ALPHABETIC TRIGRAMS AND TETRAGRAMS UPDATE

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Many words contain a trigram comprising three consecutive letters of the alphabet, the most common being DEF (defeat, defrost, indefinite, etc.) and STU (stubby, astute, gesture, etc.). Alphabetic tetragrams are much rarer. Perhaps the most well-known are the RSTU examples understudy and overstuffed.

In ‘Alphabetic Trigrams and Tetragrams’ (Word Ways, May 1999) we gave examples for 21 of the 24 trigram combinations and 11 of the 23 tetragrams.

As in the original article, this update gives a single example for each alphabetic set. Proper nouns are acceptable, but not initialisms, purely foreign words or two-word terms like star-studded or film noir.

We have provided examples for every combination this time, but some of the personal names are to say the least ‘dubious’! If you can improve on anything, please let us know.

### Trigrams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trigrams</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Arabcentric focused on Arab culture and history. [Arab + -centric] (Net) ‘... the Arabcentric view of medieval Islamic civilization.’ (Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Vol 24, 2000, p316)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCD</td>
<td>abcdarian early variant of ‘abecedarian’, one engaged in teaching the alphabet. (OED, 1691 quotation)</td>
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<td>CDE</td>
<td>ecdemomania an insane desire to wander away from home. (DMD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>spadefish a deep-bodied Atlantic food fish found from Cape Cod to Cuba. (Web2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFG</td>
<td>trefgordd in old Cymric law, a single community constituting a taxable unit, typically nine houses, one plough, one oven, one churn, one cat, one cock and one herdsman. (Web2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGH</td>
<td>afghanite a hydrous hexagonal feldspathoid mineral of the cancrinite group. (Wikt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHI</td>
<td>tanghin a Madagascan poison, once used to test the guilt of someone suspected of a crime. (ChD)</td>
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<td>HIJ</td>
<td>hijabista a muslim woman or girl who dresses stylishly while conforming to the Islamic modesty code. (Wikt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IJK</td>
<td>riksdalder a former cupronickel or silver Dutch coin equal to 2.5 guilders. (RHD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JKL</td>
<td>kojklumpen a mountain in Jamtland county, central Sweden. (Geo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KLM</td>
<td>zinklmitach town in Upper Bavaria, Germany. (Geo)</td>
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<td>LMN</td>
<td>elmness the essence or quality of being an elm tree. (Wikt) ‘They were spectral, with all vestige of elmness leached back to the soil by the winter rains.’ (Fat Man on a Roman Road, T Vernon, 1983, p129)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNO</td>
<td>hymnody the collective hymns of a specific religion, place or period. (RHD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOP</td>
<td>oenophily love of and knowledge of wines. (ChD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A quiz given without prior announcement or opportunity to prepare. (Web3)

A dubious surname recorded 11 times. (Names)

A settlement in the Zufar region, south Oman. (Geo)

A history regarded from a feminist point of view. (ChD)

In ancient Greece, a covered portico used by athletes for their exercises. (ChD)

A Celtic tribe of southeast Britain before the Roman conquest. (Oxford Dictionary of British History, J Cannon, 2009)

A village in Delta state, south Nigeria. (Geo)

A dubious first name recorded 3 times (Facebk)

Sweet, sexy and dangerous, based on a slightly sarcastic pronunciation of ‘foxy’. ‘Wow damn, who said you could be so fawxy.’ (UD)

An anti-infective agent. (Concise Dictionary of Biomedicine and Molecular Biology, P-S Juo, 2001)

Tetragrams

abcdarian see BCD

dubious surname listed 25+ times. (Names)

dubious surname recorded 25+ times. (Names)

A US government and military slang for ’secretary of defense’, the civilian head of the US Department of Defense. (UD/Wikt)

A surname recorded 170 times in Belgium.

[lastnames.myheritage.com (Net)] Boucherie Defgnee is a butcher shop in Nandrin, Belgium, owned by Raphael Defgnee. (Net)

A female given name of 7 people on Facebk, including Refgha Ezaldeen of Khartoum, Sudan. (Net)

A small town in the Beni Meal-Khenifra region, central Morocco. (Geo)

A village in Odisha state, east India. (Geo)

An area in Sindh province, southeast Pakistan. (Geo)

A small settlement in Friesland province, northwest Netherlands. (Geo)

A dubious surname recorded 30+ times. (Names)

A see JKL

A mountain in Karnten state, south Austria. (Geo)

Morbid aversion to seeing a naked body. (DMDB)

A male resident of Bangkok, Thailand. (Facebk)

dubious surname recorded 13 times. (Names)

dubious surname recorded 13 times. (Names)

A see OPQR

A see OPQR

A a student taught via the Internet rather than by face-to-face tuition. (Wikt)

A a genus of viroids that infects many plants, including the common hop plant. [Wikipedia (Net)]

A Nigerian given name and surname recorded several times on Facebk.

A dubious first name recorded 7 times. (Facebk)

A see UVWX

A dubious first name recorded 3 times. (Facebk)
References
DMD  Dorland’s Medical Dictionary, 23rd edition, 1957
Facebk  Facebook, online social networking site (Net)
Geo  National Imagery and Mapping Agency placename database
      [geonames.usgs.gov (Net)]
Names  Names Directory [namesdir.net (Net)]
Net  Internet, using Google search program (2018)
UD  Urban Dictionary (Net)
Web3  Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, 1976
Wikt  Wiktionary, online dictionary (Net)