

## CRYPTIC HELPER

### Abbreviations in clues

Abbreviations are popular with crossword compilers for cluing individual letters or short sections of the answer.

Consider the following clue:

*About to come between little Desmond and worker for discourse (7)*

There are two abbreviations used here. "About" abbreviated "c" (for "circa") and "little Desmond" indicates that the smaller of Desmond, DES is used. The "c" is "to come between" DES and ANT (a worker; note that compilers also use "worker" to stand for BEE or HAND), giving DESCANT, which means "discourse".

### •Anagrams

An anagram is a rearrangement of a certain section of the clue to form the answer. This is usually indicated by words such as 'strange', 'bizarre', 'muddled', 'wild', 'drunk', or any other term indicating change.

It is common for the setter to use a juxtaposition of anagram indicator and anagram that form a common phrase to make the clue appear as much like a 'normal' sentence or phrase as possible.

### •"Charade" clues

The two clues are used to form separate parts of the answer.

Ex. **Musicians Assistant Cut Remedy(7)**

Here we have our first clue **Musicians = Band** , 2nd clue is **Assistant = Aid** .

With the definition being "**Cut Remedy**", therefore our solution is **Band Aid**.

Note: though the clues appear in order, there is no requirement for them to do so. However, the order of the parts is sometimes indicated with words such as "against", "after", "on", "with" or (in a down clue) "above".

### •Combination clues

A clue may employ more than one method of wordplay. For example:

*Illustrious baron returns in pit (9)*

The answer is HONORABLE

. "Baron" "returns", or is reversed, and put inside "pit" or hole, to make *honorable*, or "illustrious".

In this example, the clue uses a combination of Reversal and Hidden clue types:

*Cruel to turn part of Internet torrid (6)* The phrase "to turn" indicates "to reverse," and "part of" suggests a piece of "Internet torrid".

## •Containers

A container clue puts one set of letters inside another. So:

ex. *Apostle's friend outside of university (4)*

gives PAUL ("apostle"), by placing "pal" ("friend") outside of "U" ("university").

Other container indicators are "inside", "over", "around", "clutching", "enters", and the like.

## •Deletions

Deletions consist of *beheadments*, *curtailments*, and *internal deletions*. In beheadments, a word loses its first letter. In curtailments, it loses its last letter, and internal deletions remove an inner letter, such as the middle one.

## •Double Definition

Most often seen as 2 or 3 word clues( does not follow the typical definition-wordplay format).

Consider : *Clergy Moves diagonally(6)*.

Note both definitions are of different roots, and we have Clergy=Bishop= moves diagonally (chess).

## •Embedded Words

Occurs when the answer appears within the clue, but is contained within one or more words, or hidden.

Possible indicators of a hidden clue are "in part", "partially", "in", "within", "hides", "conceals", "some", and "held by".

Ex. *Introduction todo-gooder canine (3)*.

Is simply *dog*, because the introduction "do-gooder" and the definition *canine* points to it.

## •Homophones

Words that sound the same but have different meanings, as "night" and "knight". Homophone clues always have an indicator word or phrase that has to do with phonetics, such as "reportedly", "they say", "vocal", "to the audience", "by the sound of it", "is heard" and "on the radio".

## •Initial-isms

In an initialism clue, the **first letters** of part of the clue are put together to give the answer.

## •Odd/Even Clues

An odd/even clue is one in which the odd or even letters of certain parts of the clue give the answer. An example is:

*Odd stuff of Mr. Waugh is set for someone wanting women to vote (10)*

The answer would be

SUFFRAGIST

, which is "someone wanting women to vote". The word "odd" indicates that we must take every other letter of the rest of the clue, starting with the first: **Stuff of Mr Waugh is set**.

## •**Reversals**

A word that gets turned around to form another.

Ex. **Returned King** Ale Drink

Where returned king =Regal, and "return" (reversal )of regal =lager = Ale drink.

Other indicator words include "receding", "in the mirror", "going the wrong way", "returns", "reverses" "to the left" or "left" (for across clues), and "rising", "overturned" or "mounted" or "comes up" (for down clues).

## •**" & lit."**

A rare clue type is the "& lit." clue, standing for "and literally so". In this case, the entire clue is both a definition and a cryptic clue. In some publications this is always indicated by an exclamation mark at the end of the clue.

<http://www.puzzles-online-niche.com>



