

ACROSTIC DICTIONARY OF WORDPLAY TERMS

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A bunch of definitive reverse acrostics presented in February ('10-8) included seven wordplay terms, with especially fun ones for logology and logophile (see below). I thought a rather immoderate list of wordplay terms similarly defined might be appreciated by logology fans. Read the definitions first. If they are not clear, then consult the examples, which are given as “answers” if needed. For freer definitions see Dave Morice’s *Dictionary of Word Play* (Teachers & Writers Col- lab.: NY, 2001), Chris Cole’s *Wordplay* (Sterling: NY, 1999) or spot WW references.

* = repeats from 10-8; § = quoted there;

RE = contributed by Ross Eckler. I invite others to send in improvements or additional terms.

{Xa/Xb} = choose one or read twice, once with each, making two acrostics;

(Xa/Yb) = alternatives within a single acrostic: either one or both may be appropriate

[Helvetica font] = examples and comments (not acrostics)

Non-bold parts of headwords = also not acrosticised. May your dislike of calling a part the whole be outweighed by your relief at being spared unnecessary repetition or drivel. Even so, I’ve had to work to minimise expletives (irrelevant filler), preferring redundancy to use up excess letters. Still, many read like headlines and could stand a clarifying *a, the, one/you, of, is* or *and* in places. Some definitions use part of the target term, but mostly I’ve avoided such ‘cheating’. I’ve also stretched the language occasionally, commandeering marginal words to represent the two most important words in logology, word and letter.†

Read these words as **letter**: *alphabit* (kid’s cereal eponym), *character*, *element*, *grapheme*, *rune*, *symbol*, **type**.

Read these letters as **word**: *lexeme*, *morpheme*, **sign**, **verb**, *name*— but capitalised *Names* means proper nouns.

*§ **ACRONYM** (cf. 10-196)

a condensed representation of nomenclature yielding meaning

[IBM]

ACROSTICS (*≈ Acronym; cf. Anacrogram*)

axed-crosswise readings of secondary text initial characters strike

Carnivorous

Animal,

REVERSE ACROSTICS (*cf. 10-8 and this article*)

Relate elements, **verb**alising each, realise (sentence/expression). [**cat** carnivorous animal, tigerlike]

Tigerlike

ALPHABET

All letters park here as basic English **types**.

ALPHABETICAL Assort list, prioritise headword arrangement by established tradition, items consecutively arranged letterwise.

† As opposed to the two most important words in word play, which are word and play!

All word and no play makes Jack a dull bore.

ALPHANUMERICS (*cf. Digital Wordplay, Gematria, Balanced*) [A = 1, B = 2, etc]
All letters perceived having a number, use math equations resulting in changed significations.

ALPHOME
Alphabetised letters (personal holdings) of morpheme educed. [AEHLMOP]

ALTERNADE [FOILED > FIE + OLD]
Alternating letter-turn exemptions render newly achieved double expressions.

ANACROGRAM (Anil, 06-74) [No man is an island. > NMIAI > MAIN, I. or I AM IN.]
Abstract neatest abbreviation, consider, rearrange (order) graphemes, render apt message.

ANAGRAMS (*cf. Anacrogram, Antigram, Bananagram, Definitive, Ostrich, Pairagram, Polyanagram, Transposal*)
Analyse names, apply grapheme rearrangements. Aim: meaning {similarities/synchronicities}.
RE A novel alphabet game reconstructs a mixed-up spelling. [EAT/ATE TEA.]

ANTIGRAM
anagram naming the item's generalised reverse (antonymic) meaning [ADMIT. DAM IT.]

(* **ANTONYM**
antithetical name taking opposite "not your" meaning [YES, NO?]

* **ANTONYMIC**
affinity-negative to other name you mention; in contradistinction

AUTOLOGICAL WORDS (=Truthful Words, ≈ Self-Referential Term)
when ordered runes describe self [COMMON; HELVETICA]

BALANCED WORD (aka BALANCED LETTER SUM)
Beginning and later alphanumeric numbers cancel, equally dense. [LOVE: 12+15 = 22+5;
The term is also used to mean letters in any order whose values average 13.5, eg VOLE.]

