposed the new set of letters; for example WALPOLE transdeletes to WALLOP and transadds to WALLOPER. Transdeletions are coded by a minus sign.

Newcastle CANDLE-WASHER (OED)	Russell --SULLES (OED)
Devonshire OVERFINISHED (Chambers)	Gladstone DESOLATING
Shelburn BRUSHLESSNESS (OED)	Balfour --LABOUR
Portland DEPLORATION (OED)	Asquith --QUAITS (OED)
Addington --DONATING	Baldwin --BILAND (OED)
Perceval DEDIGNATION (OED)	Chamberlain PULMOBRANCHIAE (OED)
Liverpool OVER-POLEMICAL (OED)	Attlee PATELET (OED)
Canning NUANCING (Chambers)	Callaghan ARCHANGELICAL (OED)
Melbourne WHOLE NUMBER	Wellington --TOWELLING

Junkie's Song

Jeremy enclosed a "logological poem with an obvious alphabetical motif." Readers will probably detect it as the words go marching by in this surrealistic tale of animals and music.

Let wolves baa, aardvarks hiss, and seas ebb back;
 Draw vaccine on odd days from carefree eels;
 Sniff fried egg garnished with hot griddle-cakes,
 Whose radii I infill with benj, jam-packed;
 See shark kill llama swimming by the inn,
 Nor spare thee too, O oozy water snake;
 Go shopping in the suq, quaff milk and purr;
 Rootle with ass's snout in badger's sett;
 Then to delight you ukuleles bring,
 Revved-up guitars new-wrought, six xylophones,
 And play your sweet jazz zither till it breaks.

Words With Repeated Bigrams and Trigrams: Follow-Ups

Ed Wolpow adds to Jeremy Morse's list of words with repeated bigrams and trigrams in the last Kickshaws. "Just a note about a Feb 2005 Kickshaws item, top of page 58. The list of repeated bigrams omits Q, and the entry ZOOZOO for Z is incorrect. So, the list of bigrams lacks Q, X and Z, and the list of trigrams lacks Z. QEQErtaq is an island of Greenland, notes the Times Atlas of the World. XIXIa is a locale in China in the same reference. I googled hydroXYXYlene as a likely word and did find a single reference in a pharmacy journal, as 4-hydroxyxylene. ZIZIa and ZIZIth are in Webster's Unabridged as well as the lovely word peZIZIform—botanically 'cup-shaped'. XINXING is listed as a locale in China in the same atlas, so that should cover the field in reasonable references for the holes."

Rex Gooch sends a batch as well. "Repeated Trigrams: found no dictionary words for X, but there are numerous place names, notably thirteen starting XINXIN, including Xinxin itself. The trigram is cunningly hidden in Xixia Xian. Repeated Bigrams: for X, ex-Exe (a coinage) and ixixi (a snow goose) are from The Palindromicon II; tax-exempt (OED tax); Xuxu in China 34°21,

119°18 and many similar. For Z, Zizi (personal name, see OED purringly); zezew (a zither-like string instrument of eastern and central Africa, OED); peziform (OED Peziza) and many others.”

At the Edge of Words

Jeff Grant points out that “beheading BRIM (edge) leaves RIM (edge), and TRIMMING (decorative edging) also contains RIM. More interestingly, RIM appears in PERIMETER, another edge word.” Jeff’s beheading reminded me of a curious relationship regarding hats. To DON a hat and to DOFF a hat are opposites. DON means put it ON, and OFF means take it OFF.

More Advice

Jeff tried transposing the letters of my name with intriguing results. “AMI Insurance recently ran an advertising campaign in New Zealand based on the punning phrase ‘AM I insured?’ (AMI insured). A pity it wasn’t AM I COVERED, a transposal of DAVE MORICE. Have you noticed that the first ten letters in MEDIA COVERAGE, ACID REMOVER and OVERMEDICATED all transpose to DAVE MORICE? If you OVERCLAIMED on your MEDICOVER you could get a transaddition and a transdeletion in the same sentence. It is interesting that DAVE MORICE + NA (North America) = AMERICAN DOVE (or VERONICA MEAD), and DAVE MORICE + IA (Iowa) = VIDEO AMERICA. Looking at straight transposals, your ideal street address would be CAMEO DRIVE (there are lots of them in US), and if you don’t actually have a DREAM VOICE your best career prospects could be at New York public relations agency MEDIA-COVER.”

