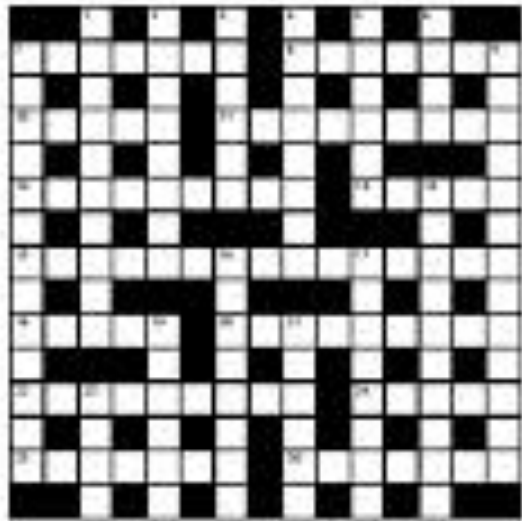


SOLVING CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS



Phil Quinn

This guide is an updated version of a previous guide developed for U3A Hobsons Bay/Williamstown Cryptic Crossword group. It is free to current members.

For members of other U3A's or anyone who comes across the document on the Hobsons Bay/Williamstown site or in print form, you are asked to make a donation of \$5 to the organisation. Details of how to make a bank transfer are given under Membership on the website at

<https://u3ahbwilli.org.au/memberships/>.

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The guide is dedicated to my fellow crossword solvers at U3A Hobsons Bay/ Williamstown. Thanks for your input and suggestions and for joining me in enjoying Cryptic Crosswords.

Phil

Solving Cryptic Crosswords

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Starting to solve cryptic crosswords

Introduction

Cryptic crossword setters all have their own styles. David Astle, who compiles the Friday Age cryptic crossword, is renowned as a difficult setter. Similarly, the Times cryptic has a reputation for being tough.

My favourite is the Age cryptic, except for Friday's unless I have my friends there to help me out. Once we get started, we can get a reasonable level of success and have been known to complete it! So, there is my first suggestion – try solving the cryptic with someone else, preferably someone who is skilled at solving them.

The second suggestion is to find a setter and stick with that person so that you get used to their style. Style includes favourite clues, abbreviations used, and in general, commonly used approaches to clue setting.

If you are learning to solve cryptic crosswords on your own, the best way to get started is to look at the clues together with the correct answers. Use the answers to try to figure out how the answer relates to the clue. This process of 'working backwards' gives good insight into how cryptic clues are set.

Learners can often get the right answer but don't necessarily know how they got that answer or why it is correct. Taking the time to find the link between the clue and the answer, is time well spent and will help to improve your clue solving abilities. Even if you guess the right answer, maybe from a quick scan of the clue, work backwards to figure out how the answer makes sense from the given clue.

I suggest that learners attempt crosswords with a pencil and eraser. I use a pen, as it stands out clearer from the newsprint or black and white of a puzzle. But, at least initially, a pencil is a good idea so that incorrect guesses at answers can be erased easily.

I often need to have a couple of sessions with the crossword. The first attempt may only result in a few answers but if I go away and try again later, I often get more of it solved. It is easy to get locked into a pattern of thought and be convinced that a particular clue has a meaning or is constructed in a particular way that later turns out to be entirely wrong. Second attempts help to change one's thought patterns and lead to successful clue solving.

So, after reading through this book, jump in at the deep end equipped with pencil, eraser, perhaps a friend and a cup of coffee or tea and lots of patience. Also, use this book as a reference when working through cryptic crosswords.

The approach and General Rules

I have developed a set of general rules as a guide to cryptic crossword solving.

Summary of General Rules:

1. Every part of the clue has relevance
2. There are two parts to the clue - the definition or substantive and the wordplay or how it is constructed to get the answer. The definition or substantive is usually at the start or end of the clue
3. Look for directions that the setter provides
4. Use the number of letters in the answer to guide you
5. If you think an answer is correct, assume it is and check if that gives you other answers or some letters of an answer
6. Use the tense and case of the clue to guide your answer
7. Abbreviations are used a lot in cryptic clues
8. Punctuation is 99% of the time irrelevant
9. Don't be frightened of using a dictionary, Thesaurus or Dr. Google to assist you
10. Some people have more success with certain setters and that can build confidence, so stick with one setter and develop your skills before branching out to other setters.

1. Every part of the clue has relevance

Even definite and indefinite articles (the, a, an) pronouns (he, she) and prepositions (on, in, up) can be relevant, for example, as part of an anagram. For instance, if the clue is 'A pet is mixed into the fuel' (4 letters in answer) – the 'a' and the word 'pet' are combined to give 'peat' a fuel used in Ireland and elsewhere for open fires. The 'a' has significance as part of the final answer. However, there are exceptions to this rule as setters may include a word to make the clue read grammatically correct or to make sense.

2. There are two parts to the clue - the substantive and the wordplay

One part of the clue is the 'substantive' or the clue if the crossword were non-cryptic or 'straight'. In the example above, 'fuel' is the substantive or the straight meaning of the clue. The rest of the clue is what you work on to get the answer. Often an indication is given, as part of this clue is 'silly' or nonsensical. The substantive is placed at the front or end of the clue, never in the middle.

The strongest hint I can provide is to look for the substantive. I usually try to find this first. The definition could be a synonym where the clue and the answer are two different words but share the same meaning. 'Rip' and 'tear' are synonyms.

'Tear' meaning what results from crying and 'tear' as in ripping fabric, are homographs. They are spelt the same way but sound different and have different meanings.

'Wind' as in the breeze and 'wind' as in what you do to an old fashioned clock are also homographs – spelt the same way but with different pronunciation.

Homophones have the same pronunciation or sound but different spelling and meaning. Examples include 'too/two/to' and 'there/their/they're'.

Homonyms have the same sound and spelling but have different meanings . For example, arms – do you mean parts of the body or weapons?

A tell-tale sign for those new to cryptic crosswords looking for the substantive is that the rest of the clue is usually a bit more obtuse, garbled or generally doesn't make a lot of sense. In fact, it may look like gobbledegook!

Try this:

Deer is part of the car I bought? (7)

'The car I bought' doesn't make much sense so is probably the part of the clue to work on while the rest - 'deer' is the substantive.

So 'car I bought' needs to be worked on. This is the non-substantive part of the clue or the bit that is worked on to get the correct answer.