BANANAGRAMS (Conti, 98-139)
Both anagram names asked need answer-generating rhymed aware-making signal.

BEHEADMENT (*cf. Deletion*)
By excising head element a different meaning ensues; name too. [CAT – C = AT]

CHARADES [BARMY EXAMPLE:
Change, holding all rigid as designated except spacing. BAR MY EXAMPLE?]

CHARITABLE WORD (*cf. Stingy Word*) [AID > AI, AD, ID (Ai is a sloth.)]
Change heralds a rightness inclusively: toss *any* beheld letter, end with ordinary readable diction.

COINAGE (= *Neologism*)

Create officially invalid name and get excited.

[SMYNONYMS]

COINCIDENTAL SELF-SYNONYMY (Anil, 04-45)

Couple obtain identical nuance, composition. Initially different etymologically, now they've acquired likeness. [HALT 1. stop <G halt; 2. hesitate <OE healt]

COLLOQUY

communications of little logology opinions, queries, updates, yearnings

CONSTRAINT

Confined operating nexus: set task requiring abridgment in negotiable tactics.

CONTRONYM

Contradicts own name. Two readings occupy name you mention. [CLIP = join *or* cut]
It's spelt CONTRANYM in Cole. To accommodate change "occupy" to "acquire".

CRASH

Corresponding registers alphabetically shared here.

[the I's in BIG and LIE]

CROSSWORD

columns, rows operated so sideways words overlap reads downward

I
T I M E
P

CRYPTARITHM

coded riddle you put together arithmetically, realising its **types** hide mathematics

CRYPTOGRAM

coded riddle you put together of graphemes reassigned alternative monikers

CURTAILMENT (*cf Deletion and Charitable*)

Cut ultimate (rear) **type**; afterwards intact letters mean entirely new thing.

[BET - T = BE]

DEFINITIVE (cf 03-91)

[eg, definitive anagram: BASICS = Is "ABCs"]

dictionary entry facsimiles invented novelly investigating **types**; ideal: **verbal** equality

DELETION (*cf Beheadment, Curtailment, Charitable and Transdeletions*)

Disposable "extra" letter excised, turns into other name.

[HOE - O = HE]

DIGITAL WORDPLAY (*≈ Alphanumeric and Gematria; cf. Shiftgrams*)

devising ingenious gematria involving totals among letters with ordained ranks, deducing patterns letters alphanumerically yield

[A=1, Z=26, etc]

DOUBLET (*cf Ladders*)

Derive opposite upon building ladder ending thus.

[TIP PIP PIT]

EMBEDDED WORD (aka KANGAROO WORD) [BATH]

Extra morpheme—buried egg—did dig engaged destiny within overall runes dealt.

EMOTICONS (=Puncs) [laughing face (sideways); ((-:]

Engender montage-of-typescripts illustration composed of nonletter symbols.

ETAOIN SHRDLU

extreme twelve alphabet objects in numbers seen, having ranked detailed literature usage

EYE RHYMES (Lederer, 05-83) (cf *HETERONYM*)

Elements yield expected rhyme. However, you're mistaken, ears say. [LEAD = "led" vs. "leed"]

FIBONACCI NUMBERS (cf Eckler, 03-199) Favoured increments: both of numbers at conclusion combine into next update. Make bigger every round similarly. [112358...]

FIBONACCI WORDS (Morice; cf 03-198) [EACH BUM BE A CHUM.]

written of "rank ditto" symbols (Alphanumeric ranks of allowed letters ditto previous definition.)

GEMATRIA (*≈ Alphanumerics and Digital Wordplay*)

generating equivalences mathematically according to ranks in alphabet

GRAMOGRAM (=Letteral Word)

Generate read-aloud morpheme off graphemes resting abreast mutually. [MT empty]

HETEROGRAM (*≈ Isogram*)

Has exclusive **type** every register, or grapheme repeats aren't made. [AMBIDEXTROUS]

HETERONYM (=Homograph type 2; cf *Eye Rhymes*)

Hearing eclipses the eye's reading, offering new yell, meaning. [BASS]

HOLOVOCALIC (Anil, cf 02-66†) [EA., YOU, I (Rastafarianism: "Ea. you = I.")]

