

Problem of the Week : *Step Words Finder.*

This problem was asked by Pivotal.

Problem Description:

Scenario:

In a word game, a **step word** is created by **adding exactly one letter** to a given word and then **anagramming** the result to form a valid dictionary word.

For example, from "APPLE":

- Add "A" → "APPLEA"
- Anagram to form "APPEAL" (a valid dictionary word) → This is a **step word**.

You are given:

- A dictionary of valid English words (as a list of strings),
- An input word.

Your task is to write a function that returns **all valid step words** that can be created from the input word using the above logic.

Input Format:

- First line: A string w (the input word)
- Second line: An integer N (the number of words in the dictionary)
- Next N lines: Each line contains one valid word from the dictionary

Output Format:

- Print each valid **step word** (one per line) in **lexicographical order**

Constraints:

- $1 \leq \text{len}(w) \leq 15$
- $1 \leq N \leq 10^5$
- All dictionary words are lowercase, alphabetic, and contain no spaces

Example Input:

```
apple
5
appeal
apply
pepla
papple
apples
```

Example Output:

appeal
papple

Explanation:

- "appeal" is formed by adding "a" to "apple" → "applea" → anagram → "appeal"
 - "papple" is formed by adding "p" → "applep" → anagram → "papple"
 - "apply", "pepla", and "apples" are **not** valid because:
 - "apply" is missing "e", not just one letter added
 - "pepla" is not formed by adding just one letter
 - "apples" has 6 letters, but the added letter doesn't result in a correct multiset match with "apple"
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Approach Hint:

- Count the character frequencies of the input word
 - For each word in the dictionary:
 - If its length is not exactly one more than the input word, skip it
 - Compare character frequency maps
 - The word is valid if **only one character is added**
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Expected Time Complexity:

- $O(N * K)$, where $K = \text{max word length (up to 15)}$
 - Optimize using `collections.Counter` or fixed-length frequency arrays
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Practice Links:

-  [Leetcode – Group Anagrams \(Similar logic\)](#)
 -  [GeeksforGeeks – Valid Anagram](#)
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Video Resources:

-  [YouTube – Check for Anagrams using Counter](#)