

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

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

Tetragrams

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