

VOWEL-CONSONANT PATTERNS

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In his article "Seven-Letter Words" in the August 1968 Word Ways, Dmitri Borgmann tackled the problem of finding seven-letter words containing an excess of vowels or consonants. Specifically, he listed a no-vowel word (BTFSPK, a character in Al Capp's "Li'l Abner" comic strip), four of the seven words in which the sole vowel occupies each of its possible positions, and all 21 words containing two vowels in all possible positions. Similarly, he listed a no-consonant word (OIOUEAE, found in Rupert Hughes' Music Lovers' Encyclopedia, representing the phrase "world without end, amen" in certain church music), five of the seven one-consonant words, and 19 of 21 two-consonant words. However, three of these 19 consisted of two-word phrases (as EN QUEUE), and one of the one-consonant words (UKIYOYE) used Y as a semivowel rather than as a true vowel. Most of these words were taken without credit from an article by Robert Hooke ('Al Gebra') in the August 1949 issue of The Enigma.

In attempting to fill the gaps in Borgmann's article, I decided to add a little more challenge to the problem: find examples for all 128 possible combinations of vowels and consonants in seven-letter words. Furthermore, I decided to be stricter about the use of Y, allowing it only if it was strictly vocalic, and then only if nothing better could be found. (The three cases in which it was necessary were FIFTHLY, ARCHSPY and EARTHLY.)

cccccc	Llwchwr	GD	cvcccv	prattle	cvccvc	tingled
cccccv	Strbské	T*	cvccvc	swallow	cvcccv	fuchsia
ccccvc	Crngrob	OY	cvcccv	trustee	cvccvc	distort
ccccv	shtchee		cvccvc	spinach	cvccvc	restive
ccccvc	schwarz		cvccvc	promise	cvccvc	fiction
ccccvc	Schwege	TOG	cvccvc	station	cvccvv	marquee
ccccvc	schnook		cvccvv	plateau	cvcvcc	resents
ccccvv	Schmeie	OG*	cvvccc	squints	cvcvcc	finance
cccvc	throngs		cvvccv	breathe	cvcvvc	belated
cccvcv	scherzo		cvvccv	croaked	cvcvvc	malaria
cccvcv	striped		cvvccv	floozy	cvcvcc	beneath
cccvcv	scholia		cvvvcc	freeing	cvcvvc	radiate
cccvc	spreads		cvvvvc	squeeze	cvcvvc	various
cccvcv	striate		cvvvvc	chaouas	cvcvvv	sequoia
cccvv	spreeuw		cvvvvv	Chaouia	cvcccc	dearths
cccvvv	Brhouia	OM	cvcccc	lengths	cvcccv	quibble
cvcccc	plights		cvcccv	fifthly	cvccvc	pounded

cvvccv	fiancee	vccvvc	actuate	vcccvv	o'gloea
cvvcvc	diamond	vccvvv	obvious	vvcvcc	outings
cvvcvc	beehive	vccvvv	Arbaoua TOM	vvcvcc	eatable
cvvcvc	seafood	vcvccc	alights	vvcvvc	outages
cvvcvv	rouleau	vcvccc	atingle	vvcvvc	eulogia
cvvccc	queests	vcvccc	amended	vvcvcc	easiest
cvvccv	faience	vcvccv	oversee	vvcvvc	aureate
cvvvcv	quailed	vcvccc	ageless	vvcvvv	oidioid
cvvvcv	raoulia	vcvvcv	operate	vvcvvv	Outaoui OM*
cvvvcc	queuing	vcvvcv	overeat	vvvccc	
cvvvvc	pauoise OED	vcvvcv	epikeia	vvvccc	Quintla OM
cvvvvc	miaoued *	vcvccc	amounts	vvvccv	euaster
cvvvvv	Zouaoua *	vcvccc	oquassa	vvvccv	o'angia
vccccc		vcvvcv	oceanic	vvvcvc	aoudads
vccccc	archspy	vcvvcv	alienee	vvvcvc	aeoline
vccccc	enthral	vcvvcv	apioids	vvvcvc	aeolian
vccccc	archsee	vcvvcv	elaeine	vvvcvv	ouabaio
vcccvc	extract	vcvvvc	aqueous	vvvccc	
vcccvc	uncrate	vcvvvv	Araouia OM*	vvvccv	Aouacha OM
vcccvc	unction	vvcccc	eighths	vvvvcv	Ouaifir OM
vcccvv	archaei	vvcccv	earthly	vvvvcv	euaemia FW
vccvcc	imports	vvcccv	oersted	vvvvcc	Aeaeans
vccvcc	offense	vvcccv	Austria	vvvvvc	Iaouine OM
vccvvc	alleged	vvccvc	airport	vvvvvc	aialais
vccvvc	escapee	vvccvc	earlobe	vvvvvv	Uoiauai AL*
vccvcc	abreast	vvccvc	oatmeal		

In this table, unmarked words are from Webster's Second (NI2) or Third (NI3). Other sources are encoded as follows: FW = Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary, GD = Webster's New Geographical Dictionary (1972), OED = Oxford English Dictionary, OG, OM, OY = Official Standard Names Gazetteers for West Germany, Morocco, Yugoslavia, T = Times Index-Gazetteer of the World, AL = International Journal of American Linguistics (14:47). All place-names are populated places except for Schmeie (a stream) and Araouia (an area). Štrbské is the first word of a two-word phrase, Štrbské Pleso; Outaoui is a variant of Out Aaoui; Uoiauai is a language of Pará state, in Brazil. Two of the Websterian words are hard to find: miaoued is explicitly given in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1949), and Zouaoua is given only in the etymology of 'Zouave'. (For those who are uneasy about this, many other cvvvvv words can be found in OM.)

In "Six Vowels, Two of the Other" Darryl Francis extended Borgmann's work to eight-letter words in the November 1970 Word Ways; as the title implies, he restricted himself to the 28 words corresponding to the various positions the two consonants can occupy. Even so, he was unable to find three words, and five of the others were forced to include Y as one of the vowels, even when it was functioning as a consonant. These defects are remedied in the following table.

1-2 Chouieia	2-3 Achaouia	5-7 Aouokeda	6-8 Aououdid
1-8 Douiour	2-8 Iguiouaz	6-7 Ouaouchi	7-8 Aiaouech

All are found in OM, and all are populated places except for Choueia, the second word in the phrase *Jebel Choueia*, a variant of *Jebel Chalkha* (a mountain).

The Official Standard Names Gazetteer for Morocco seems to be an especially fine source of vowel-rich words. Some longer specimens from there are:

C_1V_7 = Zouaouia (dune), Assif Ouaouzia (stream), Oued el
Aouaouda (stream), Ouiouane (ridge)

C_2V_7 = Bouaouene, Eaoudaïne, Ain Ouaousait (spring),
El Aouaoucha, Ouaouassa (mountain), Ouaouareg

C_2V_8 = Ez Zouaouine, Jebel Oulougouene (mountain), Ouaourioud,
Jebel Ouaouioust (hill)

C_2V_{10} = Ijouaououene

The eight consecutive vowels of Ouaouioust and Ijouaououene are, as far as I know, records among non-coined words.

Long consonant-dense words are harder to find. *Vshchizh* is in the OSN USSR, and *Cwmsgwt* is a locality in A Gazetteer of Welsh Place Names edited by Elwyn Davies (Cardiff: U. of Wales Press, 1967). In fact, all-consonant words are so rare that a collection of these would be useful in various Word Ways investigations. *Cwm* and *crwth* are the only two known in the main sections of NI2 and NI3 (other than interjections such as *pst* and *sh*), but the OED must contain many.