

A CRUCIAL QUIZ

DARRYL FRANCIS

Hounslow, Middlesex, England

Somewhile ago, we took part in a contest where those participating had to find as many words as possible ending with the letter X that could be found in the thirteen-volume Oxford English Dictionary. This particular contest was inspired no doubt by the fact that the contest sponsor's name, that of a major British breakfast cereal manufacturer, ended with the letter X. The contest ran for just three days -- not a great deal of time in which to search through the 16,400 pages of the OED. Nevertheless, after the three days were up, we had compiled a rather extensive list of X-ending words.

We have decided to offer the readers of Word Ways a quiz that is somewhat similar to the one just described. It will not be based on the OED, though -- the dictionaries that you will need are the Second and Third Editions of Webster's New International. Furthermore, you will not be asked to find all words ending in X -- in fact, you will only be asked to find 26 words ending with this crucial letter. However, each word must begin with a different letter of the alphabet, and must be as long as possible. That isn't too hard a quiz, is it? Or is it?

We suggest that for each of the 26 words on your list (assuming that you do manage to find 26) you score as many points as there are letters in each word. As a rough guide to your performance, we indicate the following targets:

250 points -- good

275 points -- very good

300 points -- excellent

314 points -- you have beaten our score of 313 points,
an achievement that speaks for itself!

Our solution, scoring 313 points, is given in the Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue. If you have bettered (or bested, which amounts to the same thing) our solution, don't hesitate to write and let us know.