

Clueing in on Crosaire

CROSAIRE has many devious ways of baffling the crossword buff, but although the clues may be difficult to unravel, Crosaire is fair — he wants us to solve them. There is always a logic, even if it is sometimes hard to find.

There are certain clues and parts of clues that crop up frequently in cryptic crosswords. Some are common to all cryptic crosswords and others are peculiar to individual compilers. These become familiar over time and can be quickly recognised at first glance. A blank Crosaire grid can seem totally incomprehensible to the uninitiated, but once the general principles and main conventions are understood, the task becomes far less daunting.

Crosaire conventions

A Crosaire clue can be usually be broken down into three parts. The solution, usually indicated in one part, is arrived at by joining the other two parts.

Example: The sort of death a priest might have, one may add (6). The solution is "append", and is arrived at as follows:

1. The word 'death' in a clue usually indicates the letters END in the answer. 2. The word "priest" sometimes indicates the letters PP (parish priest), so "a priest" is A PP. 3. Joining these two parts together — A PP and END — gives the word APPEND, which means to "add". Hence, parts 1 and 2 of the clue — "death" and "priest" — gives the answer APPEND, which is indicated in part 3 — "one may add".

A list of the common conventions is given at the end of the article.

Using the list of conventions, try the following clues:

- Being overweight, Edward is sick, unfortunately (3-5).
- Mother is around the lair as one misses them (7).
- That miserable accountant is worth his weight in diamonds (5).

The answers and method of solution are:

- ILL-FATED. — Overweight = FAT; Edward = ED; Sick = ILL. Thus, — ILL + FAT + ED = ILL-FATED (unfortunate).
- MAIDENS — Mother is = MA IS; Lair = DEN; — MA + IS + DEN (anagram) = MAIDENS (misses).
- CARAT — Miserable = RAT; Accountant = CA (Chartered Accountant); — RAT + CA (anagram) = CARAT (diamond weight).

Many people who love crosswords find the intricacies of Crosaire's daily puzzle a total mystery. Mary O'Brien, in the spirit of Christmas, indicates a route through the maze.

Anagrams

An anagram is a word or phrase formed by the letters of another, in a different order. **Example** — "The cockney girl and I wander about together (7)".

Solution — MEANDER — cockney girl = ER ('er); and I = AND ME; ER + AND + ME (anagram) = MEANDER (wander about).

Referring to the list of conventions, try these:

- It amounts to a week, and it is roused (8).
- The artist has a broken rib, which is a thorny problem (5).
- If you listen, you'll be able to join forces with this (6).

- Solutions:**
- AWAKENED — A + WEEK + AND (anagram) = AWAKENED (roused).
 - BRIAR — Artist = RA (Royal Academy); broken rib = BRI; RA + BRI (anagram) = BRIAR (thorny).
 - ENLIST — Listen (anagram) = ENLIST (join forces).

Synonyms

A synonym, as used in crosswords, is a word which has the same meaning, or nearly the same meaning, as another. **Example** — "Phone for an adornment and be a good listener (7)".

Solution — EARRING (phone = RING; listener = EAR; EAR + RING = EARRING (adornment)).

Using the list of synonyms at the end of the article, try these two clues:

- Oh, it sounds as if you are in debt (3).
- Father is not going out, he hurts too much (4).

- Solutions:**
- OWE — 'Oh' sounds like OWE (in debt).
 - PAIN — Father = PA; Not going out = IN; PA + IN = PAIN (hurts).

Homophones

Homophones are words that are pronounced the same but are

different in meaning. In crosswords, the words may not sound exactly the same, but near enough to guess. Generally, but not always, homophones are indicated in a clue by the phrase "sounds like" or "we hear".

Example — "For the celebration, sounds as if you pretend to be sore (9)".

Solution — CHAMPAGNE — Pretend = Sham, which sounds like CHAM; Sore = Pain, which sounds like PAGNE; CHAM + PAGNE = CHAMPAGNE (for the celebration).

Try these homophonic clues:

- Air or a sound (4).
- Prays, by the sound of it that you get a leg (6).

- Solutions:**
- AURA — 'Or a' sounds like AURA (air).
 - EULOGY — 'Prays' sounds like PRAISE; YOU + LEG (anagram) = EULOGY (praise).

