

Clues

My clues are tough but follow the normal cryptic clue rules. You can find some good definitions of how cryptic clues work here: <http://solving-cryptics.com/> or here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cryptic_crosswordHome_Page

The important things to remember for my puzzles are:

1. My clues will always have 2 parts, a **definition** part and a **word play** part and the definition part will always be at the beginning or the end, never in the middle
2. **Look at the words not the sentence - and especially not at the punctuation.**
3. Every word has a purpose, even the humble 'a' is always required as part of the wordplay and **my clues will never have any superfluous words in them.**

For example:

1. For the clue "*Range Rover tops Buick in some odd nuances*", the definition part of the clue is "*Range Rover*" and the answer is "BISON", which is made up of the top or first letters of Buick in some odd nuances. So the answer has absolutely nothing to do with cars and you are not looking for anything that is 'odd' - so **look at the words and not the sentence.** Also note that there are **no superfluous words** - the word 'in' is just as important as the rest.
2. For the clue "*Illegally, don't follow, suit Rene for example, inside*", the definition part of the clue is "*Illegally don't follow suit*" and the answer is "RENEGE" (e.g. inside rene). So again the answer has nothing to do with providing something that would 'suit' a person called Rene; punctuation must be ignored; and again, **every word matters!**

Mystery Entries or other 'tricks'

It is important to realize that there will always be a **symmetry or logic** about how Mystery Entries are to be included in the grid. They will always begin and/or end at the start or end of a row or column or corner; or be centered in a row or column; and in most cases they will be 11 characters long and therefore take up an entire row or column.

Similarly if changes are to be made to a word, or more than one letter is to be put into a square, then again there will always be logic as to where those changes occur (e.g. in all four corners, etc.).

Finally, make sure you **read the instructions properly** and also **look at the puzzle title.** This title will always be related somehow to the 'tricks' and/or mystery entries and/or words made up of the missing letters.

How to get started

Looking at a completely blank grid can be off-putting but here are some tips for starting to fill that grid up. You'll need to have solved about a third of the clues first before you should start to consider how they fit into the grid. Just write the answers in the columns beside the clues.

So:

- 1), If you have solved the first across and first down clue, then you can start in the top left corner. Similarly if you have solved the last across and last down clues then you can start in the bottom right

corner - Remember the clues are always in the order of how the answers are to be entered in the grid.

For example, if the last across answer word is "**repent**" and the last down answer word is "**column**" then clearly the "**t**" of "**repent**" is one of the missing letters and you can fill in the grid thus:

										c
										co
										ol
										lu
										um
						R	E	P	E	N

Note that "**column**" might also have a letter missing so put both letter options in the other squares for the time being, in pencil of course!

Note also that as "**repent**" has already 'lost' the "**t**", it can't lose any other letters - so those other letters can be put in in ink!

2). You can also look for little used letters like J, Q, X, Y, Z, etc., If you see one of these in both an across and a down answer word then there is a good chance it is an intersection point.

Then, because the clues are in the correct order, you can figure out where that intersection point might be. For example, if the third last across answer word has a "Y" in it then that "Y" is probably in somewhere in row 10. If there is also a "Y" in the seventh or eighth down answer word, then that "Y" is probably in the bottom half of column 3 or high up in column 4. So try putting the "Y" in row 10, column 3 and work from there.

For example, if you have determined that the **second** down answer word is "**temperature**" and that the **fifth** across answer word is "**attune**" then maybe the "**u**" in each is an intersecting point. You can then use the relative placing of the words to figure out that the "**u**" would likely be in row 3, column 2 and so you could enter the following:

	ra									
	at								a	at
tt	U	ne	e							
	re									
	e									
t										c
te										co
em										ol
mp										lu
pe										um
er						R	E	P	E	N

Note that as there is a double "t" in "attune", then the letter in the square before the "u" has to be a "t" regardless of whether a letter is missing or not. This in turn implies that the first down answer word is 5, 6 or 7 letters long with a "t" in it.

Then if you have also determined that the fifth last across answer word is "unpack" then the "p" in that could intersect with the "p" of "temperature" in row 10, column 1 - Giving the following:

	ra								
	at							a	at
T	U	ne	e						
	re								
	e								
t									c
te									co
em									ol
mp								u	un
P	ac	ck	k						um
er						R	E	P	E N

This tells you that the answer "temperature" is missing one letter from the letters between the "p" and the "u". This in turn tells you that the other letters of "temperature" must be correct (as an answer word can only be missing one letter) and can be entered in the grid accordingly.

Similarly, the "u" of "unpack" now lines up with the "u" of "column" - meaning that the "m" of "column" is also correct but that the "n" of "unpack" is missing - and so the remaining letters of this word can now be entered properly:

	ra								
	at							a	at
T	U	ne	e						
	R								
	E								
									c
T									co
E									ol
M									U
P	A	C	K						M
er						R	E	P	E N

So now you know that either the second or third last across answer has an "me" or "mr" in it but as "mr" is an impossible combination, then it has to be "me".

And so on!

3). Finally, another way to get started is if you have 4 or more consecutive across (or down) answer words, then you can write them out in eleven character blocks and look for how some down (or across) answers might intersect.

For example: If you have the following five consecutive across answers "**neon**", "**onion**", "**introducing**", "**petal**" and "**trip**" then write them on a scrap of paper as follows:

N E O N , O N I O N , I N
 T R O D U C I N G , P E
 T A L , T R I P

Then if one of your down answers is "**soup**" then that word could intersect as follows:

N E O N , **O** N I O N , I N
 T R O D **U** C I N G , P E
 T A L , T R I **P**

In this case, there will be no letters missing between the first "**o**" of "**onion**" and the "**u**" of "**introducing**" but there are two letters missing from two of: the last 4 letters of "**introducing**", the word "**petal**", and the first 3 letters of "**trip**"

So if the clue for "**soup**" is around the middle of the down clues and "**onion**" is the answer to the fourth across clue, then you can confidentially enter the following information into the grid:

					s					
	n	ne	eo	on	O	N	I	O	N	I
N	T	R	O	D	U	ci	in	ng	g	
		t	tr	ri	P					

Enjoy!