CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

Cryptic crosswords are very different to regular crossword puzzles. In a regular crossword puzzle, you might get a clue that looks like this:

Large mammal with a trunk (8)

This is a straight forward clue that leads to 'elephant' as the answer. These types of clues are referred to as straight definitions.

Now, in a cryptic crossword, a clue consists of a straight definition and a cryptic definition, like this:

Herb replays chaotically (7)

The straight definition will be at the beginning or the end of the clue and the rest of the clue is a puzzle that uses a play on words to lead to the same answer. The tricky part is figuring out which part is the puzzle and what type of cryptic clue it is! Thankfully, cryptic clues have to follow certain rules, so we can learn how to figure them out. In this worksheet and in the following crossword, we're going to focus on the two easiest types of cryptic clue to spot and solve: anagram clues and hidden word clues.

ANAGRAM CLUES

Anagram clues involve having to rearrange the letters of a certain word (or words) in the clue to form the answer to the straight definition.

If a clue is an anagram clue, then it will include a word that indicates that you need to rearrange letters somewhere (see below). Let's look at the example above:

Herb replays chaotically (7)

We know the answer has 7 letters and we can see that 'replays' has 7 letters as well. The word 'chaotically' indicates that we need to mess up the order of the letters in 'replays'.

REPLAYS –> PARSLEY

Which we know is correct as parsley is a herb, so herb must be the straight definition!

Examples of words that are used in anagram clues:

About / adjusted / amended / arranged / baffled / becomes / bizarre / changed / could be / crazy / derived /destroyed / disguised / explosive / maybe / otherwise / perhaps / rearranged / strangely / terrible / unusual / upset / wild

HIDDEN WORD CLUES

Hidden word clues are a lot easier than anagram clues, as the answer will be directly hidden within the cryptic part of the clue itself.

Here's an example:

Nocturnal bird hides in hollow log (3)

'Hides in' tells us that the answer is likely to be hidden somewhere in there. We know the answer has three letters and if we look carefully, we can see:

Nocturnal bird hides in hollow log (3)

An owl is a nocturnal bird, so we know that 'nocturnal bird' is the straight definition, which confirms our answer!

Words that might be used in a hidden word clue:

A bit of / buried in / concealed / contained in / displayed in / exhibited in / featured / found in / fragment / held by / hidden in / inside / internal / imprisoned / part of / piece of / sample / selection / some / smuggled /within

Now let's try an entire crossword made up of a mixture of anagram clues and hidden word clues!

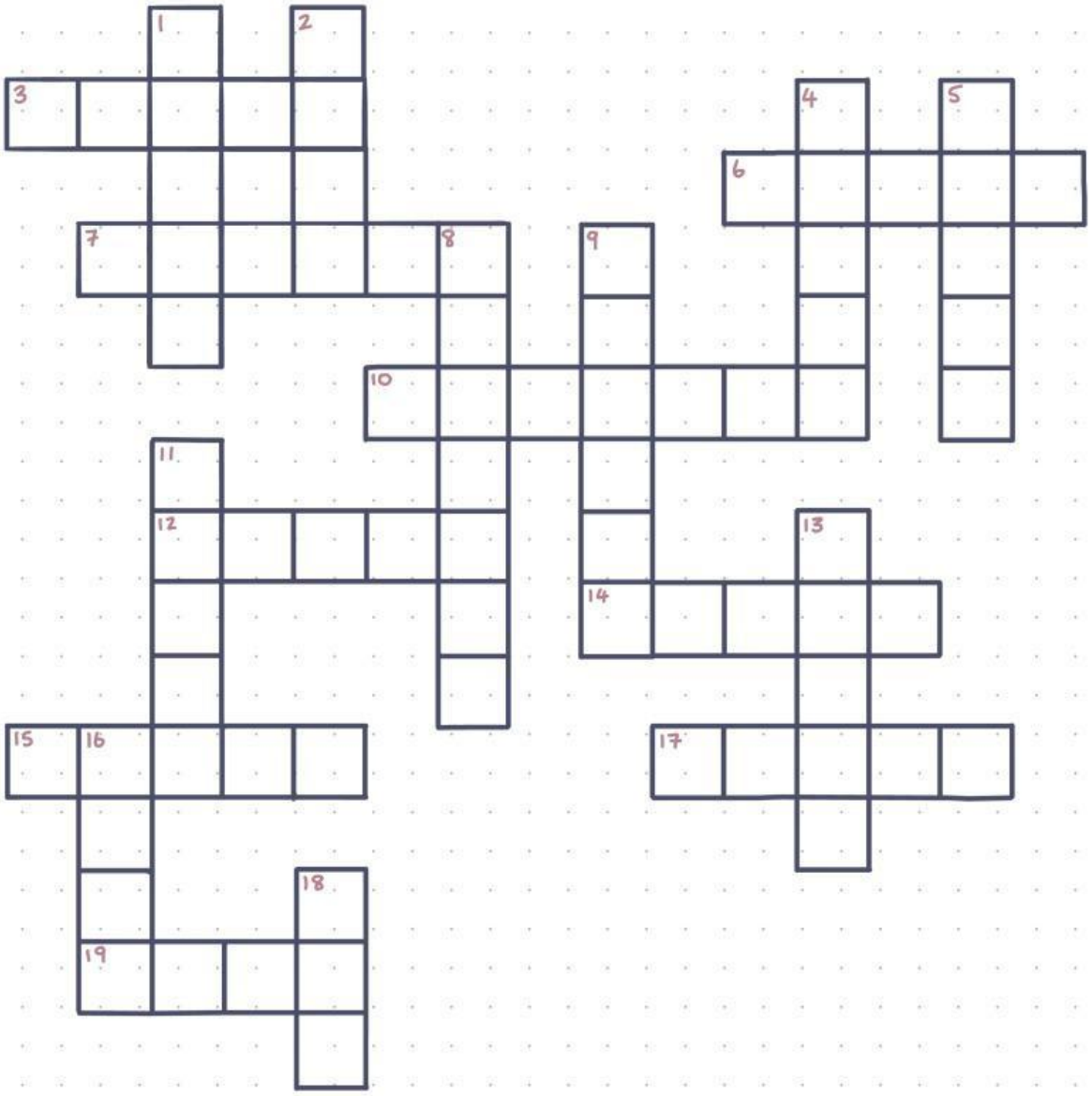
We've included a separate hint sheet that you can refer to if you need help with any of the clues.



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LIVEWORKSHEETS

CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS



ACROSS

3. Big fragment of spectacular gemstone (5)
6. Month derived from charm (5)
7. Raptor upset a talking bird (6)
10. Unusual allergy where art is displayed (7)
12. Art supply hidden by grandpa in tank (5)
14. There could be a number (5)
15. Planet displayed in given username (5)
17. Tutor becomes a type of fish (5)
19. Crazy team is domesticated (4)

DOWN

1. Fibre added to conceal food (5)
2. Escape artist smuggles fruit (4)
4. Flower concealed by panda is yellow (5)
5. A body of water battered canoe (5)
8. Kitchen appliance rotates strangely (7)
9. Choose part of this election (6)
11. Gorgeous painting features a country (5)
13. Melon disguised as a citrus fruit (5)
16. Seat changed direction (4)
18. Colour found in bizarre door (3)



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LIVEWORKSHEETS

HINT SHEET

The straight definitions are highlighted in pink.
Anagram indicator words are highlighted in blue.
Hidden word indicator words are highlighted in green.

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