The strategy here is to take part (as suggested in the clue) of the following words (CAR I BOUGHT). Part is a directional clue (see later). This indicates that the answer is made of parts of the following words. The answer is caribou, a type of deer.

3. Directions from the setter of the crossword

Crossword setters provide directions in their clues. For instance, if the clue is built using an anagram, there will be an anagram indicator such as the word 'mixed' or 'stewed' or similar. Anagrams and other directions are explored later in this guide.

4. Use the number of letters in the answer to guide you

Cryptic crosswords include the number of letters in the answer after the clue. This is useful particularly when looking for anagrams. Again referring to the example before, a word of four letters is required for the answer so mixing 'a' and 'pet' gives four letters as indicated in the clue.

Once you have identified that the clue uses an anagram, look to see how many letters in the answer and find a group of words in the clue containing that number of letters.

5. Follow your instinct

Intuition or guessing can play a part in cryptic crossword solving. If you think an answer is correct, pencil it in and then utilise that answer to give you a start with other answers. Getting another answer that agrees with your hunch, serves to verify the first answer. Often the logic of the answer follows on after some reflection on the clue.

6. Use the tense and case of the clue to guide your answer

Use the grammar (tense, case) of the clue to guide your answer. For example, if the clue starts with a word such as 'asking', then the answer will end with '-ing'. If the clue is plural, then the answer will be plural, usually therefore ending in a 's'. If the clue is in the present tense, then the answer will be in the present tense so often end in a 's' again. If the clue is in the past tense, the answer will likely end in '-ed'.

For example, consider the clue:

Tom starts asking to be given jobs (7)

Asking ends with -ing so the clue may end in that also. 'Tom starts' gives 't' and added to 'asking' gives the answer, 'tasking' or being 'given jobs'.

Also, consider this clue:

Pleads with part beans part eggs mix (4)

'Pleads' (the substantive) suggests the answer ends in 's', as it does. The strategy is to use part of 'beans' and part of 'egg' – the 'b' with the 'eg' and the 's' to give 'begs' – same meaning as 'pleads', so a synonym.

7. Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations are used a lot in cryptic crossword clues. An acronym is an abbreviation formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word, e.g. NASA. Some common abbreviations are given in a later section of this book. An example is where the clue includes the word 'soldier', the letters 'GI' will be part of the answer, often as part of an anagram.

For example, consider this clue:

Huge soldier with insect (5)

Huge is the substantive. 'GI' for 'soldier' is added to 'ant', from the insect, to give 'giant' or huge.

8. Punctuation

Punctuation is mostly irrelevant. So, try to ignore the punctuation as you read the clue. However, an exclamation mark (!) that some crossword setters use at the end of the clue indicates that the answer is a bit obtuse. Then again, isn't every clue a bit obtuse?

A question mark might be placed at the end of the clue. This can be because the clue is actually framed as a question. Alternatively, it signifies that the clue again has some twist to it or has an unusual or unconventional perspective.

Another device used in crossword setting is a series of dots (.....). This can signify a link between that clue and the next. For instance, consider these two clues:

1. Legume sounds like it's living in the past (4)
2. in a city in Peru (4)

The first clue is a homophone. The answer is 'BEAN' and 'living in the past' suggests the word 'been'. The answer to the second clue is 'LIMA' - a type of bean. So the two clues connect. The series of dots also means that a full sentence is not required.

The setter might use an apostrophe to drop a letter from a word that is then anagrammed. For instance:

'Is' EP record is flaky (4). The answer is PIES. The 'H' from 'his' needs to be dropped to make the anagram work as intended. 'Flaky' refers to 'pastry'.

9. Resources

I have been forced to reach for a dictionary or use Google to check an answer or look up the meaning of a word in the clue. Crossword setters can get desperate or perhaps obtuse and use uncommon words as part of the clue or answer including scientific names, place names, plant names, etc.

I know my Periodic Table so if a clue refers to an element, I know its symbol. Silver is Ag, for example. A useful resource is to print off a copy of the Periodic Table.

Don't be frightened to use some assistance to help you understand and solve a clue or to check an answer.

10. Get to know your setter

Lastly, stick to one setter until you are confident that you have the basics of cryptic crossword solving. Familiarity is a useful thing when approaching a crossword. The setter will employ a style that includes favourite abbreviations, common approaches, references to people, etc.

For instance a clue I have seen used by a particular setter is the name 'Jeremy' which refers to 'irons' after Jeremy Irons, the English actor. Other common names used in crossword clues are given later in this guide.

Approaches or strategies for solving clues

The main types of clues and strategies to apply to solving cryptic crossword clues include the following:

- Anagrams
- Sayings or expressions
- Three way clues
- Directional clues
- Charades or Pancake stacks
- Homophones
- Running words

Anagrams

Anagrams are one of the most common tools of the cryptic crossword setter. An anagram is a mixture of letters to form a new word. For example, 'deer' is an anagram of 'reed'; 'steam' is an anagram of 'meats'. 'Time', 'emit' and 'mite' are anagrams of each other.

Where an anagram is indicated, look for nonsensical groups of words that will be anagrammed to give the required answer. A word in the clue will suggest the need to juggle the letters of a word or group of words. Here is a list of possible prompts to indicate an anagram in a clue:

Mix/ed	Cook/ed	Trouble/d or problem	Disgusting
Stew/ed	Confuse/d	Worked	Tricky
Jumble/d	Upset	Off	Mutant
Uneasily	Revise/d	Mash/ed	Fry or fried
Spread around	Convolutd	Juggle/d	Refine/d
Mobile	Battery	Blur (an English band)	Fuzzy

This list is by no means exhaustive. Keep a list of prompt words that indicate an anagram is required.

Try these examples of clues using anagrams:

Mixed egg and bed pleaded for alms (6)

Ape cooks a large gar in oil? (7)

The acre is refined into a new land measure (7)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Another strategy to apply when you suspect an anagram is involved, is to find a word or combination of words that adds up to the number of letters in the clue. Note some anagrams are built from one word in the clue while others are built from multiple words.

A fellow cruciverbalist (Crossworder) makes two columns for the letters in the anagram. One column lists the consonants involved in the anagram, the other lists the vowels. Ruth says that the list of consonants helps her to work out the required anagram. I like to write the letters in a circle but in a different order to where they are placed in the clue. Try both strategies to see what works for you.

