

## KICKSHAWS

DAVE MORICE  
Iowa City, Iowa

### ~ SHAKESPEARE'S SONNET GENERATOR

*(A few years ago Kickshaws include the description of a sonnet generator that could generate sonnets composed of Shakespeare's lines. A few months ago, Tristan Miller wrote a program that makes it truly a workable generator. The details appear below. You might wish to check out the website at this link: [nothingisreal.com/sonnet](http://nothingisreal.com/sonnet).)*

Shakespeare's Sonnet Generator takes up where the Bard of Avon left off. Using 70 of his lines, our website can generate any of 61 036 015 625 new sonnets. Writing the software was easy, but selecting the lines was a balancing act between rhyme and reason. Out of Shakespeare's original 2 156 lines, we picked fourteen sets of five rhyming lines.

Our implementation is based on the Shakespearean Telesonnet Program described by Dave Morice in the November 1991 issue of *Word Ways: The Journal of Recreational Linguistics*.

Shakespeare's Sonnet Generator is the only one on the Web that produces poetry from Shakespeare's original sonnets with the correct rhythm and rhyme scheme. It uses only lines from Shakespeare, and all the lines fit together grammatically.

There are other kinds of sonnets, but Shakespeare's are the best-known throughout the world. A Shakespearean sonnet is fourteen lines long and has an

iambic pentameter rhythm throughout. The lines rhyme in the pattern *ABABCDCDEFEEFGG*.

**Dave Morice** is a writer, artist, and educator based in Iowa City. He has written 26 books and thousands of poems, and is the prime sponsor of dozens of poetry marathons and other literary and artistic events. Shakespeare's Sonnet Generator is based on an article of his first published in *Word Ways*, the wordplay journal whose "Kickshaws" column he has edited since 1987.

**Tristan Miller** is a Free Software programmer, recreational linguist, and ferret herder. His poetry, puzzles, wordplay, and humour have appeared in *Word Ways*, *Games*, *Light*, *Babel: The Language Magazine*, and *The Annals of Improbable Research*. He currently researches computational humour at Technische Universität Darmstadt.

**William Shakespeare** is a distinguished writer and actor whose work has delighted generations of fans. His popular plays and poetry—among them 154 sonnets—have been widely anthologized. He unexpectedly returned from a lengthy hiatus in writing to contribute billions of new poems to this project. Shakespeare currently resides in a small basement flat in the Waterside area of Stratford, Warwickshire.

### **Contact**

Comments? Questions? Suggestions?

Contact the webmaster at [psychonaut@nothingisreal.com](mailto:psychonaut@nothingisreal.com).

### **~ PUN CONTROL: CHINA BANS WORDPLAY**

Published November 29, 2014, FoxNews.com

The Chinese language is filled with puns and other humorous wordplay, but the country's print and broadcast watchdog does not believe it has a place in the newsroom.

The watchdog has panned wordplay for the media citing that it breaches the law on spoken and written Chinese and if they promote puns, it will make teaching China's cultural heritage harder and could mislead the public, including children, The Guardian reports.

Cultural idioms could create a "cultural and linguistic chaos."

"Radio and television authorities at all levels must tighten up their regulations and crack down on the irregular and inaccurate use of the Chinese language,

especially the misuse of idioms," the State Administration for Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television said in a statement.

The statement also said programs and advertisements must abide by the rule and avoid changing characters, phrases and meanings.

"Idioms are one of the great features of the Chinese language and contain profound cultural heritage and historical resources and great aesthetic, ideological and moral values."

"(Wordplay) is so much part and parcel of Chinese heritage," David Moser, academic director for CET Chinese studies at Beijing Capital Normal University told The Guardian.

The statement from the administration cites rather small complaints about a tourism advertisement to a medical commercial.

The tourism advert must now change a slogan from "Shanxi, a land of perfection" into "land of splendors." And the medical commercial turned "brook no delay" into coughing must not linger," The Guardian says.

"It could just be a small group of people, or even one person, who are conservative, humourless, priggish and arbitrarily purist, so that everyone has to fall in line," said Moser.

"But I wonder if this is not a preemptive move, an excuse to crack down for supposed 'linguistic purity reasons' on the cute language people use to crack jokes about the leadership or policies. It sounds too convenient."