One good turn deserves another, so I got out the lettershift calculator, cranked it up, and let it work on Jeff’s name. I emailed him “GRANT shifts 13 steps to TENAG = AGENT. Change E in AGENT to R to get AGRNT which transposes back to GRANT. Amazingly, JEFF G shifts 9 steps to become a rare five-letter shift, SNOOP. Let’s see what your name says about your mastery of the game of Scrabble in New Zealand. JEFF NZ shifts 9 to SNOOWI, which is perfect to remember when you win a championship, since it transposes to the phrase SO I WON, although if you won in a close, tense, heart-pounding game, you might also remember another transposal, I SWOON. Now let’s shift JEFF NZ 13 steps to WRSSAM = SWARMS of words from a single rack of letters. Or 15 to YTUUOC = YOU CUT the tiles (not the cards). Or 25 to IDEEMY = MID EYE, the mythical middle eye so necessary in winning Scrabble.”

Xictionary: A Dictionary of Words Beginning With X

X is the least-used letter in English. It is made in one of the most basic ways possible—two lines crossing each other. This suggests that X should be one of the most-used letters. Xictionary provides many new X-words to help X catch up with the 25 other letters. Here are 52 X-words and their definitions.

XAARIOT a whisk broom on a desert island

XABTUNKLE the hard skeleton secreted by a raindrop prior to a storm

XACON a religious sect that moves on or as if on a seesaw

XADPIPZIP to eat bits of cowhide during a rodeo

XAEULIO a lively dance by a dull person

XAFFXIFF to crumple a small animal

XAGGYPLAGGY a hairstyle that combines the worst attributes of mullet and dreadlocks

XAHANA the act or sound of laughing at an odor left in passing

- XAITCCH derived form or depending upon a beautiful dangerous woman
- XAJPIMMERY a towel for drying a man's wig
- XAKKNAW a loose gown worn in bed by the female deity Fascinakka in ancient Micronesian mythology
- XALLO a game of discards
- XAMINTHOOBOIBOI to pound one's fist on a melon
- XANKZCHPT a scratch on a brand-new car
- XAO an extremely crude form of Zen practiced by malcontents at airports
- XAPXAPXAP very, very, very, very, very sharp
- XAQUE sensiblenessless
- XARGRUOALF the sound of wind blowing over a house of cards
- XASTICALLY in a crude or viscous manner
- XATZAROOOU the surtax on bikinis
- XAUGLATE to make the throaty cry of an angry extinct carnivore late at night
- XAVLEENTNARY not drunk, but not sober
- SAXATDI a chestnut or chestnuts roasting on a class C fire
- XAX slang term for abominably bad taste in footwear
- XAYBOT a robot game out of control in a world populated by androids
- XAZZIK a type of jacknail used with a left-handed jackhammer, named after a female jackrabbit
- XEAMZAPUT an apple after it has been run over by a steamroller
- XEBNOTIZE to hypnotize by gently clubbing the subject over the head
- XECCHY the happiness one feels after successfully sneezing
- XEDDADDUDDLE something valueless that acquires value by being sold as part of an odd lot of equally valueless things at a flea market
- XEE the sad chirp of a bird flying with one wing and carrying its nest with the other
- XEFFIEZABBASHABUI the Anteater Devil of ancient Atlantean mythology who caused the island of Atlantis to sink by raining one hundred thousand million billion trillion ants on it
- XEGCHOW food that is no longer delicious to humans or cats, only to dogs
- XEHUISTICALLY acting like a squirrel that has found a pair of Siamese acorns
- XEIMZITCHMATIST a collector of vegetables that resemble the heads of famous movie stars
- XEJICK vermilion with an outer edge of yellow, a central oval of mauve, and a jagged spiral of puce commonly found on moldy bread
- XEKARAT an unpopular form of martial arts based on tickling instead of kicking
- XELLY delicious sugar-flavored wax found in the ears of elephant
- XEM discarded gum that many bugs have become embedded in
- XENJIBPLI the original middle name of Attila the Hun (Attila Xenjibpli Hun) which means in modern terms "the homecoming king"
- XEOIT a person who goes prospecting in the sewers of Detroit
- XEPSH to splash bittersweet cologne on one's ex
- XEQUAVE an artist who builds large plastic trees and exhibits them in rainforests
- XERR exclamation used by pit bulls similar to 'grrr' only much worse
- XESKAFFION a constellation that doesn't resemble anything but a bunch of stars
- XETTEXETTEXETTEXETT a society of talking monkeys who only know cusswords
- XEUTIAT a tragic loss followed by an equally tragic gain
- XEVTISHPUBBLE to step in a puddle not much rounder than a manhole cover but deeper than thirty skyscrapers
- XEWIEDEWIE to find a wallet with \$100,000 of counterfeit play money in it
- XEXAN a newly-discovered chemical element that looks like caviar, tastes like caviar, and costs