On the next page are some anagrams to try and solve. Some elements may need to be developed. For instance in the first example, love is replaced by 'O'. **Answers are on the bottom of the page following the examples.**

Elements of anagram	Letters	Meaning
Me love frost	8	Most important or leading reason
I add it on	8	Mathematical process
Ray rep	6	Incantation or request
South east epic	6	Bits
Beast crib	9	Most bad tempered
Reward	6	Part of cupboard
Ten dime	5	Jumbled
The race	7	Land measure
Ned is rude	9	Lower or hidden part of an object
Sales at ...	3-4	Seasoning
Pear sing	8	Attacking with a lance
Present ruler	8	Aware or cognisant

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Mixed egg and bed pleaded for alms (6)

Ape cooks a large gar in oil? (7)

The acre is refined into a new land measure (7)

In the first clue, the word 'mixed' points to the use of an anagram. The components of the anagram are 'egg' and 'bed'. Note that 'and' is inserted to make grammatical sense of the word but is not part of the anagram. The substantive is 'pleaded for alms' and so the answer is 'begged'.

The substantive in the second clue is 'ape'. The word 'cooks' points to an anagram. The components of the anagram are 'l' for large, 'gar' and 'oil'. The word 'in' indicates that 'oil' is part of the mix that makes up the answer. It is in a sense a directional clue (see later). 'Gorilla' is the answer to the anagram.

The third clue plays with land measurements and in fact 'land measurement' is the substantive. The word 'new' could be taken a number of ways but refers to the metric system as opposed to the old system that included the land size measurement - 'acre'. The hectare has replaced the acre and this is the correct answer. An anagram of 'the' and 'acre' yields the answer 'hectare'.

Sayings or expressions

A popular strategy of cryptic crossword setters is to use a saying or expression. Where a saying is the required strategy, the clue usually features a number of words and often these include shorter words.

For instance, a one-letter word can only be 'a' or 'I'. Two-letter words include prepositions such as 'in', 'by', 'at', 'to', etc. Three-letter words often feature 'and' or 'the'.

Try these clues that have sayings as their answers:

Prompt sewing earns nearly ten rewards? (1, 6, 2, 4, 5, 4)

Butcher repeatedly calls for speedy response (4, 4)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Elements of anagram	Letters	Answer
Me love (O) frost	8	Foremost
I add it on	8	Addition
Ray rep	6	Prayer
South east (SE) epic	6	Pieces
Beast crib	9	Crabbiest
Reward	6	Drawer
Ten (X) dime	5	Mixed
The race	7	Hectare
Ned is rude	10	Underside
Sales at ...	3-4	Sea-salt
Pear sing	8	Spearing
Present (now) ruler (king)	8	Knowing

'Three-way' clues

These clues are short and sharp, often having only two words and both these words indicate a third word that is the correct response. For instance:

Peel two? (4)

The correct response is 'pair' another word for 'two'. Peel refers to 'pare', which is a homonym (sounds the same but different spelling) for 'pair'. A variation on this clue is:

Peel fruit? (4)

The correct response is 'pear'. Again, 'pare' (peel) and 'pear' (fruit) are homophones.

Try these clues:

Ours not here (5)

2 also (3)

Just buy a ticket for the bus (4)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Prompt sewing earns nearly ten rewards? (1, 6, 2, 4, 5, 4)

Given that there are a large number of words in the answer, including a short word, this suggests a saying.

The first word of the clue can only be 'a' or 'I' as these are the only one-letter words used in English. The two-letter word could be a preposition such as: 'to', 'at', 'in', 'of', 'by', etc. Sewing suggests a needle, thread or stitch. The substantive is probably something connected to promptness. Earn and reward suggests a positive outcome.

Nearly ten indicates the number nine and the word 'prompt' suggests some sort of action taken in a timely manner. The answer is: A stitch in time saves nine.

Butcher repeatedly calls for speedy response (4, 4)

This is one of my all time favourite clues and is also a saying. The substantive is either 'butcher' or 'speedy response', and is actually the latter. A key clue is the word 'repeatedly' - note that the response is two words of the same length, so a repeated word of four letters is called for. What does the butcher call out to get a speedy response? The answer is: Chop, chop!

Directional clues

A clue can include a direction or indicate an arrangement is required. For example, the clue may include the phrase, 'every second ...' This clue indicates that every second letter of the words following are used to get the correct answer.

Try this one:

Every second able priest wears a French hat (5)

The correct answer is 'beret' and is made up of every second letter in the words 'able' and 'priest'. The substantive is 'a French hat' and could lead to thinking, correctly, that the answer is 'beret'.

Other directional clues include, odds, evens, endless, under, over, etc. A list is provided over the next two pages of some examples of directional clues with worked examples.

A useful strategy is to make a list of words that indicate a directional clue, particularly as you learn how to tackle cryptic crosswords and come across other directional clues.

Correct answers to clues from two pages back:

Ours not here (5)

2 also (3)

Just buy a ticket for the bus (4)

The substantives in these clues are – not ours, also and ticket for the bus.

In the first clue, 'not here' is 'there', so the correct response is 'their', which is not ours.

In the second clue, '2' is a homophone of 'too' which can be expressed as 'also', so 'too' is the correct response.

The final clue relies on 'just' meaning 'fair' and a homonym for that word is 'fare', what one pays for a ticket for the bus.

The following table gives examples of directional clues and how to interpret these clues with an example of each type of approach or strategy.

