

## 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 (**def**eat, **def**rost, **indef**inite, etc.) and STU (**stubby**, **astute**, **gestu**re, 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

ABC	<b>Arabcentric</b>	focused on Arab culture and history. [Arab + -centric] (Net) ‘... the <b>Arabcentric</b> view of medieval Islamic civilization.’ ( <i>Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies</i> , Vol 24, 2000, p316)
BCD	<b>abcdarian</b>	early variant of ‘abecedarian’, one engaged in teaching the alphabet. (OED, 1691 quotation)
CDE	<b>ecdemomania</b>	an insane desire to wander away from home. (DMD)
DEF	<b>spadefish</b>	a deep-bodied Atlantic food fish found from Cape Cod to Cuba. (Web2)
EFG	<b>trefgordd</b>	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)
FGH	<b>afghanite</b>	a hydrous hexagonal feldspathoid mineral of the cancrinite group. (Wikt)
GHI	<b>tanghin</b>	a Madagascan poison, once used to test the guilt of someone suspected of a crime. (ChD)
HIJ	<b>hijabista</b>	a muslim woman or girl who dresses stylishly while conforming to the Islamic modesty code. (Wikt)
IJK	<b>rijksdaalder</b>	a former cupronickel or silver Dutch coin equal to 2.5 guilders. (RHD)
JKL	<b>Kojklumpen</b>	a mountain in Jamtland county, central Sweden. (Geo)
KLM	<b>Zinklmiltach</b>	town in Upper Bavaria, Germany. (Geo)
LMN	<b>elmness</b>	the essence or quality of being an elm tree. (Wikt) ‘They were spectral, with all vestige of <b>elmness</b> leached back to the soil by the winter rains.’ ( <i>Fat Man on a Roman Road</i> , T Vernon, 1983, p129)
MNO	<b>hymnody</b>	the collective hymns of a specific religion, place or period. (RHD)
NOP	<b>oenophily</b>	love of and knowledge of wines. (ChD)

OPQ	<b>popquiz</b>	a quiz given without prior announcement or opportunity to prepare. (Web3)
PQR	<b>Pqrmr</b>	dubious surname recorded 11 times. (Names)
QRS	<b>Qrshat</b>	settlement in the Zufar region, south Oman. (Geo)
RST	<b>herstory</b>	history regarded from a feminist point of view. (ChD)
STU	<b>xystus</b>	in ancient Greece, a covered portico used by athletes for their exercises. (ChD)
TUV	<b>Catuvellauni</b>	a Celtic tribe of southeast Britain before the Roman conquest. ( <i>Oxford Dictionary of British History</i> , J Cannon, 2009)
UVW	<b>Ebruvwa</b>	village in Delta state, south Nigeria. (Geo)
VWX	<b>Vwxyz</b>	dubious first name recorded 3 times (Facebk)
WXY	<b>fawxy</b>	sweet, sexy and dangerous, based on a slightly sarcastic pronunciation of 'foxy'. 'Wow damn, who said you could be so <b>fawxy</b> .' (UD)
XYZ	<b>nidroxyzone</b>	an anti-infective agent. ( <i>Concise Dictionary of Biomedicine and Molecular Biology</i> , P-S Juo, 2001)

## Tetragrams

ABCD	<b>abcdarian</b>	see BCD
BCDE	<b>Bcdef</b>	dubious surname listed 25+ times. (Names)
CDEF	<b>secdef</b>	US government and military slang for 'secretary of <b>def</b> ense', the civilian head of the US Department of Defense. (UD/Wikt)
DEFG	<b>Defgnee</b>	a surname recorded 170 times in Belgium. [ <a href="http://lastnames.myheritage.com">lastnames.myheritage.com</a> (Net)] Boucherie <b>Defgnee</b> is a butcher shop in Nandrin, Belgium, owned by Raphael <b>Defgnee</b> . (Net)
EFGH	<b>Refgha</b>	female given name of 7 people on Facebk, including <b>Refgha</b> Ezaldeen of Khartoum, Sudan. (Net)
FGHI	<b>Toufghine</b>	small town in the Beni Meal-Khenifra region, central Morocco. (Geo)
GHIJ	<b>Singhijuba</b>	village in Odisha state, east India. (Geo)
HIJK	<b>Sahijki</b>	area in Sindh province, southeast Pakistan. (Geo)
IJKL	<b>Nijkleaster</b>	small settlement in Friesland province, northwest Netherlands. (Geo)
JKLM	<b>Hijklmn</b>	dubious surname recorded 30+ times. (Names)
KLMN	<b>Hijklmn</b>	see JKLM
LMNO	<b>Kolmnock</b>	mountain in Karnten state, south Austria. (Geo)
MNOP	<b>gymnophobia</b>	morbid aversion to seeing a naked body. (DMD)
NOPQ	<b>Nopqorn</b>	<b>Nopqorn</b> Pinsiri is a male resident of Bangkok, Thailand. (Facebk)
OPQR	<b>Opqrst</b>	dubious surname recorded 13 times. (Names)
PQRS	<b>Opqrst</b>	see OPQR
QRST	<b>Opqrst</b>	see OPQR
RSTU	<b>cyberstudent</b>	a student taught via the Internet rather than by face-to-face tuition. (Wikt)
STUV	<b>hostuviroid</b>	a genus of viroids that infects many plants, including the common hop plant. [Wikipedia (Net)]
TUVW	<b>Tuvwere</b>	Nigerian given name and surname recorded several times on Facebk.
UVWX	<b>Uvwxy</b>	dubious first name recorded 7 times. (Facebk)
VWXY	<b>Uvwxy</b>	see UVWX
WXYZ	<b>Vwxyz</b>	dubious first name recorded 3 times. (Facebk)

## References

ChD	<i>Chambers Dictionary</i> , 11th Edition, 2014
DMD	<i>Dorland's Medical Dictionary</i> , 23rd edition, 1957
Facebook	Facebook, online social networking site (Net)
Geo	National Imagery and Mapping Agency placename database [ <a href="http://geonames.usgs.gov">geonames.usgs.gov</a> (Net)]
Names	Names Directory [ <a href="http://namesdir.net">namesdir.net</a> (Net)]
Net	Internet, using Google search program (2018)
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 2nd Edition, 1989
RHD	<i>Random House Dictionary</i> , 2nd Edition, 1987
UD	Urban Dictionary (Net)
Web2	<i>Webster's New International Dictionary</i> , 2nd Edition, 1961
Web3	<i>Webster's Third New International Dictionary</i> , 1976
Wikt	Wiktionary, online dictionary (Net)