Holding of letters offers vowels only; construct's altogether lacking in consonants.

/ † Defined there as containing all the vowels, it's more useful meaning any vowels. Please revise.

HOMOGRAPHS (type 2 = *Heteronym*)

1. Having other meanings. Oral, graphic representations attending pair hold same. [BAT]

2. *Hear* other morpheme, only graphic representation attending pair holds same. [LEAD]

HOMOPHONES

Hear other(s) matching oneself; puns, heard only, not equal spelling. [LED, LEAD metal]

IMPAIRED READING (cf 06-156 and "*Diacrostics*" in this issue)

I maim phrase and is readable, easiness diminished. [HLOD YUOR HSOERS.]

INSERTION (cf *Transadditions and Triangle*)

Inject new symbol, enlarging register, thus instigating other name. [PIT + N = PINT]

ISOGRAM (*≈Heterogram; cf Pair Isogram*)

Individual species only; grapheme repeats aren't made. [SUBORDINATELY]

ISOLANOS (*cf Onalosi*)

If substitute one letter (*any*), not obtain **sign**. [GNU (no words fit GN_, G_U or _NU)]

ISOMORPHS

Individuals share other's morpheme organisation; rune pair hangout's same. [ALL ODD]

KEYBOARD CONSTRAINTS (aka TYPEWRITER WORDS, Thorpe, 00-73; *see also 08-30*)

Keep elements you brandish of a restricted division, column or nominated section:
totally righthand; all in narrow typewriter stripe; ... (etc) [ALASKA is the only single row State.]

KICKSHAWS

Kinky intellectual charades keep savants happy abusing words shamelessly.

KING'S MOVE (*eg 08-30*)

Kinesis, l notch: (go sideways / move obliquely / vary elevation). (l = Roman one)

KNIGHT'S MOVE

Kick north initially, gyrate, head two sideways, making oblique vault entry.

LADDERS (*cf Doublet, Sentential Ladder, Vowel Cascades, Word Stools*)

Letter alterations, different down each rung somewhere. SOW
MOW
MOP
MAP

LETTERAL WORD (Anil, 02-223; cf 03-257) (=Gramogram, cf)

Let each **type** tease ear, rendering aural-lit word(s) off rebus diagram. [XXX = exec's sex!]

LETTER HEIGHT CONSTRAINTS (see "Letter Height Lipograms" in this issue)

Line elevation (tall/ trimmed even) restricted. [hillbilly curvaceousnesses]

*§ **LETTERS**

little etchings that transcribe every readable sound

LIGHT VERSE (*cf Parodies, Rhyme, Rhythm*)

["Fleas" Adam Had 'em. — Anon.]

Levity, insight give humour to **verbal** etudes, rhyming shorties especially.

LINKADES (*compare Portmanteau Word and Word Chains*)

Lexeme includes names knit along double entendre symbol. [GOLD = GO + OLD]

LIPOGRAM(S)

[eg, no A: Merry owned one little juvenile sheep...]

Letter(s) in particulars omitted, generating restricted-alphabet made sentences.

RE Letters in particular omitted, generating really abnormal messages.

* **LOGOLOGY**

linguistic oddities, gematria, onomastics, letter-ordering games—yahoo!

***§ LOGOPHILE**

loveable old {gent/gal} outlandishly pursuing happiness investigating lexicographic enigmas

MACARONICS

["Sail a V," said the half-English half-French duck.]

Mixed alphabet constructs artfully reference other nation's idiomatic culture **signs**.

MACHINE (generator or locator; aka ENGINE)

method assisting check-hunts in name explorations

MAGIC WORD SQUARES (05-76) (*cf Word Squares*)

YAM 25 1 13

Morphemes, alphanumeric go into compatible spelling quadrangles;

AMY 1 13 25

up/dn, angular, right/left equal, sensible.