Wording contained in clue	Interpretation	Example
Every second	Take every second letter from the words that follow in the clue	Every second <u>able</u> <u>priest</u> wears a French hat? (5) BERET
Regularly	Use every second letter of the following words	Regularly <u>allows it</u> to get directionally fuddled? (4) LOST
Odds	Take every odd letter from the words that follow in the clue	Oddly, <u>tr</u> <u>o</u> <u>d</u> <u>o</u> <u>n</u> <u>l</u> <u>e</u> <u>s</u> s mechanical aids? (5) TOOLS
Evens	Take every even letter from the words that follow in the clue	Even <u>pa</u> <u>r</u> <u>t</u> <u>fo</u> <u>r</u> <u>L</u> <u>o</u> <u>l</u> <u>a</u> was on a coral reef (5) ATOLL
Part of/parts of/partly/part/bit of	Answer uses parts of the following words (See also 'Running words')	Sun is <u>pa</u> <u>r</u> <u>t</u> <u>st</u> <u>o</u> <u>n</u> e and <u>a</u> <u>pa</u> <u>r</u> <u>t</u> <u>ro</u> <u>c</u> <u>k</u> ? (4) STAR
Endless	Drop the end off the word that follows (can be more than one letter); often this is only part of the answer	Endless <u>be</u> <u>a</u> <u>c</u> <u>h</u> with <u>a</u> <u>pa</u> <u>r</u> <u>t</u> <u>l</u> <u>y</u> <u>st</u> <u>u</u> <u>n</u> <u>n</u> <u>i</u> <u>n</u> <u>g</u> animal? (5) BEAST
Topless	Similar to above but drop first letter	Topless <u>be</u> <u>a</u> <u>s</u> <u>t</u> has back facing west? (4) EAST
Starts	Use the first letter of the word or words that follow; often this is only part of the answer	Starts <u>h</u> <u>a</u> <u>p</u> <u>p</u> <u>y</u> and ends on road that is not soft? (4) HARD - 'rd' is an abbreviation for road
Initially or started	Use first letter of following word or words	Started <u>s</u> <u>w</u> <u>i</u> <u>m</u> <u>m</u> <u>i</u> <u>n</u> <u>g</u> and initially <u>u</u> <u>n</u> <u>d</u> <u>e</u> <u>r</u> <u>r</u> <u>e</u> <u>d</u> <u>f</u> <u>l</u> <u>a</u> <u>g</u> , in ocean swell? (4) SURF
Finally or after	Uses last letter of following word	Finally <u>d</u> <u>e</u> <u>c</u> <u>i</u> <u>d</u> <u>e</u> <u>s</u> to <u>e</u> <u>a</u> <u>t</u> in a chair? (4) SEAT
Extremes	First and last letter of following word used in an anagram	Extremes of <u>h</u> <u>e</u> <u>a</u> <u>t</u> are nothing but very warm? (3) HOT - nothing abbreviated as 'O'
Under or after	What follows the word under is placed before rest of answer	Under <u>s</u> <u>e</u> <u>a</u> , male offspring come in winter, autumn, spring and summer? (7) SEASONS - male offspring are 'sons'

Wording in clue	Interpretation	Example
Consumed or contains or within or in	One word contains the other word (or letter/s) to form a new word	Quadruped consumed five to do a good turn? (7) FAVOURS - Quadruped suggests the word fours (as in four legs) and has the letter V added (Roman numeral for five) and uses the 'a'.
Hangs around or surrounds or besieged	Opposite to the strategy given above. So the word that hangs around or surrounds is put around the other word.	Decomposition surrounding smell like an automaton? (5) ROBOT - Smell refers to 'B.O.' or body odour and decomposition refers to 'rot'.
Holding	The preceding words include the answer	Don't <u>be a moron</u> if holding building material? (1-4) T-BEAM
Returning or back or back to front or backwards or up	Answer is contained in the reverse of the words	Backward ' <u>mar</u> cher is sheepish' (3) RAM
In or across 'word1' to 'word2'	The answer runs across the two following letters	In Brisbane <u>we</u> settle once more? (4) ANEW
'X' without 'Y'	Drop letter/s in second word from first word letters	While on your back, <u>play</u> without first piano? (3) LAY - first piano here gives 'P'
Starting to ...	First letter of next word is used	Starting to question you. It pulls out (4) QUIT. Here 'you' + U. Q comes from starting to questions. 'It' is added.
Swap ends	The first letter of a word is swapped with the last letter	Swapped ends of fish for piece of tattered cloth? (3) RAG - gar(fish) with ends swapped
'nearly all of	Nearly every letter of the following word is used, usually in an anagram	Nearly all of them go north after that time? (4) THEN - 'the' from 'them' + N for north
... don't ..	An instruction to drop or ignore part of the words	Seek <u>ing</u> but don't see the ruler (4) Drop off the 'see' from 'seeking' giving 'king' or 'ruler'.

Try these examples of Directional Clues:

Part horse and part alligator but definitely a sea mammal (4)

Even a priest took no engine part (6)

Koala sits eating leaves from back of cup (3)

That's the ends of the paint - struggle for breath? (4)

Oddly to grow old, ain't bad! (4)

Regularly, the poet of pulses is the collective masses (6)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Charades or Pancake stacks

Charades are played out bit-by-bit or word-by-word. Similarly, a cryptic clue may be solved through a process of adding bits of a word together as given in the clue. I refer to this style of clue as a 'Pancake Stack'.

For example, the word 'reinforcement' can be broken up into three words – rein + for + cement. So, the clue could read as follows:

Pull on harness in order to bring together elements to strengthen building? (13)

The substantive clue is 'strengthen building'. 'Pull on harness' refers to 'rein', 'in order to' refers to 'for' and 'bring together elements' refers to 'cement'.

Try these examples:

Blokes sitting in a tent drinking tea pull a scam but altogether full of happiness. (11)

Again received a monetary penalty but ended up purified? (7)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Part horse and part alligator but definitely a sea mammal (4)

Even a priest took no engine part (4)

Koala sits eating leaves from back of cup (3)

That's the ends of the paint – struggle for breath? (4)

Oddly to grow old, ain't bad! (4)

Regularly, the poet of pulses is the collective masses (6)

Part indicates use of part of the words that follow. Take 'se' from 'horse' and 'al' from 'alligator' to form 'seal'.

Use the even letters from 'a priest took no' to get 'piston' – an engine part.

A Koala eats gum leaves and gum backwards is mug – a type of cup.

Ends of the word 'paint' are 'pa' and 'nt' – forming the word 'pant'.

The odd letters of 'grow old' are 'good' – not bad.

Take the regular letters of the 'poet of pulses' and it gives 'people' – the collective masses.

Homophones

Homophones are two words that sound the same and have different meanings but are spelled differently. For example, saw and sore, see and sea, there and their, etc.

The indicator of a homophone is the use of words such as: say, perhaps, sounds like, as the saying goes or hear. Other prompts for homophones can include:

- On the radio
- Announced
- Hearsay
- In/on the air
- Broadcast
- Anything referring to ears

Try these clues that feature homophones:

We hear that sailor took rope and was unable to tie it in a pattern? (4)

Sounds like the ocean with all the others reaches top of the hill? (5)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

*Blokes sitting in a tent drinking tea pull a scam but altogether full of happiness.
(11)*

Again received a monetary penalty but ended up purified? (7)

The substantive for the first clue is 'full of happiness'. 'Blokes' are men, 'drinking tea' gives the letter 't', 'pull a scam' gives 'con'. 'Sitting in a tent' suggests including the word 'tent' in the construction of the clue – in fact in the middle of the correct answer. Adding this together, the answer is found – 'contentment'!

