AN AEIOU EXAMINATION

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We have often seen comments on words that have all five vowels AEIOU, usually in alphabetic order. I decided to take a particular dictionary and list all the words I could find with AEIOU in any order, eliminating those words in which a vowel was repeated, such as AdvEntI­IOUs with two I’s. The dictionary I selected was the Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary (1973 printing) which I use frequently in the game of Scrabble.

To my surprise, I found 283 words; the editor subsequently provided me with 80 more for a total of 363. At his suggestion, I have listed the words that were found according to the order of the vowels. There are 120 possible permutations of AEIOU, of which 68 are represented by one or more words (about 60 per cent of the total).

Of course, the list could be greatly expanded with the use of other dictionaries. In the November 1969 Word Ways, the editor gives examples of words for 104 permutations, and dictionary words for nine more were later found.

The alphabetic-order pattern AEIOU is represented by AbstEm­IOUs, fAcEtIOUs, and pArEcIOUs, but the reverse alphabetic-order pattern UOIEA is realized only by UnnOtIcEAbLY (is it really unnoticed­able?). Of the five possible circular alphabetic patterns, all but UAEIO are represented in the listing; contrariwise, the only other reverse circular alphabetic pattern to be found was AUKOE, in AuthOr­IsE and other words.

Such a list as this ought to prove useful in solving a cryptogram by the vowel-spotting method, familiar to cryptanalysts. If a word is found with five different vowels, none repeated, this list will reveal which one of 363 words will fit by length and pattern or non-pattern.

My final observation is that the shortest words with AEIOU have at least two consonants, and the longest words have sixteen letters (such as nOnUndErstAnding). One word, mIAOUEd, has its vowel pattern clustered together uninterrupted by any consonants.

AEIOU abstemious, facetious, parecious
AEOIU aerobium, archegonium, pandemonium
AEIOU warehousing
AEUO maleruption
There presented. Other listed.

Ambidextrous, calciferous, glaireous, glandiferous, gramineous, jaspideous, lactiferous, lanigerous, spadiceous, stramineous.

Carillonateur.

Captiousness, factiousness, gladioluses, graciousness, grandiloquent, radiolucent, spaciousness, variousness.

Androecium, apothecium.

Manoeuving.

Albumenoid, aureomycin.

Endocarpium, leprosarium, mesosostrium.

Crematorium, pelargonium.

Belabouring, preannouncing.

Fetiparous.

Semi-voluntary.

Endocardium, leprosarium, mesosostrium.

Encouraging, expostulating.

Preconnubial.

Decussation, degustation, denudation, deplumation, depuration, deputation, despumation, detruncation, education, emulation, equation, eructation, exculpation, exhumation, expurgation, exudation, exultation, fecundation, menstruation, mensuration, peculation, regulation, reputation, speculation, sternutation.

Pneumatolytic, regulatorship, rheumatoid.

Denunciatory, elucidator, enunciator, renunciatory, resuscitator.

Delusional, equivocal, reductional.

Deutoplasmic, deutoplastic, edulcorating, leucocratic, neuro-pathic, pneumodynamics, pseudoclassic.

Eulogia, euphonical, euphoria, euphorbia, neuroglia, neuro-psychiatry, pneumonia, sequoia.

Diadelphous, diathermous, filamentous, intraserous, intravenous, ligamentous, micaceous, pinaceous, spinaceous, vitaceous.

Chivalrousness, dialogue, disfavoured, infamousness, miaoued.

Bicephalous, dicesphalous, dipetalous, tripetalous.

Interglobular, interocular.

Micrometallurgy.

Bimolecular, incommensurably.