Palindromes

A palindrome is a word that reads the same backwards and forwards, usually indicated in a clue by the phrase "backwards and forwards" or "to and fro". **Example:** "It goes round and round and also to and fro (5)".

Solution — ROTOR, which is spelt the same backwards and forwards.

Sample clues:

- He's tiny, whichever way you look at it (3).
- No matter how you see it, it's old money (3).

Solutions:

- TOT — whichever way you look at it — backwards and forwards.
- BOB — no matter how you see it — backwards and forwards; old money — old shilling — BOB.

Letter plays

Great use is made of letter plays in Crosaire. After a bit of practice, they are generally easy to spot.

Example — "ABCEFG, one can affirm (3)".

Solution — NOD — there is no D in this string of letters, so NO D - NOD (affirm).

Sample clues:

- GIE, just a shade (5).
- ETSETSETSETSETSETSETSETSETSETSET one holds (6).
- E/S, for ages (4).

Solutions:

- TINGE — The letter T is contained within the letters G and E, hence T in GE - TINGE (shade).
- TENETS — There are ten ETS here, hence TENETS (principles one holds).
- EONS — E/S - E on S EONS (ages).

WHEN words in the left-hand column are used in the clues, it generally indicates that the words or letters in the right-hand column form the solution or part of it.

Clue words	Solution (or part of it)
Abominable	YETI (snowman)
About	RE (or change order of letters for an anagram)
Accountant	CA (chartered accountant)
Account	AC, VERSION
After Tea	'T' is the first letter of word
Afterthought	PS
Again	RE...
Albert	AL
American Soldier	GI
American	CIA
Intelligence	CIA
Animal (miserable)	CUR, RAT
Annoyance, Anger	IRE
Are, in short	R (sounds like are)
Aristocracy	GENT(S)
Artist	RA (Royal Academy)
At Home	IN
Ate (of late)	SUPPER, SUPPED
Avenue	AVE
Bovine (sound)	MOO
Be quiet	SH
Beastly	BEAR, LION, etc.
Bee	B
Behad	Drop the first letter
Bloom	ASTER
Boy	SON, LAD; or shortened male name
Brother (little)	BRO, BR
Bob	S (shilling)
Bird	TT
Bury	INTER
Behold	LO
Border	RIM, EDGE
Cornelius	CON
Conservative	TORY
Came First	LED
Came First (he, she)	ADAM, EVE

Catalogue	LIST
(I) Claim	IM (I am)
Claim	AVER
Cockney girl	ER ('er)
Communist	RED
Comparatively	ER
Counsel	SC (senior counsel)
(go to) Court	SUE
Craft	ART
Cut head off	Drop first letter
Cat	TOM
Cry (of pain)	OW
Case	ATTACHE
Crown (one with)	KING
Death	END
Degree, Graduate	BA, MA
Directors	BOARD
Doctor	MO, Md, DR
Doctor (learned divine)	DD (doctor of divinity)
Dog	TERRIER
Detectives	CID
Drink	ALE, PORT, GIN, BEER
Dead	LATE
Dickens	Dickens' title or character
Dragon	BORE (drag on)
East/Orient	E
Editor	ED
Edward/Teddy	ED, NED, TED
Employ	USE
Ever	EER
'Er	ER
Essence	ATTAR
Eccentric	CAM (eccentric projection on shaft)
Father, Old Man	DA, DAD, PA, FR
Fifty, half a century	L
Five	V
Five hundred	D
Four	IV
Firm	CO (company)
Free State	SE (Saorstát, Eireann)
(the) French	LE, LA
French one	UN, UNE
Fed up	DEF. (fed spelt backwards)

First rate	AI
Fast time	LENT
For instance	EG
(on) Foot	HEEL, TOE, HOE, etc
Fighter	MIG
Flower	ASTER
Fast	LENT
Gee	G
Gilbert and Sullivan	G & S title or character
Girl	GAL, LASS, or ANN, SUE, etc.
Gratitude	TA
Graduate, Degree	BA, MA
Grand	M (thousand)
Go on ahead	HAT, CAP, HAIR
Grass	LEA
German (town, place)	ESSEN, STEN
Gun	
Hullo	HO, HI
(I) Had	ID (I'd)
(He) Had	HED (He'd)
Hair	TRESS
Hill	TOR
(at) Home	IN
(in the) House	MP
Hundred	C
Hears	EAR
Horse, nag	GG (gee-gee)
Half a century, Fifty	L
Half a dozen, six	VI
Hotel, Pub	INN
Heavenly	ANGEL, STAR, PLANET
I am	IM
I claim to be	IM
Insect	ANT, FLY
I had	ID
In order	TIDY, NEAT
Invoice	SING (in voice)
	BILL
Judge	DI (District Inspector)