### **~ UNIQUE WORD(S)**

Dmitri Borgman was the first to suggest that all words are interesting. That may or may not be so. But one thing is certain: Some words are unique. Not all words are unique, but those that are should be treasured. Borgmann didn't define "interesting" probably because it isn't possible to pin down what is interesting. But unique words can be defined. A unique word or words does something so odd, strange, weird, and above all amazing!. If a person finds a word that seems to be unique, then let that person call it unique until someone else finds another word that qualifies. Even then, the two words together may make a unique pair that is even more amazing.

For instance, I had heard about the anagram CABARET = A BAR, ETC. I thought it was a unique word for years. Then one day I realized that there is another very similar anagram, CABINET = A BIN, ETC. The addition of this anagram makes the two a unique pair, remarkable in its own right. If an ambitious wordplay writer

found 25 anagrams that worked the same way, then the set would no longer be unique.

Another example: While writing an article titled "Are All Number Names from 1 to 99 Interesting," One of the first things I found was the fact that ONE has one consonant, TWO has two, and THREE has three. That's a unique word set as it stands. Then I realized that the same consonant count works in Spanish, UNO, DOS, TRES, and in French, too: UN, DEUX, TROIS, a unique set in each of three languages. Do any other languages count their own consonants in this fashion?

A third example: AMBIDEXTROUS is a 12-letter word in which the first six letters, AMBIDE, appear on the left half of the word, and they also appear in the left half of the alphabet. The last six letters, XTROUS, appear on the right half of the word, and they also appear in the right half of the alphabet. There are other words that divide in the same way, but only this one defines itself. It is alphabetically ambidextrous.

### **~ INFORMATION TRANSFORMATION**

The word FORMED can be transformed into eight other words by adding an additional letter somewhere at the beginning of the word. This occurs in succeeding steps, one new letter at a time.

#### In Formation Information

Formed	(made into a shape)
U-formed	(shaped like a U)
Unformed	(having no shape)
Uniformed	(wearing an outfit)
Uninformed	(not told)
Union-formed	(description of a workers' group)
E-union-formed	(electronic version of above)
Reunion-formed	(description of a gathering of like-minded people)
Pre-union-formed	(description of unorganized workers)

### **~ MORE QUIRKINITIONS**

Ray Love has come up with some more unusual definitions of words that are strangely spelled. The first batch appeared in the last Kickshaws.

AARDVARK: aan aanimal that eats aants

A CAPPELLA: without instrumental a companiment

BWANA: Swahili bwoss

EEL: eelongated fish

HAWAII: iislands in the Pacific

IGLOO: Eskimoo domicile

RHUBARB: plants with stalks and rhoots

## ~ SYLLABIC NUMBERS

A *syllabic number* is a number name in which its syllable count is the first number in the series of all syllable counts. ONE is the first number name with a syllable count of 1, and that means it's a syllabic number. TWO is the second number name, but its syllable count is 1, and thus it's not a syllabic number. Nor are THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX, EIGHT, NINE, TEN, or TWELVE since each has a syllable count of 1. SEVEN is the first number name with two syllables, and that makes it a syllabic number. ELEVEN is the first with three syllables, and it qualifies, too.

In other words, imagine all of the numbers names above ZERO placed in a single row, and imagine each one having the number of its syllables written under it. Here are the first 11:

ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3

As discussed above, in the first 11 numbers there are three syllabic numbers, ONE, SEVEN, and ELEVEN, which are the first number names to have 1, 2, and 3 syllables respectively.

Up to ONE MILLION, there are only 20 syllabic numbers. The list appears below. (To save space, the syllabic number appears below instead of the syllabic number name.) Here are some questions about syllabic numbers. (1) What is the highest syllabic number? (2) How many syllables does it have? (3) How many syllabic numbers are there in all? And here's the big question: If all the syllabic numbers were added up, would the sum be a syllabic number?

Syllabic Number	Syllable Count of the Number's Name
1 (one syllable)	1
7 (two syllables)	2
11 (three syllables)	3
27 (etc.)	4
77	5
111	6

127	7
177	8
777	9
1127	10
1177	11
2777	12
7777	13
11777	14
27777	15
207777	16
217777	17
227777	18
277777	19
777777	20

Some of the syllabic numbers are made of the same digit repeated. So far I've found only two such repetition series, 1 and 7. They are shown below with their syllable counts under the numbers. Are there any higher syllabic numbers with the same digit repeated? Are there any other syllabic numbers composed of a single digit other than 1 and 7 that work the same way?