In the second clue, the words, 'ended up purified' suggest that the substantive means 'purified'. 'Again' gives the prefix 're' (commonly used in cryptic crosswords) and 'received a monetary penalty' suggests 'fined'. The answer is 'refined'.

'Running words'

Some clues (many containing the word 'some') take bits of two or more words in a row to give the correct answer. The words run into each other, hence the name 'running words'. An example is as underlined:

Inside, Phil loathes being sick (3)

The answer is 'ill'. The letters are inside Phil and loathes.

Indicators for this type of clue include:

- Some of
- Included
- Contained
- Within
- Found in/find
- In/inside
- Part/partly

For example:

A tiger ate some council fees (5)

Partly, as Kay frames a question (3)

So I like to dirty things (4)

In pure tortellini I find a response (6)

Part of simple asterisk is smallest (5)

Mum, partly gizmo the rest? (6)

Seeking but don't see the ruler (4)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Hear that sailor took rope and was unable to tie it in a pattern? (4) KNOT

Sounds like the ocean with all the others reaches top of the hill? (5) CREST

The substantives in these clues are – tie it (rope) in a pattern, and top of hill. 'Hear' in the first clue indicates a homophone. In this case 'unable' suggests 'not' and therefore the homophone 'knot'.

In the second clue, 'sounds' suggests a homophone indicator and from 'sea' gives 'c', 'All the others' is the 'rest' so, c + rest or 'crest' is the answer.

Talking about 'about'

My Cryptic Crossword group recently discussed the use of the word 'about' in clues. We came up with four uses, all different as follows. 'About' meaning:

- An approximate date. For instance, 'It happened about 1960.' The Latin word for about, in this sense, is 'circa', abbreviated as 'ca'.
- Concerning and indicating the use of 're'
- An anagram indicator to indicate that the letters of the anagram are shuffled about
- An indication of placement putting the letters of one word at either end of another word.

Consider these to show examples of 'about' being used in different ways in clues.

Garage about right, left (7)

About a small coin not so long ago (6)

Tea set about the property (6)

About a hundred given food to brave the consequences (5)

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

A tiger ate some council fees (5) RATES

The answer is 'rates' – council fees. The trick is to take some of 'tiger' – the 'r' all of 'ate' and the first letter of 'some' with some indicating this approach and council fees as the substantive.

As Kay frames a question (3) ASK

'Frames a question' is the substantive and it is formed by using 'as' and 'k' to give ask. The dots are inserted because it is not a complete sentence.

So I like to dirty things (4) SOIL

To dirty things (the substantive) is to 'soil' them, the correct response formed from 'so', 'l' and 'l' from like.

In pure tortellini I find a response (6) RETORT

Simple asterisk is smallest (5) LEAST

Mum, gizmo the rest? (6) MOTHER

The substantives are fairly apparent in the last four clues – response, smallest, Mum and ruler. The remainder of the clue is not straightforward, suggesting that's what the solver should work on to get the correct response. The first three clues use the strategy of using parts of two or more words (as underlined) to form a new word that is suggested by the substantive.

Subtracting

Another type of clue involves subtracting, deleting or removing some letters from another word or words.

For example:

Pictures lost groove to make condiment (5).

Either 'pictures' or 'condiment' is the substantive. The direction 'lost' seems to apply to 'pictures'. A 'groove' is a 'rut' – three letters that when taken out of the eight letter word 'pictures' gives 'PICES' (note this has five letters now) and that makes (anagram) 'spice' – a condiment.

Try these examples where some subtraction of letters is required. Note the clue is then often solved using an anagram approach.

Remove tea and Coke from Copperplate to provide spice (6)

Look! Company lost from chocolate – you swindler! (5)

Flipping dairy not included in dictionary? Not true! (7)

The correct answer is given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Garage about right, left (7)

The answer is 'carport' – a garage. The 'about' provides 'ca', the right is abbreviated to 'r' and left is the 'port' side of the boat. Add these together to get 'carport'.

About a small coin not so long ago (6)

A small coin refers to a 'cent'. 'About' here is used for 're', so the answer is 'recent' – 'not so long ago'.

Tea set about the property (6)

The 'property' is an estate. 'About' indicates an anagram of 'tea' and 'set'.

About a hundred given food to brave the consequences (5)

'About' here means to place words inside parts of another. The words to be inserted are 'a' and 'c' for hundred. These go inside 'fed' to give 'faced' or 'to brave the consequences'.

Other cryptic crossword setters' tricks

East End/Cockney

The East Enders or Cockneys drop the 'H' so when a clue includes a reference to these people, it signifies that the 'H' is dropped from a word or group of words.

For example, a clue refers to Cockney Awards. Awards are honours and dropping the 'H' gives 'onours' which is used in the response to include the letters 'o+n+o+u+r+s' and therefore 'on ours'.

Try this:

East Ender says that the horse's lead needs to change? (5)

The correct answer is given at the foot of the next page.

One and two-letter words in answers

The only one-letter words used in English are 'a' or 'I' except where an abbreviation or acronym is used such as U.N. for United Nations.

A two-letter word in an answer could be a preposition such as: to, at, in, of, by, etc.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Remove tea and Coke from Copperplate to provide spice (6)

'Spice' is the substantive as 'remove' is the clue to the approach to be used. 'Tea' or T is removed along with COLA (Coke) to give PEPPER.

Look! Company lost from chocolate – you swindler! (5)

'Look' according to the list of abbreviations becomes LO and 'company' becomes CO. Remove these from 'chocolate' and anagram the remainder to get CHEAT (a swindler).

Flipping dairy not included in dictionary? Not true! (7)

The substantive is 'not true' or FICTION. Remove F (for 'Flipping') and 'diary' from 'dictionary' anagram the remainder to give the correct response.

Initials

Initials are a close relative of the directional clue. The prompt 'initials' or 'initially' indicates that the answer is found by taking the first or initial letter of each of the following words. Usually the words that follow have very little meaning or sense.

