In each of the groups of 3 words below, the first and second words make a 2-word phrase; the second and third words also make a 2-word phrase. Easy you might say and you would be right, if it wasn’t for the fact that a third constraint requires that the first and third words be related. They may both be transposals, synonyms, antonyms, homophones, heterophones, different tenses of the same verb, palindromes, reversals, mutual shifts, rhyming words, AEIOU words, and so on. **Two-word designations such as** FINGER TIPTOE and THUNDERBALL LIGHTNING, **in which one of the words under consideration in each case (toe and thunder respectively) is joined to the linking word (tip and ball respectively) are not admitted.**

**TRANSPOSALS**

First and third words are transposals.

- **FUELS FIRE FLUES**
- **PLATE BOX PLEAT**
- **PLEASES HEARD PEALS**
- **BOARD GAME BROAD**
- **MALE FISH MEAL**
- **LUMP SUGAR PLUM**

Longer groups of words can be achieved by incorporating multiple transposals. This particular group consists of 7 words and each adjacent pair of words makes a phrase.

**MEAT'S HOT STEAM TRAINS TEAMS PLAY MATES**

**SYNONYMS**

First and third words have the same, or nearly the same, meaning.

- **PART TIME SHARE**
- **MAKE WIND FORCE**
- **FOSTER CHILD SUPPORT**
- **DROP LEAF (table) FALL**

**ANTONYMS**

First and third words have the opposite, or nearly the opposite, meaning.

- **ON TIME OFF**
- **DARK BLUE LIGHT**
- **ENEMY CAMP FRIEND**
- **FOREWARD KICK BACK**
- **IN TIME OUT**

**HOMOPHONES**

First and third words: same pronunciation; different spelling; different meaning.

- **COARSE WEAVE COURSE**
- **FLAWED STONE FLOORED**
- **SEES OVER SEAS**
- **WEIGH IN WAY**
- **RIGHT WHEEL WRIGHT**

- **INN SIGN IN**
- **SLAY DOG SLEIGH**
- **BASTE MEAT BASED**
- **BORED STIFF BOARD**
- **SAW RED SORE**

- **WAY UNDER WEIGH**
- **CAUGHT BALL COURT**
- **BOW LOW BOUGH**
- **ROW HARD ROE**
- **SENT FLOWER SCENT**
**HETEROPHONES**

First and third words: same spelling; different pronunciation; different meaning.

- **WIND UP**  **WOUND BANDAGE**  **DEsert TROOPS**
- **LIVE ON**  **POLISH GLASS**  **PRESENT AWARD**
- **REFUSE TIPS**  **CONCERT PLAN**  **HOUSE PETS**
- **MARIA BLACK**  **SEAT* CAR SEAT**  **ENTRANCES PUBLIC**

(person's name)

...and, with a stretch of the imagination, LAME SILVER LAME where lame describes Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*.

**TENSES**

First and third words are different tenses of the same verb.

- **STEPPEd IN**  **SHRUNK HEAD**  **STRUCK COAL**
- **BENT ROUND**  **ROSE HIGH**  **BLEw HARD**
- **BEAR WELL BORE**  **RAN HOME RUN**  **LEAVE OUTSIDE**
- **SANK UNDER SINK**  **LIT CANDLE LIGHT**  **HELD ON HOLD**

In one case, at least, the tenses have the same spelling. They are pronounced differently.

READ WELL READ

**PALINDROMES**

First and third words are both palindromes.

- **ROTOR HEAD NUN**  **YAY HIGH NOON**  **REPAPER WALL EYE**
- **POP IN DEED**  **SEES RED EYE**  **LEVEL TWELVE NOON**
- **PEEP SHOW EWE**  **ROTOR CLOUD LEVEL**  **ROTOR SHIP RADAR**

**REVERSALS**

First and third words are reversals.