Numbers:	1, 11, 111	7, 77, 777, 7777, 777777
Syllable Counts	1, 3, 6	2, 5, 9, 13, 20

\*

### ~ TRIADIC NUMBERS

Another curiosity involving the syllables in number names is that the numbers 111, 222, 333, 444, 555, 666, 888, and 999 each have 6 syllables. 777 is the only one that doesn't have 6. It has 9 syllables, but if that syllable count is turned upside down, 9 becomes 6. Finally, considering 000 to be a number pronounced ZERO ZERO ZERO, it, too, has 6 syllables.

### ~ DANGEROUS LETTERS

Rich Lederer notes that "The tyrannical King Herod rules during the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus is a member of the Holy Trinity. So let's subtract three letters of the alphabet from each letter in *Herod* – and we get *Ebola*. Well, maybe *get* isn't the best word here." (These are sometimes called "shiftgrams" or "lettershift words."—DM.)

H	E	R	O	D
G	D	Q	N	C
F	C	P	M	B
E	B	O	L	A

## ~ WHERE IS PETER NEWBY?

Anil writes, "Peter Newby's been missing in recent Kickshaws. I hope he's still alive and well. Ver clever fellow, he is missed." Does anyone know where Peter is?

## ~ POLITICALLY CORRECT DESCRIPTION OF SENIORS

Political correctness has affected the way we refer to certain groups of people to avoid offending them. There don't seem to be any terms for senior citizens. Anil offers the following terms that could be used.

- macula challenged  
(In two senses: I can't focus my eyes enough to see the spots on my skin.)
- inner ear challenged  
(I can't hear a pen drop any more. Nor a cob.)
- middle ear challenged  
(I lost balance, fell and broke a rib recently. Is my semicircular canal now only quarter-circular?)
- vertically challenged  
(In two *new* senses: I can't reliably stay upright [see preceding] and I'm stooped. — Yet wise, having understood and accepted how things bend [!] and how cookies *will* crumble.)
- bathroom challenged  
(In at least three senses: #1, #2, and bathing.)
- challenge challenged  
(But who gives a shit? Not us average shit-challenged Seniors.)

## ~ OVERLAPPING SYNONYMS: ABOVE = OVER

"Chains of overlapping words are frequently deployed in Word Ways," Anil comments, "but how many overlapping words are synonyms? Like above and over. Did OVE Michaelsen ever notice this? The words are linguistic doublets, distantly related in part (-ove) from an I-E root, but evolving separately into their current forms. Can you find any totally unrelated overlapping synonyms?"

## ~ HAPPY TYPOS

“**Typo** as a *typo* of **type** is a type of happy typo [HT],” Anil notes, “one which resonates with if not means the same as or the opposite of the wronged word. There are many happy typos, especially single letter substitutions or deletions where both are words. I’ve been collecting both and presented several definitive single letter substitutions, which I call “word stools” or single-step word ladders, in 02-288 (eg, **add** and, **too** two, **ban** bar, **sip** nip, **wear** gear; **quelled** fuelled [antonyms]), and several beheadments as “cheater’s coincidental selfish synonyms” in 04-129 (eg, **brim** rim, **chunk** hunk, **crumple** rumple, **factual** actual, **hedge** edge, **zax** ax). For a longer one: **predetermination** redetermination, or several other pre-/re- pairs repairs.

But what inspired this Kickshaw was finding a typo where the misprint isn’t a word but nonetheless is a credible coinage and a synonym; namely, **offsprig**. If it were a word, offsprig would mean offspring, the same as sprig, a family descendant. Sprig and spring are not related. Indeed, being unrelated is a requirement of a good HT. So my opening typo type HT is not good, but all the other examples above are unrelated.”

#### ~ LSD

“LSD,” Anil says, “was the parental guidance rating of a recent TV movie involving (bad) Language, Sex and Drugs. Was the drug LSD? I doubt it, but I didn’t watch the movie just to find out. Still a funny coincidence.

