DEFINITIVE ACROSTICS

ANIL
Perth, Australia

These are ‘backward’ acronyms. Instead of abbreviating a given phrase or company name, etc, they start with the abbreviation given, usually a single word, and use its letters as the initial letters of a phrase created to define or relate to the word. Ideally, no words in the acronym should be related to the head word etymologically. A famous Medieval example was the popular Latin graffiti:

Roma Radix Omnia Malorum Avaricia (Rome: the root of all things evil and avaricious).

This game was popular in earlier issues of Word Ways (73-37, 81-244, 82-224), featuring, among others, these gems:

acronym a condensed representation of nomenclature yielding meaning
bra bust raising apparatus
cigar carcinogenic incendiary gadget attenuating respiration
diet disciplined intake encouraging thinness
ear elementary audio receptor
letters little etchings that transcribe every readable sound
lights luminous incandescent gadgets helpful to sight
logophile lovable old gent [or gal] outlandishly pursuing happiness investigating lexicographic enigmas
nose natural olfactory sensor extension
mouth muscular orifice, usually toothed, hungry
shovel sharp, hand operated vertical earth lifter
smile stretched mouth indicating likeable experience

Having not resurfaced for nearly three decades I thought readers might be ready for a revival. Here I offer at least one for each letter. If the list seems long, it’s very short compared to Robert Patton’s proposed complete Acronymic Dictionary of English (73-37). It does, however, lend some credence to the possibility of an all-inclusive list, although in reality I expect a majority of words would be intractable, especially those containing jqxyz, very short words and overly specific hard-to-define nouns. And most long words would have to contain lots of ‘padding’.

Regarding hyphenated words I cheat and use a double standard: either both elements are counted or only the first. Some of the following run two or more acronyms together, like polyanagrams.

antonym a name taking opposite nuance, yea meaning
antonymic affinity-negative to other name you mention; in contradistinction
arm articulated reaching mechanism
ass anus, shit sphincter
“asshole” a stupid shit hazardous our level emotions
bears bruins (Eat anything, really slumber.)
bold brazen, of large daring (Brave, or largely duped?)
bread  baked, readily eaten appetising dough
cold  chilly, of low degrees °
cop  [n.] constable or policeman
cop  [vb] come onto passively, can’t obviate politely
cows  [n.] 1. cattle; 2. obese women;  [vb] 3. subdues (Is this 3-for-1 cheating, or a bargain?)
ditto  Do it thus twice over.
entire  Everything’s neatly there, isn’t requiring elements.
eyes  encrypctors yielding electromagnetic sensitivity
fast  for a short time
faster  fleet and speedy transit, enhanced rate
faster than light  forbidden acceleration: speedier than electromagnetic rays
(The heavens await no landings if glow holds top.)
(fie, the heavens outside our solar system; no neighbouring stars have solid planets)
fed  Finished eating dinner, fulfilled eating desire.
fire  flame; ignition-released energy
“Fit in!”  (Free in thought it’s not.)
gather  glean and take home earned resources
gem  geologically exciting mineral
good  greatly outdoing ordinary dullness
hands  holding-arms-near-digits structures
heavy  having extreme avoirdupois/volume yield  (heavy dense)
hot  heightened overall temperature, high on thermometer
ibis  iconic bird (Is sacred.)
inside  Is nested (sequestered), isn’t denied entry.
job  just one’s business
joker  jester offering kinky ending rib-ticklers
kindergarten  kids in nursery deriving education regarding group activity, reciprocal treatment, ego normalisation
legs  locomotives earning ground scissors-like
Lethe  lotus-eaters’ torpid heedlessness experience
lie  Largely inaccurate equivocation, literalness isn’t evident.
logology  Linguistic oddities, gematria, onomastics, letter-ordering games—yahoo!
love  1. liking one very especially; 2. licking one very erotically
mind  mysterious intellectual nous domain
nobs  niche: “old boy” Sirs (network of bull shit!) (Except Sir Jeremy Morse of course!)
now  no other when
“Now!”  “Not on Wednesday!”  (a self-referential: applicable generally but Not on Wednesday!)
obey  Observe boss’s edict, yes-man, operate beyond ego, yield.
open  only partly enclosed now  (corral, room)
“pig”  policeman in gear
pigs  porcine individuals, genus Sus
quart  quantitation unit; application: runny things  (Like a quart horse?)
replica  reproduction exact, perfect, lacking in creative additions
rip up  Rend into pieces, undoing perfection.
rob  relieve of belongings
scissors  shearing/cutting instrument (“snips”), serrated or razor sharp
senses  skin, eyes, nose, stoma, ears, soma  [skin = touch, temperature, pain; stoma (mouth) = taste;
ears = hearing, gravity and balance; soma (body) = proprioception or positional body awareness]
shit  sewage haul in turds
siblings  “sisters” including brothers; location initially: nest group situation
snowflakes  sixfold nodules of water forming lovely and kaleidoscopic “ephemeral stones”
sow  Seed out (whatever: sorghum, oats, wheat...)
sows  swine (only ‘women’ swine)
synonyms  “same yet not”: other notations yet mean same
three  two, having received extra element
toe  terminal oblong extremity
top  [n.]  tip of projection; totally “on” part
top  [vb]  trounce other participants
udders  “underside dairies” delivering emulsion-rich soup
valid  verified and locked-in (data)
vase  vessel as stem enclosure
violins  vibration instruments offering lyrical intonations (non-fretted strings)
waste  what afterward survives to eliminate
wit  wide in thought; where ideas triumph
xerox  xeric exact reproduction of X
yearn  You eagerly anticipate receiving “need”.
“yes”  You essentially sympathise.
zealous  zestful energy about loved object, utterly serious
zebras  zoological entities bearing regularly arranged stripes

I hope you’ll be tempted to play this open-ended game again and send your best efforts to the editor
or to the Kickshaws editor.

NATURAL ORDER

SIR JEREMY MORSE
London, England

The quaking jungle
Becomes a zone
Of unvexed order
When the lion preys—
A buck dies fighting;
Jackals moan;
Opaque forest
Curves in waxy haze.