- **SPAY DOG YAPS**  **NOD HEAD DON**  **NET PLAY TEN**
- **DAM POWER MAD**  **PETS CORNER STEP**  **TRAP TWO (greyhound racing)**
- **NO GO ON**  **(in which 'no go' and 'go on' have opposing meanings)**  **TOP MONEY POT**
- **NIPS TAIL SPIN**  **LAID STONE DIAL**  **TIP COAL PIT**

**SHIFTS**

The first and third words are mutual shifts. The letters of the first word are shifted along the alphabet (looping from Z to A) to make the third word. The numbers represent the number of steps the letters are shifted.

1  **STAR FRUIT TUBS**  4  **OPAL STONE STEP**  6  **WOLF HAIR CURL**
8  **HAW BERRY PIE,**  11 **ETCH DRAWING PENS**  12 **TOUCH WOOD FAGOT**
13 **NAG WORKER ANT**  14 **FAKE FUR TOYS**  18 **TIE BREAK LAW**
19 **SPUR ROAD LINK**  20 **HOT COAL BIN**  23 **HOP PLANT ELM**

15 **LAP PET APE** (in this case LAP to PET is also a shift - 4 steps, as is PET to APE - 11 steps)

**RHYMING**

The first and third words rhyme.

- **PLUME ROSE BLOOM**  **DRANK WATER TANK**  **STATE ROOM MATE**
- **DEAD LEVEL HEAD**  **TIGHT FIST FIGHT**  **BLEak HOUSE LEEK**
- **STAYS AWAY DAYS**  **SLAM DOOR JAMB**  **THIN HAIR PIN**
- **COAL FISH SHOAL**  **SPREAD BUTTER BREAD**  **PHONE HOME GROWN**
- **STONE POT GROWN**  **MATT PAINT FLAT**  **RAW SKIN PORE**
AEIOU WORDS

Both the first and third words have just one each of the 5 vowels a,e,i,o and u.

AUTHORIZE CHANGE BEHAVIOUR
WAREHOUSING COMPLEX EQUATION
ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT UNDERCOATING

LINKED BY ‘AND’

When linked by the word ‘and’, the first and third words make a well-known phrase.

BOOT LEATHER SADDLE
LOCK DOOR KEY
TIDE OVER TIME

FUR HAT FEATHER
ROCK BAND ROLL
HOME SPUN DRY

FETCH HELP CARRY
SAGE GREEN ONIONS
HIGH LINE DRY

MULTIPLE GENRES

The first and third words can be related to each other in more than one way.

GREAT FIRE GRATE (transposals + homophones)
BEAR ARMS BARE (transposals + homophones)
SORE SKIN RAW (synonyms + rhyming)
NOON HOUSE DEED (a 16-step shift + palindromes)
ERE LONG BOB (a 23-step shift + palindromes)

THREE PHRASES

Each example makes a 3-word phrase in addition to the two 2-word phrases: three phrases in total.

TAME DOG TEAM (transposals) ORGAN PATIENTS GROAN (transposals)
WASTE BIN LITTER (synonyms) BACK IN FRONT (antonyms)
BLUE WHALE BLEW (homophones) DAB SMELLS BAD (reversals)
GIG NOISE LEVEL (palindromes) ‘CIVIC’ (Honda) ENGINE REVVER (palindromes)
MOUNTAINLESS COUNTRY BOUNDARIES (aeiou words)
LAW COURT ORDER (linked by ‘and’)

Some shift pairs, linked by appropriate intervening words, also make 3-word phrases.

8 LOG SEATS TWO
11 SPIT OUT DATE
17 BUNNY RABBITS SLEEP
19 JOLLY CROWDS CHEER, DOLL’S PRAM WHEEL
20 RUM CAKE LOG

So far, the 3 phrases have been made from words 1+2, 2+3 and 1+2+3.

In RED INDIAN INK, on the other hand, the 3 phrases are made from words 1+2, 2+3 and 1+3.
1+2+3 is not eligible (I nearly typed ‘indelible’) as a 3-word phrase because indian ink is not red!

FOUR PHRASES

Each of these examples makes 4 phrases, the maximum possible. They are made from words 1+2, 2+3, 1+3, and 1+2+3. I introduced this genre as Triads in May 1995 (page 111).

The first three are non-generic examples.