#### ~ SALVAGING AN OLD ERROR

“A decade ago (04-253),” Anil writes, “in my article ‘Are All Words Interesting?’ I misread arthroscope asnanthroscope, a non-word, and proved the latter to be interesting. (Isn’t that in itself interesting?) When I noticed the error later the editor said let it go. I was relieved at the time because I had trouble making a good argument for arthroscope being interesting. But now it is, thanks to this rare eleven letter anagram I just unearthed, **arthroscope** < **crap shooter**. There’s even a weak link: Crapshooters can abuse their elbows and wrists and need arthroscopy.

I found the anagram in my computer’s Killer Word app. It’s not in my two anagram dictionaries nor, I must admit, did I find it in my own look at arthroscope. Best I found was a vaguely definitive anagram, **or aches port**—a window on aching joints.”

#### ~ LOST IN TRANSLATION

Anil suggests that you “check out this provocative title of the Oz version of a US TV program: ‘The Biggest Loser US.’ Now who’s the biggest loser here? The USA, or the program’s creator and channel, or us, we viewers? (Disclaimer: We lied. We’ve never viewed the show.)”



## ~ LIKE FATHER, ALMOST LIKE SON

Anil came up with this twist: "David fell in love with Bathsheba when he saw her taking a bath. Their son Solomon fell in love with Sheba without a bath."

## ~ ADJACENTS, OR READING THE DICTIONARY AS A NOVEL

Anil discusses a new word game that he devised. He calls it ADJACENTS or READING THE DICTIONARY AS A NOVEL. "I first thought to call it Neighbours but that word is overused as well as too general. Adjacents is played by simply reading straight thru the dictionary (but starting anywhere) looking for immediately adjacent words that are cognate (or make a good phrase or suggest a story), excluding etymologically related pairs, but accepting words with common prefixes unless they are the main factor in the similarity. Ideally words of the same prefix should also be excluded, but that would drastically reduce the number of pairs available (cognate or not).

I chose a pocket dictionary (PD) to up the likelihood of good hits, specifically *Collins PD and Thesaurus* (1998), an inferior dictionary but really well presented and easy to read as a word list.

The first 15 pages yielded many cognates, strong to weak, but most share a common prefix, either *ab-* (from) or *ad-* (to). \* = no common prefix.

Nine good pairs:

\* **abhor abide** (antonyms)

\* **about above** (in something's immediate vicinity)

**absolve absorb** (antonyms, free or release vs. soak up)

**abstain abstemious** (verb and adjective of self-restraint or denial, especially re alcohol)

**abstract abstruse.** (near synonyms in many contexts yet ironically antonyms in their etymology;

ignoring the common *ab-* (from) prefix, abstract is from *trahere*, draw off, while abstruse is from

*trudere*, push. They're contronyms really, pull away vs. push away, yet both cause separation.)

(\*) **accompany accomplice** (unrelated roots but *complice* later added *ac-*, perhaps influenced by

accompany)

**accrue accumulate** (good synonyms)

**advertise advice/advise** ('instructing' consumers)

\* **afterwards again** (later in time or number of times)

And ten weaker cognates:

**abandon abase** (verbs of negative treatment; common prefix from *ad-*, to, rather than *ab-*, from)

**abscond absent** (verbs that cause 'disappearance')  
**abstruse absurd** (possible antonyms, but often equated by the ignorant).  
**accept access** (verbs of inclusion or joining)  
**accursed accused** (negatively treated or implicated)  
**adopt adore** (two forms of loving care)  
**adverse advert** (cognates in my opinion!)  
**affiliate(d) affinity** (shared closeness)  
**afloat afoot** (happening or about to happen, 'in the air')  
**aggrandize aggravate** (ca. antonyms, make greater vs. make worse)

I shouldn't pollute this note with exceptions, but two *very good* synonyms were adjacent but one:

**acclaim accolade** (nouns of praise; separated by acclimatize).

Tiring of all the common *ab-* and *ad-* prefixes, I jumped to the first six pages of M and found only two pairs, both of which are both cognates and make good phrases. The first pair are strong cognates, the second pair weaker.

\* **Machiavellian machination** (unscrupulous manipulation);

\* **mansion mantelpiece** (household words).

Then to round out my first sampling of Adjacents, I did XYZ (2 pp.) and found one:

\* **yesterday yet** (antonyms of sorts, past vs. still present)

Being the verbo-compulsive type, I'll probably trudge through the whole CPD&T eventually, but recommend it to you and others to beat me to the punch in other sections of the dictionary."

