

ALL WORDS ARE INTERESTING

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The scientific method requires that any profound experimental result be verified by duplication. This should be by an independent competent unprejudiced researcher. I qualify.

In the February 1977 Word Ways, Dmitri Borgmann in "The Keystone of Logology" proposed that all words are interesting. As proof he offered the statistical evidence that 20 words selected by a structured random sample were all interesting.

To obviate any possibility of prejudice or random error I repeated his method of word selection in all regards except (to guarantee a different set) I chose the 1970 edition of the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary. This generated 17 words as given below. Note that the last three are out of alphabetical order since this edition has a supplement of new words.

The words all had at least one area of interest to me; most had two or more. It may well be that an individual reader may not agree with me on one or more items; but this simply proves that people differ -- if a word be interesting to any person it is interesting. Mr. Borgmann and other readers may well discover additional aspects that I either did not consider interesting or overlooked -- which only proves that all words probably have a number of interesting features. The proof is in: all words are interesting.

BAUXITE a Scrabble bonus word for the difficult letters ABEITUX -- the syllabic chain BAUXITE, BOCK BEER, NEAR BEER, NEAR-SIDE, BEDSIDE, BEDROCK, SHAMROCK, CHAMOIS leads to the second word in the sample

CHAMOIS unexpected spelling-pronunciation with C as "s" and OIS as "e" (see also above)

CURVE central word in series RECURSIVE, CURSIVE, CURVE, CUE, E in which one deletes bigrams yielding words; each letter advanced nine in the alphabet gives LDAEN, a transposal of LADEN, and regressed two gives ASPTC, a transposal of PACTS

EMBOLISM sum of letter-values for first half is reverse of sum for second half (35 vs. 53); the plural EMBOLISMS may be anagrammed to I BLESS MOM (why I don't have them)

FREE over 2 1/2 pages in Web 3 required to define it and its combi-

nations; transposes to FEER and REEF; successive beheadments give words FREE, REE, EE, E

HOW ABOUT dictionary entry, yet not one word (if and when it becomes a noun it will be spelled HOWABOUT, compare RUN ABOUT to RUNABOUT); a run-on entry, hence not in normal alphabetical order or left-justified, hence often hard to find; charades to HO-WA-BOUT

KOWTOW from the Chinese, having repeated bigram OW (e.g., HOW NOW BROWN COW); spelled backwards, could be a question to a cook, WOT WOK?, meaning "which Chinese cooking pan?"

MODISHNESS charades to the three words MO-DISH-NESS, all in Web 3; may be divided into a symmetric pentuple deletion from the center out: M(O(D(I(SH)N)E)S)S

PARENT transposal of ENTRAP; successive curtailments yield Web 3 words PARENT, PAREN, PARE, PAR, PA, P; beheadment yields AREN'T

PROVINCE bigram deletion in series PROVIDENCE, PROVINCE, PRINCE, PRIE, PE (all in Web 3) requires it; transdeletion yields Web 3 words PROVINCE, COVER IN, COINER, CRONE, CONE, ONE, ON, O

SAFFRON yields series by transdeletion SAFFRON, RAN OFF, FORAN, ROAN, OAR, OR, O (FORAN is computer name for currently popular forecasting method); transaddition to SAFFRON gives AFFRONTs; transposes to SARNOFF, the surname of a well-known RCA executive

STEEL one of six transposals STEEL, TEELS, TELES, STELE, SLEET, LEETS, the last being a reversal, all in Web 3; may be dismembered to entries STEE, TEEL, STE, TEE, EEL, ST, TE, EE, EL, S, T, E, L

TRAMMEL charade is TRAM-MEL; beheaded to RAMMEL (in Web 3)

VOCABULARY rare "perfect" word with alternating consonants and vowels; yields centered pentuple deletion using Web 3 entries: V(O(C(A(BU)L)A)R)Y

BUDGIE by penultimate letter subtraction gives BUDGIE, BUDGE, BUDE, BUE, BE; transdeletes to Web 3 words BUḐGIE, GŪIDE, GUĪD, DIḐ, GI, I

INTERFACE a substitute (E for S) letter transposal of CRAFTINESS gives the plural INTERFACES

SASHAY a linkade SA-AS-SH-HA-AY and a double linkade SAS-ASH-SHA-HAY (all in Web 3); contains two single letters (H, Y) and two doubled letters (AA, SS)