MYA 13 25 1

MALAPROPISM

["If you don't want to come, I can't stop you."]

merriment arising linguistically after posting regrettable oops pun-involved silly misuse

METATHESIS (*cf Ostrich Anagram, Spoonerism*)

Mutual exchange: trading-around two held elements still is sensible.

[PENAL PANEL]

MIAMI WORD (Thorpe, 00-14)

morpheme's internal alphabet mounted inside wings of replicate duo

[MIAMI]

MONDEGREENS (Sylvia Wright, Harper's, 1950s; cf 10-55)

[The Ants Are My Friends]

Music's oral names don't evoke good recognition easily, engender noncorrect suppositions.

NEOLOGISM (= *Coinage*)

[NEOISM]

{New/Not} English: order letters, originate groundbreaking inventive spelling, meaning.

NEO-TRUISM (coinage; cf 04-174)

[Taste makes waist.]

Novelly edited old twist rendered "updated" in {serious makeover / silly mischief}.

NETWORKS (*cf WORD PACKS and LADDERS*)

needleworking established terms with others, {rigging kinship setups/ reflecting kinship series}

ONALOSI (*cf ISOLANOS*)

Overlay name's *any* letter opportunely, **sign's** incurred.

[POT > HOT PAT POD]

ONOMASTICS (*cf SIGNATURE*)

Overviewing Names, open many avenues studying their incidence, comparisons, spelling.

OSTRICH ANAGRAM (Anil, 07-60) (*cf ANAGRAMS*)

Opening symbol(s) tuck (reposition) inside, concealing head, and new alphabet grouping

results: a morpheme.

[CAT ACT]

OXYMORON [HOLY WAR]
Outlandish x + y match opposes rationality or normality. (Note the use of “or”, not “and”.)

PAIRAGRAMS (Morice, 07-128, cf 03-201) (*cf ANAGRAMS*) [ADOBE ABODE]
Partner anagrams in redolent affinity groupings reveal associations’ mutual synergies.

PAIRINDROMES (Anil, 08-59) (*cf PALINDROME*) [BONK KNOB]
Partners agreeing in reversal invite newly derived reading, obtain “match effect” synergy.

PAIR ISOGRAMS (*cf ISOGRAM and POLYGRAM*)
Partner all item’s runes. [INTESTINES = EEIINNSSTT]

PALINDROME (*cf PAIRINDROME and SMYNONYMS*)
RE Provides all letters in narrative, displays reverse order—message equivalent. [SMYNONYMS]

PALINDROMES
Putting all letters in names down, reversing order manifests equal spellings.

PANGRAM [Quick, brown fox, jump over the lazy dogs!]
Possesses *all* name-generating rudiments (alphabet members).

PARODIES
Pretending are reproducing opus, diverge—invent, embellish, satarise.

PATTERN WORDS (*contrast HETEROGRAM and ISOGRAM*)
Paired and/or tripled **types** effectively ‘ripple’ names. [MONOTONY, pattern **12324235**]

PIG LATIN [IGPAY @ INLAY]
Put initial grapheme last, “A” terminally introduce, neighlike. (Or Horse Latin?)

POLYANAGRAMS (Anil, *up/dn*; 03-91) (*cf ANAGRAMS*) [**outstanding** astounding tasting donut]
Pile on last year’s anagrams, negotiate any grammatical rifts, achieve meaningful synthesis.

POLYGRAMS (*cf PAIR ISOGRAM; contrast HETEROGRAM*)
Paired or larger, your graphemes’ restriction. All multiple specimens. [ERRER]

PORTMANTEAU WORD
Parts of requisitioned two morphemes adhere, new thought emerges as united. [MOTEL]

PUN
put-up nuance [Big Foot is a leg end.]
RE Presents unexpected nuance.

PUNCS (*coinage; ≈ EMOTICONS*) Ganesh: (ojo) KKK: /oo\
pictures using naked characters, structured (all keyboard characters, including letters)

REBUS

[BB = rebus (re-B us)]

riddle enigmatically built upon symbols (all symbols, pictures as well as letters)

RESIDUAL HETEROGRAM (Thorpe, 01-36) (*cf HETEROGRAM*)

Repetitious elements singularised, item deals up anagrammed lexeme.