Kenneth, in short	KEN
Knock out	KO, STUN
Laurence	LAR
Left	OVER
Let it stand	STET
Like	AS
Little brother	BOR, BR
Love	O (tennis)
Loud	F
(very) Loud	FF
Lubricate	OIL
Lisp	TH(s)
Last month	ULT, DEC, etc.
Little by little	ERIC
Magistrate	RM, DI
Manage	RUN
Me and you	US
Mischievous	IMP
Mother	MA
Money (little)	CENT
Melody, tune	AIR
Most	EST (superlative)
Maid(en)	MISS
Nervousness	TIC
New York	NY
Newt	EFT
North	N, NI (Northern Ireland)
Nothing left	RIGHT
Nothing but	ALL
Number one	NOI
Nag, horse	GG
Noon	AMENDS (am ends)
Not new	USED
Orient, East	E
Old man	DA, DAD, PA
Old penny	D
Old shilling	S
Bob	I
One	EBB
On the way out	FAT
Overweight	
Professional	PRO
Poetry (not the)	VERSE, ODE
Principle	AGENT
Pale, Pallid	ASH

People	MEN
Pest	RAT
Piano, Soft	P
Police	CID
(old) Police	RIC
Polish	RUB
Pound	L, LB
Priest	PP, REV
Pub, Hotel	INN
Quid	L
Quote	CITE
Queue	Q
Reference	RE
Relative	AUNT, NIECE
Loud	RD
Road	RD
Roman	LATIN
Ronald	RON
Ruddy	RED
Russell, George	AE
Sailor, Seaman	AB, TAR
Saint	ST
Saints	SS
See, Sea	C
Six, half a dozen	VI
Shelter	LEE
Ship	SS
Soft, Piano	P
(very) Soft	PP
Sick	ILL
South	S
South East	SE
South Africa	SA
Speed	RATE
Street	ST
Stomach	TUM
Side	TEAM, ELEVEN
Spoil	MAR
Stupid	ASS
Twister	EELS
Teething	DRIVER (tee thing)
Time is fast	LENT
Tea	T
Tecottaller	TT
Ten	X, 10
Thanks	TA
Thousand, Grand	M
Thus	SO
Teddy	ED, TED, NED
Tune, melody	AIR
That is (to say)	IE
Twenty	SCORE
Ulster	NI

Viva voce	ORAL
Very	EST (superlative)
Well (they are not) (as you) Were	AIL, ILL
West	STET
Wine	W
Writer	PORT
Work	PEN
	OP
X	TEN, 10
You and me	US, WE
Yours and mine	OURS
Common synonyms used in Crosaire	
Anger — IRE. Bet — WAGER. Check — REIN. Fair — BLONDE. Fool — ASS. Fury — ANGER. Holiday — LEAVE. Inactive — PASSIVE. In debt — OWE. Invoice — BILL. Irritation — ITCH. Letters — MAIL, POST. Listener — EAR. Pain — ACHE. Peel — RIND. Phone — RING. Pitch — TAR. Poet — BARD. Poetry — VERSE, ODE. Possess — OWN. Profit — GAIN. Rug — MAT. Rush — REED. Saucepan — POT. Serious — GRAVE. Speed — RATE. Spoil — MAR. Swarm — TEEM.	
Common homophones in Crosaire	
ALE — AIL. ARE — R. BEAR — BARE. BOARD — BORED. CAUSE — CAWS. GAUL — GALL. HIGH — HI. HORSE — HOARSE. HOURS — OURS. I — EYE. LACKS — LAX. MAID — MADE. MAIL — MALE. MORNING — MOURNING. NEW — KNEW. NO — KNOW. NOSE — KNOWS. OR — R. OWE — OH — O. PAIL — PALE. PLACE — PLAICE. PLAIN — PLANE. PRAYS — PRAISE. RAIN — REIGN. SENT — SCENT. SEE — SEA — C. SEED — CEDE. SO — SEW. SOW. TO — TOO — TWO. WOULD — WOOD. YOU — U — EWE.	