For example:

Initially, Phil offered some toffee in the mail? (4)

The correct answer is given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

East Ender says that the horse's lead needs to change? (5)

The substantive in this clue is – 'change'. The horse's lead is a 'halter', which with the 'h' dropped gives 'alter' (change).

Spoonerisms

Mr. Spooner was famous for 'wuddling his murds' – that is muddling his words by changing round the first letter or sound of two words appearing side-by-side. For instance, 'my hair' becomes 'high mare'.

As a further example:

Spooner said that his mandle was badly treated by hand? (9)

Swap the letters or sounds in the words 'his' and 'mandle' and 'mishandle' results – bad treatment by hand.

Compass bearings

A reference to the compass, directions or bearings is a clue to include North, South, East or West, usually as the abbreviation N, S, E or W. The words 'All directions' refer to the letters N + E + W + S and can refer to the word 'news'.

For instance, try these:

Points of needle workings (4)

O, no, no – with all directions, go it alone? (2, 3'1, 3)

Fresh information from all directions? (4)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answer to clues on previous page:

Initially, Phil offered some toffee in the mail? (4) POST

The substantive in this clue is 'mail'. Take the initials of everything from 'Phil' onwards to give 'post'.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Points of needle workings (4)

O, no, no – with all directions, go it alone? (2, 3'1, 3)

Fresh information from all directions? (4)

The substantives in these clues are – 'needle workings', 'go it alone' and 'fresh information'.

In the first clue points refers to compass points, in this case South, East, West and South again to give and East, to give 'sews'.

The 'animal' in the first clue is a 'beast'. Take off the 'b' to give 'east' where the sun rises.

The second word in the answer has an apostrophe so could be 'one's (and is). Add N + S + W + E as suggested by the word 'with' to 'O, no, no' to get 'on one's own' or 'go it alone'.

All directions in the third clue suggest, north, south, east and west, abbreviated to 'NEWS' – fresh information.

Apostrophes

Occasionally a cryptic crossword setter will include an apostrophe in the word count of the answer. For instance, the answer, 'Don't go', would have a word count of (4'1, 2).

An apostrophe is used in good English where there is a contraction such as 'don't' replacing 'do not' or, where there is a possessive. Apostrophes are misused; so keep these guidelines in mind when you come across a clue containing one. As an example, 'Phil's computer' means the computer of or belonging to Phil. The 'princes' crowns' refers to a number of princes and their crowns.

Try this:

The Doctor primed for action? (3'1, 5)

To solve this clue, remember that the first word in the answer is either a contraction or a possessive. Either 'doctor' or 'ready for action' is the substantive clue.

Do any doctors spring to mind? Why is 'The' and 'Doctor' capitalised? Perhaps if you watch the ABC you might get this answer? 'Primed for action' implies a state of preparedness. So, 'Who's ready?' is the answer.

Try these:

Only a single seed planted but it seems like mine! (3'1, 3)

SE hill turns him sick (5) (2'1, 3)

Take a seat Mr Bradman and Mr East if the job is finished (2'1 4)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Only a single seed planted but it seems like mine! (3'1, 3) ONE'S OWN

South East hill turns him sick (5) (2'1, 3) HE'S ILL

Take a seat Mr Bradman and Mr East if the job is finished? (2'1' 4)

In the first clue, 'It is mine' is the substantive. 'Single' suggests 'one', while 'planted' suggests 'sown'. Put these together and you get, 'one sown' which seems like or sounds like 'one's own'.

The second clue is an anagram. The key word to indicate that this is an anagram is 'turns', suggesting some change is required. The abbreviation of South East is SE. Add together SE and hill. The substantive is 'him sick', so he is ill or 'he's ill'.

Bradman (the cricketer of course) indicates 'don' and east indicates 'e'. Put together this makes 'done'. Take a seat or 'sit' can be anagrammed as 'it's', so the answer is 'It's done'.

Abbreviations and references

Each of the entries in the table below is a widely used abbreviation as included in clues. They may be part of an anagram, a 'running words' set or 'part of a pancake'.

Make a list to include further additions to the list of abbreviations, famous people, places and references.

Hint	Meaning
Again or about	RE
Bearing or compass or points or North, South, East or West or Bridge player	N/S/E/W
Big	OS
Business or company	CO
Caught or Hundred	C
Church	CE (Church of England) or CH
Current, nowadays	AD (current can also refer to AC or DC)
Detective force	CID
Doctor or medico	DR, MO or could be an anagram indicator
Donkey	ASS
Duck or nil or ring or love	O (cricket score)
First	A (letter in alphabet) or ALPHA (Greek alphabet)
Fish	Eel, cod, gar, ling
Gallery	TATE (English Art Gallery)
Goat	Butter
Good man or saint	ST
Hesitate	UM or ER
In charge	IC
Last	Z (letter in alphabet) or OMEGA (Greek alphabet)
Learner	L or P
Left	L or PORT (ship reference)
Like that	SO or AS
Look	LO
Mother, parent, father	MA, MA/PA/DA/DAD, DA/PA/DAD
Old times	BC
On board or any reference to ships and sailing	SS (Steam Ship)
One	Include I
Point	PT or N/S/W/E (as above)
Priest or clergyman or vicar	DD (doctor of divinity)
Quiet	SH or P (pianissimo)
Right	R

Sailor or seaman	AB or TAR
Second or small or son	S
Smell	BO
Specialist	ENT (Ears, nose and throat)
Support	BRA
Unknown	X or Y
Tea	CHA
Unit or A	Include A in anagram
Time	T
University	U
Times or by	X (multiplied by)
Versus or against	V
Why?	Y

Try these simple examples of using these abbreviations and references.

- Big business doctor is our current PM (5)
- One priest can count (3)
- Love again mine output (3)
- Like unknown foot warmers (3)
- Quiet donkey says, 'I can't go' (4)
- Smelly second son becomes the head honcho (4)
- Against, um, directions, I song part of a song (5)
- Good man and sailor plunge knife in (4)
- Company soldier in art gallery has a bit of a think (8)
- Tea right for washerwoman? (4)
- Two fish are found in moth-eaten apple (7)
- Last loves for animal house (3)
- Serious play for medico and one mother (5)

The correct answers are given at the foot of the next page.