[FILLIP > FLIP]

RHOPALICS

Clublike (tapering shape) is the etymology of rhopalic.

Regularly heap on (“pyramid”) another, larger item, clublike syllablewise.

[He evades policemen passionately, melodramatic sesquipedalian eleutheromaniac.]

RHYME

Reminds hearing you met earlier.

[Remember? September.]

RHYTHM

Regularity hits your timing, holding metronomically.

[(Hup-2-3-4)ⁿ]**RIDDLE**

recreational idea-disguised devilish logic enigma

[How many were going to St. Ives?]

ROTATORS (*cf* 03-243) (aka UPSIDE-DOWN WORDS/LETTERS)

Reversing orientation topwise agrees, the orientation remains same.

[up/dn]

SELF-REFERENTIAL STATEMENT

Sense-encoding line feeds retro: expression forward extends reflexively, entails negatively turned itself-aimed loop.

[The present sentence should have ended nine words ago.]

SENTENTIAL† WORD LADDERS (Anil, 02-192) (*cf LADDERS*)

Set entries {neatly/nearly} to express natural thought in a ladder.

[Fab fib fit fat cat cad.]

† sentential in the original sense, meaningful, sentence forming, as used by Puder (04-30)

SESQUIPEDALIASize-extreme **signs** quantitated using individual properties (expanse/ duration), alphabetically longest items appraised.

[ANTIDISESTABLISHMENTARIANISTS]

SHIFTGRAMS

[SENDER + 1-shift = TFOEFS, mixed > OFFSET]

Symbols hop it forward together, greatening ranks alphabetically, mix **significantly**.**SIGNATURE PUNS** (Anil, 06-222) (*cf ONOMASTICS*)

[ACHILLES: HOCK KILL EASE]

Star individuals get Names audibly teased, {upholding/upbraiding} reputation’s essence.

SMYNONYMS (Anil, 05-88) (aka DEFINITIVE PALINDROMES)

[SEMANTIC: IT NAMES.]

Same meaning yaws nigh on names you mobilise sinistrally. (Go Left, young man.)

SPOONERISM (*cf METATHESIS*)

[SHINING WIT? WINING SHIT!]

Switch places of opening name’s early rune(s), item’s secondary morpheme’s.

STINGY WORD (*contrast CHARITABLE WORD*) [JAZZ: JAZ, JZZ and AZZ are not words.]
Sits tight, is *no* grapheme yanking which occasions readability dictionarywise.

SYNONAGRAM (Kidd, 03-290) (\approx *DEFINITIVE ANAGRAMS*, *cf*) [FLINCHED = INCH-FLED]
Scramble yon name, obtain neat (anagram/ group) reflecting agreement meaningwise.

*** SYNONYMS**

“Same yet not”: other notations yet mean same.

SYNONYM TO ANTONYM CHAIN (*cf WORD CHAIN*)

Serially you name other names, yoking meanings, till opposite (antithetical) name to original name you meet. [DARK—ILL-LIT—DULL—PALE—LIGHT]

TAUTONYM

Two alike units together offer novel yapyap morpheme. [BERIBERI]

TOM SWIFTIE

[“I’m coming!” Tom ejaculated.]
To offset many “said”, write identifier facetious toward implicated expression.

TONGUE TWISTER

[Say BUGS BLACK BLOOD fast repeatedly.]
Too odd nearness gums up expression; talker wants its slowdown to ease recital.

TRANSADDITIONS (*cf INSERTIONS and TRIANGLE*)

[LAB + E = BALE or ABLE]
To reading add new symbol and disarrange, developing it till it offers new **sign(s)**.

TRANSDELETION (*cf DELETIONS and TRIANGLE*)

[TALE - A = LET]
Take rune away. Now symbols’ disarray enables letter editing to initiate other name.

TRANSPOSAL (*cf ANAGRAMS*)

[PETRIFACTION > PONTIFICATER]
Term’s runes, after newly structuring pattern, offer still another lexeme.

TRIANGLE (aka PYRAMID; *cf TRANSADDITIONS and TRANSDELETIONS*)

three-rimmed incrementally-augmented names gatherer, linearly expanding
I
IT
BIT.

