

Reading for Meaning

Part C: Read and Reason



Directions: Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

A Snag Arm

A snag arm? What? Rearrange the letters, and you will see what this article is about: anagrams. An anagram is a type of word play. All the letters of a word are rearranged to make another word or words. All and only original letters can be used in the anagram. For example:

- eleven plus two = twelve plus one
- a decimal point = I’m a dot in place.

The word *anagram* comes from the Greek (*ana* = “again” and *gramma* = “written letter”); it means “rewritten letters.” A person who creates anagrams is called an *anagrammist*. Unlike “A Snag Arm,” most anagrams reflect or comment on the subject. For example, William Shakespeare = I am a weakish speller. Or here’s an anagram that reflects someone’s occupation: astronomer = a moon starrer.

Constructing anagrams has been popular for centuries. Historians believe that the Greek poet Lycophron in the third century **B.C.** was the first anagrammist. Anagrams were also popular throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. Even Bart Simpson is an anagrammist. In one episode, he sees a restaurant sign for “cod platter,” which he transforms into “cold pet rat.”

Computers have made it easy to create anagrams. The web site www.wordsmith.org has an anagram generator. In fact, anagrammists now indicate whether they have created their anagrams by hand or by computer.

Like other word puzzles, anagrams are usually developed just for fun. However, psychologists sometimes use anagram-like tests to test the implicit memory of younger and older adults.

1. Use the clues to solve the anagrams:
 - a. “Seen alive? Sorry, pal!” [a deceased rock and roll star] _____
 - b. “old west action” [once an actor in westerns; he now also directs and produces movies]

 - c. “that great charmer” [the first female Prime Minister of Great Britain]

2. Go to www.wordsmith.org/anagram/. Enter your name in the anagram generator. Write your favorite responses below.
