

TRADING PLACES

Richard Lederer
San Diego, California

Norm Storer
San Diego, California

A number of words become new words when, contemporaneously, the front letter is looped to the back and the back to the front. The first and last letters must be different, of course, and the result of this double loop is that the first and last letters are exchanged. If the middle letters are palindromic, the pair becomes palindromic.

Dave Morice's superb *The Dictionary of Word Play* identifies this type of transposal as a *terminal switch*, but that compound seems to stress only the last letter rather than the first and last letters that come into play. We prefer the term *switchable* and hereby place our examples where our mouths are:

Four-letter switchables abound. We've asterisked two pairs that are homophonic:

AUNT/TUNA	EATS/SATE	*MEAT/TEAM
BLOG/GLOB	FOAL/LOAF	*MEET/TEEM
BRAD/DRAB	FURS/SURF	MOOR/ROOM
BRAG/GRAB	GINS/SING	MORN/ROOM
DAIS/SAID	GNUS/SNUG	NARY/YARN
DEAL/LEAD	GRIP/PRIG	NEWS/SEWN
*DEAR/READ	GRIT/TRIG	OILS/SILO
DEEP/PEED	GUNS/SUNG	PART/TARP
*DEER/REED	HOOP/POOH	PEAR/REAP
DENS/SEND	HOPS/SOPH	PEES/SEEP
DENT/TEND	KEEL/LEEK	ROUT/TOUR
DIET/TIED	KEEP/PEEK	RUES/SUER
DINK/KIND	LAIN/NAIL	SEAT/TEAS
DOLT/TOLD	LAIR/RAIL	SENT/TENS
DOOM/MOOD	LEAP/PEAL	SHIT/THIS
DOOR/ROOD	LEER/REEL	SHUT/THUS
DRAG/GRAD	LILT/TILL	SOPHS/HOPS
DROP/PROD	LOOP/POOL	THAW/WHAT
DUES/SUED	LOOT/TOOL	THEW/WHET

Rarer five-letter examples, most employing S markers, include:

ATOMS/STOMA	EMITS/SMITE	MOTET/TOTEM
AURIC/CURIA	EPICS/SPICE	PLUMS/SLUMP
DATER/RATED	GLANS/SLANG	RAGES/SAGER
DATES/SATED	HOOTS/SOOTH	RAVES/SAVER
DIVER/RIVED	KHANS/SHANK	RHEAS/SHEAR
DOLES/SOLED	LEPER/REPEL	ROBES/SOBER

DOPER/ROPED LEVER/REVEL SINEW/WINES

Reaching for six-letter prizes, we note a pattern in which the letters D and R are transposed and the order, with but one exception, is consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant:

DAGGER/RAGGED	DEARER/REARED	DIPPER/RIPPED
DAMPER/RAMPED	DIFFER/RIFFED	DUBBER/RUBBED
DANGER/RANGED	DIGGER/RIGGED	DUFFER/RUFFED
DANKER/RANKED	DIMMER/RIMMED	DUMPER/RUMPED
DAPPER/RAPPED	DINGER/RINGED	DUSTER/RUSTED

Beyond this transposal of D and R we find these six-letter specimens:

DASHES/SASHED	LASCAR/RASCAL
DISPEL/LISPED	RACKET/TACKER
DOCKET/TOCKED	SESTET/TESTES
DOUSES/SOUSED	SOUGHT/TOUGHS
DUFFEL/LUFFED	TARMAC/CAR MAT

The last example above features a smidgen of semantic kinship (in the manner of DAIS/SAID, EATS/SATE, PEAR/REAP, PEES/SEEP, LEPER/REPEL and DANGER/RANGED), but the open styling of CAR MAT is a drawback.

The D/R transposal characterizes these seven-letter pairs:

DEBATER/REBATED	DELIVER/RELIVED
DEFILER/REFILED	DECODER/RECODED
DELAYER/RELAYED	DIDDLER/RIDDLED

these eight-letter pairs:

DECANTER/RECANTED
DECEIVER/RECEIVED
DECLINER/RECLINED
DEMANDER/REMANDED
DESERVER/RESERVED

and these longer pairs:

DENOUNCER/RENOUNCED (9)
DECOMPOSER/RECOMPOSED (10)
DEOXIDIZER/REOXIDIZED (10)
DEPROGRAMMER/REPROGRAMMED (12)
DEMYTHOLOGIZER/REMYTHOLOGIZED (14)

Using the definitions that follow identify seven pairs of longer switchables that do not employ the D/R transposal. The first five pairs are seven letters per word, the sixth pair eight, and the seventh pair nine:

1. fasteners/a small carrying bag
2. hair style detail/something that provokes excitement
3. an athletic jersey or undershirt/causes a thrilling sensation
4. wastes time/rushed forth
5. shrinks/sexual enticer
6. becomes steadily smaller/obtained something fraudulently
7. confers dignity upon/meant

Their identities can be found in Answers and Solutions.

A POEM

SIR JEREMY MORSE
London, England

NATURAL ORDER

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.