Correct answers to clues on previous page:

Big business doctor is our current PM (5) SCOMO

One priest can count (3) ADD

Love again mine output (3) ORE

Like unknown foot warmers (3) SOX

Quiet donkey says, 'I can't go' (4) PASS

Smelly second son becomes the head honcho (4) BOSS

Against, um, directions, I song part of a song (5) VERSE

Good man and sailor plunge knife in (4) STAB

Company soldier in art gallery has a bit of a think (8) COGITATE

Tea right for washer-woman? (4) CHAR

Two fish are found in moth-eaten apple (7) CODLING

Last loves for animal house (3) ZOO

Serious play for medico and one mother (5) DRAMA

Chemistry clues

Hint	Meaning
Any element (Silver, gold, cobalt, lithium, carbon, etc.)	Use the abbreviation that is used in the Periodic Table (check in Google if not known). So, Ag, Au, Co, Li, C in examples given. Include in answer or in an anagram.
Gas	H for hydrogen, CO for carbon monoxide, N for Nitrogen
Gold	AU or OR (referring to heraldry)

Famous people in clues

Hint	Meaning
Australian actor	CATE (Blanchett)
Capone	AL
Cash	PAT
Cassius	ALI or CLAY
Gershwin	IRA
Jeremy	IRONS
King	GR (George Rex)
Princess	DI
Queen or monarch	ER (Elizabeth Regina)
Robbie or Scottish poet	BURNS

States/nations used in clues

Rhode Island	RI
Virginia	VA
California	CA
Britain or British	B or BR
America	US or USA
Ireland or Irish	I
Australia or Australian	A or AU
South Australia	SA
Canberra	ACT
Victoria	VIC

Foreign language clues

The + Italian	IL
The + French	LA
The + Spanish	EL
And + the + German	UNDER

Roman numerals

1	I
4	IV
5	V
10	X
50	L
100	C
101	CI
500	D
1000	M

Most commonly used Greek letters from Greek Alphabet:

- Alpha or first letter
- Beta for B
- Pi for P
- Mu for M
- Nu for N
- Omega or last letter

SOME CRYPTIC CROSSWORD CLUES

1. A duet spit is resolved in skill (9)
2. Honestly, Kay in a fly, ran awkwardly (7)
3. Can nothing escape the twin leaders in watercraft?
(6)
4. In the end, sounds Nordic (6)
5. Some send or secrete approval (7)
6. OAO – telephone tree (4, 6)
7. Move crablike on port or starboard streets (8)
8. Nearly not true with a dry reference book (10)
9. Mr Cooper followed Virginia – so quirky (6)
10. Forbearance, to, um, split spear attack (9)
11. Put some clip sticker on mouth before going out?
(8)
12. Cut kindling wood to eat Chinese food (10)
13. The main point is that an Australian state and its
northern neighbour border an untruth (7)
14. Cautious approach when you are preparing to high
jump (4, 6, 3, 4)
15. Light bulb glows in other tin as it falls (12)
16. Horse rider starts eastward in search for break in
rain (10)
17. Spooner played in a ball game where his shoe went
for a sixer (8)
18. The tome smells bad, all right (4)
19. Revolutionary begins every revolt – hurrah! (5)
20. Lefty played in show where documents were
censured (8)
21. Before, nobleman and I made our first two errors
(7)
22. The flower got up or did it just sound like it did? (4)
23. Ten alps down south on Earth or Mars (6)
24. Deep stuff comes back at a fast pace (5)
25. Every third position can key an illness (4)
26. Flower in first, last, first field (6)
27. Whichever way you look KK is paddled craft (5)
28. Order of merit given to monarch after he sprinted
(7)
29. Baby's carriage tumbles into line of bouncing
platform (10)
30. Crossword is in Tomb 99 (7)

ANSWERS TO CLUES

1. A duet spit is resolved in skills (9) APTITUDES
2. Honestly, Kay in a fly, ran awkwardly (7) FRANKLY
3. Can nothing escape the twin leaders in watercraft?
(6) CANOES
4. In the end, sounds Nordic (6) FINISH
5. Some send or secrete approval (7) ENDORSE
6. OAO – telephone tree (4, 6) RING AROUND
7. Move crablike on port or starboard streets (8)
SIDEWAYS
8. Nearly not true with a dry reference book (10)
DICTIONARY
9. Mr Cooper followed Virginia – so quirky (6)
VAGARY
10. Forbearance, to, um, split spear attack (9)
TOLERANCE
11. Put some clip sticker on mouth before going out?
(8) LIPSTICK
12. Cut kindling wood to eat Chinese food (10)
CHOPSTICKS
13. The main point is that an Australian state and its
northern neighbour border an untruth (7) SALIENT
14. Cautious approach when you are preparing to high
jump (4, 6, 3, 4) LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP
15. Light bulb glows in other tin as it falls (12)
INCANDESCENT
16. Horse rider starts eastward in search for break in
rain (10) EQUESTRIAN
17. Spooner played in a ball game where his shoe went
for a sixer (8) FOOTBALL
18. The tome smells bad, all right (4) BOOK
19. Revolutionary begins every revolt – hurrah! (5)
CHEER
20. Lefty played in show where documents were
censured (8) REDACTED
21. Before, nobleman and I made our first two errors
(7) EARLIER
22. The flower got up or did it just sound like it did? (4)
ROSE
23. Ten alps down south on Earth or Mars (6) PLANET

24. Deep stuff comes back at a fast pace (5) SPEED
25. Every third position can key an illness (4) SICK
26. Flower in first, last, first field (6) AZALEA
27. Whichever way you look KK is paddled craft (5)
KAYAK
28. Order of merit given to monarch after he sprinted
(7) RANKING
29. Baby's carriage tumbles into line of bouncing
platform (10) TRAMPOLINE
30. Crossword is in Tomb 99 (7) CRYPTIC