ACROSTICS TRIANGLE (06-127)

...OBIT?
Acrosticise continuously: regard one **sign**, turn its contents sentenceward,
acrosticise continuously, regard one’s sentence, turn its contents storyward,
acrosticise continuously, regard one’s story, turn its contents screenplayward, ...

BUTTERFLY TRIANGLES (Thorpe, 00-288, aka BUTTERFLY TRANSADDITIONS)

Build under two triangles ends-remix from letters yielded.

TRIGRAM

Three rudiments, its graphemes, represent alphabet members. [ABC]

TRUTHFUL WORDS (=Autological Words, \approx Self-Referential Term)

Terms (represent/ undergo) their home formula’s undertaking literally. [WORD, ABBREV.]

UNIVOCALIC [ILLICIT, ABRACADABRA]
Uses nominated individual vowel only, consonants alone leftovers in construct.

VICINALS [CARBONS = ABC + NO + RS]
Verb's inclusive content is neighbouring (alphabetically) letter subgroups.

VOWEL CASCADES (Anil, 02-53) [BAD BED BID BOD BUD.]
Vowels only will exhibit ladder changes—alphabet-sequential changes, all down especial spot.

WINDOWS (eg, *PANGRAM*, cf) [The (**quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog**) Fido.]
where incidental narrative demonstrates occurrence within script

WORDS
written or recited dictionary subjects

WORD CHAINS (cf *LINKADES*, *PORTMANTEAU WORD* and *WORD STRINGS*)
when overlapping regions down continuously handwritten arrays interconnect names
sequentially [1: The ending goes straight to other row-word's start. 2: Both they eyed.]

WORD PACKS (cf *NETWORKS*) HORSE O
Woven, ordered regimes densely parallel and crisscross kindred **signs**. IBEX O W
N WOLF

WORDPLAY
warping—or reading doubly—prose, letters, ambiguous yarns

WORDPLAYER
wit or revisionist dealing puns, literary amusements, yanks, entertaining repartee

WORDPLAYING
(written/oral) recreational diversions pushing letters around, yielding interesting new games
(The last two entries reflect two different perspectives on wordplay, meaningful and structural. Both are better when they coincide.)

WORD SQUARES (cf *MAGIC WORD SQUARES*) OLD
Written-outward read-downward spelling quadrangles, upon arrangement, read LOO
equivalently “sideways”. DOG

WORD STOOLS (Anil, 02-288) (*single-step LADDERS*; aka NEIGHBOURS)
where one rune difference sees the occurrence of lexeme similarity [QUICK BUICK]

WORD STRING (cf *WORD CHAINS*) [SNOWESTATE: Snow now owes West estate State ta at Te E.]
Whichever of row's divisions starts transcription rolling is name generator.

WORD TORTURES (Cole)
Torn open randomly, term's universal remains express sense. [FAD: FA, AD, F, A, D]

WORD-UNIT PALINDROME Word order reversals don't unleash nonsense; instead they
preserves all lexemes in native direct-reading order, meaning equal. [I AND I]

WORD WAYS

Whatever our readership delivers when articles yearn sharing.

RE Wordplay of remarkable {diversity/depth} will always yield satisfaction.

ZIGZAG WORDS

[BAHAMAS CHAP]

Zip inwards, grapheme zap, alphabetically gyrate, wax outwards—repeatedly during spelling.

REVERSE ACROSTICS PARLOUR GAME

Try reverse acrostics as a game. Players create acrostic messages from the same word or phrase. Use any word set—eg, players' names. Or take turns picking the target for a game. Any number can play, from one on up. Choose a time limit after a few games. Perhaps have special rules for awkward letters, eg, allow X to be Ex. If you want a competition, work out your own rules for scoring, eg, fastest, most apt, best English, funniest, most insulting; maybe multiple winners for different categories as with Oscars. Or declare everyone the winner like Alice's Dodo!

I also recommend reverse acrostics as a tool for teachers of composition and creative writing. It helps teach the value of a thesaurus and the appreciation of meaning nuances and duplicities.