## ~ VOWEL CASCADES

Anil discusses the vowel cascade challenge, back in 2002 (WW, Feb., p. 53): "I used the term DI-ODES to describe 'poems' made from pairs of short and long vowels of a word, and I used them together, singly or in groups, as poems, phrases, cognates, etc. (eg, fat fate-fit fight) Earlier in that same article I separately introduced VOWEL CASCADES, sentences, phrases, or verse made from five (or six) words that run run through the vowels. In fact I used the quintet in your example 'Pap pep pip pop pup,' which is meaningful in a stretch, but better examples (cf.) were 'Dum Dom dim dem dam mad Med mid mod mud.' [word pal], or 'Bad bed bid bod bud!' But I never combined the two plays because I couldn't find any meaningful ten-word arrays.

Do these work? (variations on the above; long vowels italic):

Bad, bad bed (bed bid) *bid*, bod. (Bod bud? *Bud*?)

(Being bad, he bade her to bed with a jewellery bid to share bodies, but she risked pregnancy or VD to boo later.)

Dam dam dem dem dim *dim*-Dom dom, dum dum!

(A dumb doom awaits the damned dame they ('dem') deem a dim cheap-champagne head.)

To do it regardless of meaning just as a logological challenge is easier. I think the following (plus your pap...) pretty well exhausts the one syllable cases. Some of these can also be forced into a meaningful statement.

ban bane been bean bin bine bon bone bun boon  
bat bait bet beat bit bite bot boat but boot or beaut  
dal? or dowel dale dell deal dill dial doll dole dull duel  
fowl fail fell feel fill file fall foal full fuel or fool  
fair feyer (more fey) fer fear fir fire for four fur fewer  
had haid (head, dialect) head heed hid hide hod hoed hud hued  
mad maid med mead mid mide (Web3) mod mode mud mood  
pack paik (Web3) peck peek pick pike pock poke puck puke  
rad raid red reed rid ride rod road rudd rude.  
rat rate ret rete writ rite rot rote rut root  
sax sakes sex seeks six psychs sox soaks sucks sooks (Web3)  
sat safe set seat sit site/sight sot sote sut suit  
tack take tech teak tick tyke tock toke tuck took  
towel tale tell teal till tile tall toll tulle tool  
tan tane ten teen tin tine ton tone tun tune

And, allowing proper nouns:

bass base Bess bees bis buys Boz bows bus boos  
Dan Dane den dene din dine don Doan done dune  
Jan Jane Jen Jean jinn jine (join, dialect) John Joan jun (N. Korean money)  
June  
ham hame hem heme him Heim (surname) hom home hum Hume  
man main men mean min mine Mon (a people, Web3) moan mun (Web3)  
moon  
mar mare mer mere mir mire mar more myrrh Muir  
sad Sade said seed Sid side sod sewed/sowed sud sued  
tat Tate Tet teat tit tight tot tote tut! tute"

### ~ TWO QUICK QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Anil has found something unusual about the letters F, H, Q, S, W, X and Y?  
Can you figure it out?
2. And he found something that distinguishes F, H, L, M, N, O, R, S and X from  
the other letters? What is it?

### ~ THREE POEMS IN A FOUNTAIN PEN

In Iowa City, the city has an annual contest for their POEMS IN PUBLIC program, in which people who live in the area can submit a poem of 7 lines or fewer. The 86 winning poems are placed in kiosks, stores, buses, and other places. Here are three poems I wrote for this year's contest. As mentioned above, I can only submit one. Which do you think I chose?

### CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Nobody knows the nose I know  
My snout is the sultan of sneeze  
Beware of the long, pointed schnozz I blow  
My proboscis just waves in the breeze  
My sniffer's so lovely, so long, and so cute  
O, please don't tweak my magnificent snoot

### THE BOOK OF NO PAGES

I bought a book with all my wages.  
Between its covers were no pages.

No one wrote it very well  
With perfect grammar. I could tell.

All the words were clear as air  
About a truth that wasn't there.

### THE HAND

The hand  
is the land  
where a finger  
can linger  
and a thumb  
can come.

### ~ HOT LIPS

In conclusion, here's the *OED*'s pangrammatic definition for *Hot Lips*: "(a) (a nickname for) an energetic or excitin[g] jazz trumpeter; (b) (freq. *humorous*) the lips of a person who kisses passionately; (a nickname for) an attractive or sexy person; one who is or is believed] to be a passionate kisser."