EXPLANATIONS TO CLUES

1.	A duet spit is resolved in skills (9). 'Appears' is an anagram indicator. 'A duet spit' has the right number of letters and doesn't make sense so that is the group of letters to anagram. 'Skills' is the substantive. APTITUDES is the correct answer.
2.	Honestly, Kay in a fly, ran awkwardly (7). 'Awkwardly' indicates is an anagram indicator so 'honestly' is the substantive. 'Kay' gives the letter 'K', inserted into 'fly' together with 'ran' to give F + RAN + K + LY = FRANKLY.
3.	Can nothing escape the twin leaders in watercraft? (6). 'Watercraft' is the substantive here. 'Twin leaders' is an indication to take the first two letters of the first three words. So, CA + NO + ES = CANOES, a type of watercraft.
4.	In the end, sounds Nordic (6). 'Sounds' indicates a homophone. 'In the end' is at the FINISH, a Nordic country person.
5.	Some send or secrete approval (7). The 'some' indicates using bits of words. 'Approval' is therefore the substantive. Starting with the 'E' from send and following on for six more letters, gives ENDORSE.
6.	OAO – telephone tree (4, 6). I'm not sure what sort of clue this is but it is definitely cryptic! 'O' is a circle, ring, round shape. 'Telephone tree' leaps out as the substantive. The 'A' stays as is. Put 'ring' in front and 'round' behind to give RING AROUND.
7.	Move crablike on port or starboard streets (8). 'Move crablike' or streets could be the substantive. 'Port' and 'starboard' relate to a ship and which SIDE is which. 'Streets' are ways, so SIDEWAYS as a crab moves is the answer.
8.	Nearly not true with a dry reference book (10). 'Reference book' seems to be the substantive while 'nearly' indicates using most of a word but not all. 'Not true' is 'fiction, shortened to 'iction'. Add 'a' and put inside 'dry' to give a reference book – DICTIONARY.

9.	Mr Cooper followed Virginia – so quirky (6). 'So quirky might be an anagram indicator but is actually the substantive rather than Mr Cooper. His first name is 'Gary'. Virginia isn't a person but a state of the USA, abbreviated as VA. Put 'Gary' behind 'va' to get VAGARY.
10.	Forbearance, to, um, split spear attack (9) Again 'attack' could be an anagram indicator with 'forbearance' as the substantive. The 'um' gives 'er' and the 'spear' is a 'lance'. Add 'to' at the front to give TO + L +ER + ANCE = TOLERANCE. Lance is split into 'l' and 'ance'.
11.	Put some clip sticker on mouth before going out? (8). The 'some' indicates using parts of the words following to make a new word. Before going out, one might apply LIPSTICK.
12.	Cut kindling wood to eat Chinese food (10) One eats Chinese food with CHOPSTICKS. The 'chop' comes from 'cut' and the 'sticks' are kindling wood.
13.	The main point is that an Australian state and its northern neighbour border an untruth (7). Is the substantive 'an untruth, say a 'lie' or the 'main point'? The Australian state must have a northern neighbour. South Australia and Northern Territory fit the description. The word 'border' means to put SA and NT around LIE to give SALIENT.
14.	Cautious approach when you are preparing to high jump (4, 6, 3, 4). Such an elongated answer often indicates an expression is the correct response. High jumpers 'leap'. A 'risk assessment' involves observation or 'taking a look'. 'When preparing' gives 'before' so LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP.
15.	Light bulb glows in other tin as it falls (12). Hmm, what sort of 'light bulb'? The 'other tin' (new word instead of tin) is a 'can' and 'as it falls' gives 'descent'. Add 'in' as given in clue to give INCANDESCENT.
16.	Horse rider starts eastward in search for break in rain (10). These clues were done as I was watching the Tokyo Olympics and it shows to the cluey observer! 'Horse rider' is the substantive. 'Starts eastward' gives E, the first letter, while one who is 'in search for' is on a QUEST. 'Broken rain' means jumbling the letters of 'rain'. Added together (stack of pancakes) E + QUEST + RIAN = EQUESTRIAN.

17.	<p>Spooner played in a ball game where his shoe went for a sixer (8).</p> <p>Which 'ball game' indeed? Spooner's shoe is a BOOT and if he 'went for a sixer', he had a FALL. Swap the first letters around as per Spooner's habit to give FOOTBALL.</p>
18.	<p>The tome smells bad, all right (4).</p> <p>A 'tome' is a BOOK. BO or body odour 'smells bad'. 'All right' gives OK.</p>
19.	<p>Revolutionary begins every revolt – hurrah! (5).</p> <p>Which is the substantive here? 'Begins every revolt' gives ER. CHE (Guevara) was a revolutionary. Together this gives CHEER – a 'hurrah'.</p>
20.	<p>Lefty played in show where documents were censured (8).</p> <p>'Documents were censured' (note past tense) appears to be the substantive and is. 'Played in a show' gives ACTED and a 'lefty' is a RED. Together this gives REDACTED.</p>
21.	<p>Before, nobleman and I made our first two errors (7).</p> <p>'First two errors' gives the instruction to use the letters ER. A 'nobleman' is an EARL. So, EARL + I + ER = EARLIER.</p>
22.	<p>The flower got up or did it just sound like it did? (4).</p> <p>Another homophone is indicated here by 'did it just sound like it did?' The substantive is (a) 'flower'. 'Got up' is ROSE.</p>
23.	<p>Ten alps down south on Earth or Mars (6).</p> <p>Earth and Mars are each a PLANET in our Solar System.</p> <p>"Down south" indicates both reversing and not using the 's' from 'alps.</p>
24.	<p>Deep stuff comes back at a fast pace (5).</p> <p>'A fast pace' is the substantive. Comes back' indicates to reverse the order starting with the 'S' from stuff. This gives SPEED.</p>
25.	<p>Every third position can key an illness (4).</p> <p>'An illness' indicating the person is SICK. Every third letter starting with S from 'position can key' provides the required letters.</p>
26.	<p>Flower in first, last, first field (6).</p> <p>'Flower' is the substantive. The first letter of the alphabet is A, the last Z. A 'field' is a LEA. Put together it gives A + Z + A + LEA = AZALEA.</p>

27.	Whichever way you look KK is paddled craft (5) ‘Paddled craft’ is the substantive – again I was watching the Olympics. K is pronounced like ‘kay’. ‘Whichever way you look at it’ indicates a palindrome – the same spelling backwards and forwards. So KAYAK is the answer.
28.	Order of merit given to monarch after he sprinted (7). A ‘monarch’ is a KING. ‘After’ indicates placing a word relating to ‘he sprinted’ – RAN, before KING to give RANKING or ‘order of merit’.
29.	Baby’s carriage tumbles into line of bouncing platform (10). A ‘baby’s carriage’ is a pram. This is tumbled to give RAMP and this word is inserted (in) TO LINE. Together this gives T + RAMP + O + LINE = TRAMPOLINE, the bouncing platform.
30.	Crossword is in Tomb 99 (7). ‘Crossword’ makes sense as the substantive, but what sort? CRYPTIC of course from ‘crypt’ for tomb and 99 in roman numerals (‘ic’).