



Jennifer Ziegler

Ways to Have Fun with Words!

Challenge yourself with some of these word games:

1.) Change a single letter in the title of a book, film, song, classic tale, or nursery rhyme in order to completely change its meaning. Then write a summary of what it might be about:
For example: *The Book Thief* could become *The Cook Thief* – Chef by day and burglar by night! In this retelling of the Robin Hood legend, an apprentice chef steals jewels from the rich and smuggles them out to poor towns and villages via baked goods.

2.) Try a Word Chain! Start with a basic five-letter word. Now change one letter to make a new word (real words, not made-up ones). Now do it again and again. Example: Plate > Slate > State > Stale > Stall... See how many you can get before you run out of options.

3.) Compose an acrostic poem for story characters' names. Challenge yourself to use only words from the text – words that describe them, words they use, words of things they love or hate, etc. For example:

Words

Obstinate




Readers

Son

Elaborate

Rally

4.) Like to draw or doodle? Try writing sentences where key words are replaced by common pictures or symbols. For example:

   = "I love you"

(NOTE: A female sheep is called a "ewe," which rhymes with "you." Another choice would be to use a big capital U in place of the word "you" since letters are symbols.)

5.) See how many words you can make using the letters of your full name, your favorite character names, or story/chapter titles. Want to take it to the next level? Try anagrams, where you rearrange the letters of a word or name to create new words, without reusing a letter and with no "leftover" letters (or as few as possible). Try creating anagrams from your name, character names, titles, or favorite words. There are anagram generators online but challenge yourself to do it without help. Example: "teenager" can become "generate" or "anger tee" or "ate genre" or "green tea."



Want to try something a little more challenging?

- 6.) “Anguish Languish” is a form of wordplay where words are replaced by similar-sounding words. For example, say the following quote aloud and see if you can recognize it (answer at the bottom of the page): “Apple ledge a legion tooth off lag offer you night ooze days offer miracle...” *
Once you understand how it works, try rewriting the first few lines of a story, poem, or song in Anguish Languish style.
- 7.) Write a flash fiction story using no more than twenty “regular” words, placed anywhere, with the rest of the text made up of only onomatopoeia. (Onomatopoeia are words that sound like their meaning, such as “screech” or “boom” or “meow”).
- 8.) Create a new word. Use a recognizable prefix and/or suffix and/or root word. Be sure to define it. Other option: Create an acronym that can be pronounced as a word (like scuba and laser). Other option: Create a brand-new onomatopoeia word. Don’t forget definitions!
- 9.) Write a sentence that contains all 26 letters at least once. Your sentence can be compound and complex, but not a run-on.

Listed below are a few other forms of wordplay. Look them up to learn about them and give them a try!

Chain Verse, Charade Verse, Chronograms, Clerihews, Cockney Rhyming Slang, Doggerel, Gramograms, Kennings, Limericks, Lipograms, Mondegreens, Monosyllabic Verse, Oxy-Morons, Palindromes, Pangrams, Paraprosdokians, Puns, Spoonerisms, Tautograms, Tongue-Twisters

I would love to see your results. Feel free send me your playful word game results through my website’s contact form: www.jenniferziegler.com/contact/

* Answer: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America...”