Bicornuate, biloculate, bivouacked, discountable, discourage, dismountable, importunate, impoundable, impoundage, incommutable, incomputable, inconstruable, inconsumable.
inoculable, inoculate, inopppugnable, inosculate, involucrate, thiosulfate

IOUEA thiourea
IUOAE circumrotate, insupportable

OAIUE colatitude, odalisque, portraiture
OAUIE coadjutrixes, consanguine, nonculitile, nonplausible
OEAIU overfaithful, overfanciful, overpainful
OEAIU commerasuring, overhauling, overlaunching, somersaulting
OEIUA nonresidual, nonvesicular
OEUAI coequality, coequating, conceptualism, overquantity
OEUIA nonregualt
OIAUE foliature
OUIAE continuance, continue, contributable, orbiculate
OUAEI outanswering, outbantering, outbrazening, outcapering, outchattering, outflattering, outgathering, outhastening, outlander ing, outtraveling
OUAIE boundaries, columbaries, communализ, commutative, conjugative, consultative, consummative, contumacies, copulative, formularize, gourmandize, journalize, obduracies, occupancies, oppugnancies, outcaved, outlawries, outpatient, outpraise, outraise, outsailed, outstrayed, outwaited, popularize, tournaline, voluntaries

OUEAI countenancing, counteracting, counterblasting, counterchanging, counterclaim, countermanding, countermarching, counterplanting, countersignal, countertallying, countervall, housemaid, housewarming, mouse tail, mouse trapping, nonunderstanding, nonenmentalism, outbeaming, outbegging, outbleating, outdreaming, outeating, outfeasting, outhearing, outlearning, outreaching, outreaching, outscreaming, outspeaking, outspreading, outswearing, outwearing, outwearying, troublemaking

OUIAE communicable, communicate, concubinage, conduplicate, con glutinate, conjunctivae, noncultivated, nondutiable, nonpunishable, nonuplicable, nourishable, outdistance, outrivaled

OUIEA nohuniversal

UAEOI quaestorship, quatrefoil, ultradespotic
UAIOE mustachioed, ultraviolet, unsanctioned
UAOIE fumatories, ultraconfident, unabolished, unsavoriness
UEAIO nucleation, numeration, putrefaction, rubefaction, sustentation, tumefaction, ulceration
UEAOI superabhorring, superastondish, supercatholic, unreasoning
UEJOA questionably, questionary, subregional, subventionary, successional, superdiplomacy, superignorant, superimportant, unmentionably
UEOA nuclearplasmic, superromantic, undemocratic
UEOIA questorial, supercordial, superformidably, superlogical, superordinary, superstoical, unheroical, unmethodical, unrecognizably, uterodynia
UIAEO multiramose
UIEOA multipersonal
UIOAE multicostate, multilobate, unicostate, unimportance
A DISCERNING/DISCRIMINATING DICTIONARY

Groups of words with closely-related meanings but different spellings and pronunciations have been collected into synonym dictionaries. However, similar dictionaries of groups of words with closely-related spellings or pronunciations have, to my knowledge, never been produced. A first attempt at filling this gap has been made by Adrian Room, in Room's Dictionary of Confusibles (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979; $10), which contains groups of words resembling each other simultaneously in all three attributes: meaning, spelling, pronunciation. With each group, he provides brief definitions designed to bring out the differences in meaning. He does not consider variant spellings of the same word, such as theatre/theater or curb/kerb.

A few samples will, perhaps, give the flavor of the whole. Similarity in spelling alone is not enough: accidental/ incidental does not appear, though accidental/incidental and oriental/ oriental do. Some of the groups of two words are very good: ingenious/ingenuous, affect/effect, banister/baluster, vice-regent/vicegerent, magnificent/munificent, torturous/tortuous. However, his larger groups are less successful, often linking words with substantially different spellings or meanings:

- babble/rabble/gabble/rabbit/burble/blather
- rigid/ur gid/turbid/tumid/torrid
- pagoda/ pergola / portico / gazebo
- catacomb/hec t tomb / catafalque / cenotaph

Many of these were probably included on the basis of similarity in syllabification.

If one is looking for the right word to convey a particular shade of meaning, this book is no substitute for a good synonym dictionary. As the author recognizes, the book cannot hope to include everyone's pet confusibles, being a personal and idiosyncratic list. Nevertheless, the book does "distract, divert, and even delight" the browser, and serendipitous discoveries can be made: did you know that 'slot' comes from the Old French esclot, 'hollow between the breasts'?