as much as caviar
 XEY to pray so many times to God that God hates the supplicant and has already planned on
 condemning him or her to eternal damnation
 XEZBRAST a mime that refuses to stop talking

More Mathematical Limericks

In the November Kickshaws several limericks with a mathematical theme were featured. Anil sent a couple more for your delectation.

<p>If you ask me, the square root of two Is one <i>point</i> four one four and two too, One hundred and thirty Five...(Here it gets dirty-- That's as far as my pocket calculator will goo.)</p>	<p>"Ten factorial" sounds pretty neat It's three million, two eighty-eight Thousand eight hundred As even a dunderhead Knows—and it managed to fit easily within the allotted number of feet.</p>
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Fraternity Names

The November 1987 Kickshaws gave some comic fraternity names (Eta Beta Pie, etc.) and asked for more. Anil writes "This may be well known and trivial, but there was and perhaps still is an actual informal frat on certain college campuses named Sigma Phi Nothing— $\Sigma\Phi O$."

The Shell Game Redux

Regarding the "Shell Game" WHO-HOW pairs, Anil writes "I'm wondering why you omitted three of my solutions (SAT-ATS, SEX-EX'S, and the multiplication DAD-ADD). The inferred ATS is surely as legitimate an inflexion as TAS. I'm particularly surprised you omitted SEX-EX'S since they make such a neat antonymic pair. And DAD-ADD, although it changed the rules a bit, was I think an interesting new direction to take your initial WHO-HOW discovery."

At Sea At Sea

In past Kickshaws, Bill Brandt used names of imaginary people to recount a trip to the store to buy a dress, a visit to the complaint department, and a sofa heist. The following crisis on a cruise ship involves an iceberg collision and an electrical failure of the pumps.

<p>Luke N. Eyesburg—Will V. Hitet? Otis S. Terrible! Manda Lifeboats! Manda Pumps! Harvey Gonnafixit? Yvonne DeHowe...Bud Wait! Theresa Way Irma Workinonet Ned Ahand—Anita Moore Tools Sherwood A. Preciatet—Rhonda Beck, Ginger Lee Jimmy D. Switch Anne Turnon Dee Power Alice Complete—Justin Time! Vera Saved! Eloise B. Grateful</p>	<p>Alma Tinksew D.Vernon Verking--Darcy Mal Function Yuri Sourceful—U. Ken Doit! Dan Gestarted! Howie Doin? Donna Giveup—Connie Ellpue?</p>
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Charade Ad

Rich Lederer sent an excellent charade that he attributes to Frank Rubin. It provides a perfect way to conclude this Kickshaws: BOOKSTORE AD : BOOKS TO READ.