



Specialised Crosswords

TOP TIP #4: The basics of a cryptic crossword clue

For those of you considering trying solving cryptic clues for the first time but feeling slightly daunted, it is useful to know that the format of a cryptic clue is almost always:

< **Wordplay** > < **optional linkword(s)** > < **Definition** >

or the reverse

< **Definition** > < **optional linkword(s)** > < **Wordplay** >

Here Wordplay means an, often subtle, way of assembling the word.

So, in the simple example

Cheese made backwards (4)

the answer contains 4 letters, the Definition is 'cheese' and the Wordplay is 'if you take the letters MADE and write them backwards you'll get the answer':

EDAM

The art of the setter includes trying to create clues where the initial reading of the clue appears to make sense but misleads, actually hiding something of the format above!

Note: more tips will regularly become available at www.specialisedcrosswords.co.uk

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- Unique and thoughtful crossword-based gifts for friends, family or work-colleagues. Imagine their surprise and pleasure when they are solving a crossword and find it's all about them!
- A regular high-quality crossword in your publication keeps it on the coffee table for longer and gets it read more. Ask *Encota* to become your magazine's regular crossword setter
- Cryptic crosswords are great for brain training – use it or lose it! Tim is available to teach you how to solve them (especially for those too afraid to ask!), as well as wider workshops on problem solving and lateral thinking

Specialised Crosswords is run by Tim King, the crossword setter *Encota* who sets puzzles for publications including The Times, The Sunday Telegraph, The Independent and The Magpie specialist crossword magazine. Tim is also the crossword editor of the journal of the Institute of Telecommunications Professionals (ITP). Visit www.specialisedcrosswords.co.uk or contact him on encota@btinternet.com to see how *Specialised Crosswords* can help you or your organisation.