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	C	R	O	S	S	W	O	R	D	S
		Y								T
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A GUIDE TO READING AND SOLVING CRYPTIC CLUES

3 - Combining different elements - Chains and Sandwiches

A lot of crossword clues require you to find multiple elements that can be joined together to form your solution. The first part of these notes look at an example of this, getting the word COAL from three successive parts of the ingredient phrase 'company with a shortfall finally'. This is an example of a chain type 'charades' clue - (like in a game of charades where you can't act out the whole word, but can represent it syllable by syllable, then put these bits together into a single answer).

There will thus here be different 'elements' to spot within the ingredients.

Note that you will only rarely be able to pick these elements *directly* from the ingredients; first you will need to identify and **rework** different elements; and only after that work out how to **consolidate** the results into the solution.

'Reworking' of an element can take different forms

- find a synonym for it (i.e. an alternative word that means the same)
- find an abbreviation for this (a shorter form of it)
- Find an example of it (a specific example of a general category)
- Do an anagram or some other kind of manipulation on it.

There may be some *indicator* words, either to say what reworking is needed (especially if this is more complex), or to indicate how to link the different bits together. Example of the latter could be '*with*' or '*followed by*' or '*consumed by*' or similar. In many cases however, especially with chains, there simply is no indicator present - the different elements just appear sequentially.

The general rule of not reading the clue as a whole still stands though - the clue still needs to be split into a definition, indicator (maybe) and ingredient parts, plus now the ingredients split into different chunks too.

Example Combination Clues

Here are some basic combination clues - definitions underlined and together with their solutions, Here the 'reworking' required is mostly by finding synonyms for the different elements of the ingredients, before chaining or sandwiching them together.

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|---|---------|
| 1. Droop when <i>encountering</i> a <u>lengthy account</u> (4) | SAGA |
| 2. <u>Characters mixed up</u> : a horse and sheep (7) | ANAGRAM |
| 3. VAT <i>on</i> a <u>musical instrument</u> (4) | TUBA |
| 4. <u>Unhealthy</u> female <i>introduced to</i> squad (5) | UNFIT |

Charades clues are fairly typical of cryptic clues, but it really does take some time to get familiar with the wide variety of tricks that setters use within these. So initially, just being able to see how a solution was arrived at, you are already becoming more familiar with just how varied this type of clue format is.

So, in the examples above these are what's needed to solve the clue. Solutions shown here with hyphens to emphasis the building up of the final answer.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Droop when <i>encountering</i> a <u>lengthy account</u> (4) | SAG-A |
| Droop = SAG (synonym) <i>encountering</i> (indicator for making a chain) + A | |
| 2. <u>Characters mixed up</u> : a horse and sheep (7) | A-NAG-RAM |
| A + NAG (a type of horse) + RAM (a type of sheep); no indicators. | |
| 3. VAT <i>on</i> a <u>musical instrument</u> (4) | TUB-A |
| TUB as a synonym for a vat-like container, 'on' as an indicator, plus A | |
| 4. <u>Unhealthy</u> female <i>introduced to</i> squad (5) | UN-F-IT |
| UNIT as a synonym for squad, F as abbreviation for female, but the indicator of ' <i>introduced to</i> ' being a hint that the F is put inside UNIT | |

Note too that the capitals for VAT in above clue are a deliberate attempt to mislead the person solving the clue, by implying VAT tax rather than vat as a container. But as with extra bits of punctuation and redundant link words, this type of sneaky tweaking of the clue is still sadly within the rules of crossword setting!

So with this format of clue, you now move to a rather harder level.

You now have to 'solve' each separate element in turn. And especially when you need to find a synonym for the ingredient word or phrase, then you can have a lot of different options to consider - some of them can need a bit of quite lateral thinking (e.g. NAG for horse, or TUB for VAT).

However the fact that you have two different routes to get the solution - the definition AND the ingredients - then you can approach from either end. EITHER you can think of possible answers that fit the definition, and then see if you can see

any possible relationships to the ideas within the ingredients, OR you can play around with the ingredients and see if that leads to words that fit the definition.

However once you can see that your word BOTH fits the definition AND can be derived from the ingredients, you can then be satisfied that it is correct. This format of clue can therefore be really satisfying when the answer fully clicks!

With practice, you DO quickly get more able to think up synonyms and become better aware that some words have multiple meanings - which is why learning to do crosswords is such good mental exercise.

Practice Exercises - Combination Clues (with synonyms and abbreviations)

Exercise 3.1. Definition and *indicators* marked ¹

- Unwell *in* bed, and being invoiced (6)
- Negative word *about* good person is unpleasant (5)
- Colourful picture of attempt *to follow* recordings? (8)
- A European type to rush *around* part of UK (6)

Exercise 3.2 No help in identifying what's what ... ²

- Calm gym expert (5)
- Chap in boat having argument with Her Majesty (5)
- Arthur is an excellent worker with his hands (7)
- Manage to smuggle uranium in car (5)

¹ Exercise 3.1

All single word solutions, hyphens added below only to indicate sub sections following on from each other, or with one part embedded within another.

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| ● Unwell <i>in</i> bed, and <u>being invoiced</u> (6) | B-ILL-ED |
| ● Negative word <i>about</i> good person is <u>unpleasant</u> (5) | NA-ST-Y |
| ● <u>Colourful picture</u> of attempt <i>to follow</i> recordings? (8) | TAPES-TRY |
| ● <u>A European type</u> to rush <i>around</i> part of UK (6) | DA-NI-SH |

² Exercise 3.2

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| ● <u>Calm</u> gym expert (5) | PE-ACE |
| ● Chap in boat having argument with Her Majesty (5) | ROW-ER |
| ● Arthur is an excellent worker with his hands (7) | ART-IS-AN |
| ● Manage to smuggle uranium in car (5) | CO-U-PE |

More about abbreviations ...

Some abbreviations are fairly self explanatory - e.g. ER for Her Majesty.
 In some cases you're given a letter directly to use e.g. "with a ..." for A
 But in many cases, the way you get letters from a part of the ingredients is a bit more elaborate or obscure, and you just pick these up as you go. Abbreviations can come from just about any source ...

Latin Numerals - L for fifty, IV for four

Clothes Sizes - S, M, L, OS, XL

Musical Notation - P for quiet, F for loud

Cricketing terms - B for bowled or bye, O for duck

Phonetic Alphabet - Alpha A, Bravo B, Charlie C ... Zulu Z

Date and Time terms - Time T, Second S, Morning AM

Family terms - Daughter D, Son S, Female F, Married M, Wife W

Plus Chemical Elements, Compass Directions, Chess pieces, Left and Right, Hot and Cold, Units of Length, Maths terms, Army Units, Professional Qualifications, or just about anything else. Often it is just an initial letter of an ingredient word - e.g. Power P, Hospital H, River R.

O can be zero, duck, none, round, ring, circle ...

I can be one, single, solo ..

IN can be used to represent at home, popular, fashionable

Exercise 3.3. Combination Clues involving Abbreviations ³

- One is grabbed by deranged girl (4)
- Young attendant, quiet and mature (4)
- Racket made by daughter at home (3)
- Difficult to hide ring in collection (5)
- Indian city food shop husband enters (5)

³ **Exercise 3.3**

- | | |
|--|---------|
| ● One is grabbed by deranged girl (4) | MA-I-D |
| ● Young attendant, quiet and mature (4) | P-AGE |
| ● Racket made by daughter at home (3) | D-IN |
| ● Difficult to hide ring in collection (5) | H-O-ARD |
| ● Indian city food shop husband enters (5) | DEL-H-I |