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
- **PLEAS** — 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

- **SPEAK** — UP STATE
- **UTMOST** — SPEED LIMIT
- **CRIES** — WOLF HOWLS
- **HURL** — STONE SLING

- **JOURNEY** — PLAN TRIP
- **PARE** — FRUIT CROP
- **FORECAST** — WEATHER OUTLOOK
- **IMPOSE** — CHARGE LEVY

**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

- **RED** — LIGHT GREEN
- **WET** — TOWEL DRY
- **SLAVE** — SHIPS MASTER
- **CAT** — WALK DOG
- **IN** — WAY OUT

- **ON** — LEAVE OFF
- **BEFORE** — LONG AFTER
- **NEW** — AGE OLD
- **SHORT** — WALK TALL
- **UNDER** — VEIL OVER

**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 WIND
LIVE ON LIVE
REFUSE TIPS REFUSE
MARIA BLACK MARIA
(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 STEP
BENT ROUND BEND
BEAR WELL BORE
SANK UNDER SINK

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
POP IN DEED
PEEP SHOW EWE

REVERSALS

First and third words are reversals.

SPAY DOG YAPS
DAM POWER MAD
NO GO ON (in which ‘no go’ and ‘go on’ have opposing meanings)
NIPS TAIL SPIN

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
8 HAW BERRY PIE,
13 NAG WORKER ANT
19 SPUR ROAD LINK
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
DEAD LEVEL HEAD
STAYS AWAY DAYS
COAL FISH SHOAL
STONE POT GROWN

DRANK WATER TANK
TIGHT FIST FIGHT
SLAM DOOR JAMB
SPREAD BUTTER BREAD
MATT PAINT FLAT

STATE ROOM MATE
BLEAK HOUSE LEEK
THIN HAIR PIN
PHONE HOME GROWN
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 UNDERTOCKING

LINKED BY ‘AND’

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

BOOT LEATHER SADDLE FUR HAT FEATHER FETCH HELP CARRY
LOCK DOOR KEY ROCK BAND ROLL SAGE GREEN ONIONS
TIDE OVER TIME HOME SPUN DRY 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.

HARD PUSH UP WHITE SNOW BERRY GREEN MOSS CARPET
SAIL ON SALE (homophones) RECORD TRACK RECORD (heterophones)
DRAY HORSE YARD (reversals) MAINS WATER DRAINS (rhyming)
FLOAT COMPANY BOAT (rhyming) TIED BOW TIE (‘tied’ and ‘tie’ represent 2 tenses)
FAT PEN NIB (‘fat’ to ‘nib’ is an 8-step shift) HOT ASH BIN (‘hot’ to ‘bin’ is a 20-step shift)