

David Tossman's Cryptic Cheat Sheet

Abbreviations

Abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms come from usages in e.g. maps, dictionaries, txt, sports results, classified ads and suchlike with which colvers are likely to be familiar. These are some of the most typical and will give you a start with the general idea of many cryptic clues.

A

A French	UN
Aboard	S (something) S
About	RE, C or containment indicator
Abstainer	TT
Afternoon	PM
Albert, Alberta	AL
Alias	AKA
Alien	ET
Alpha	A
Aluminium	AL
American Lawyer	DA
And French	ET
And Italian	E
And Spanish	Y
Approximately	C (circa)
Around	RE, C or containment indicator
Article	A, AN, THE
Asian	E
At Home	IN
Attorney	DA

B

Bachelor	B
Bald Head	B
Barium	B
Batsman	B
Batting	IN
Beginning(s)	Initial(s) of adjacent words
Belgium	B
Bend	U
Bespectacled	A word beginning and ending in O
Big Number	C, D, M (Roman numerals)
Big top	B
Bill	AC (account)
Bishop	B (Chess) RR (Right Rev)
Black	B
Blockhead	B
Book	(Any book of the Bible, eg GEN, EXOD, LEV, JOB, MATT, ROM, EPH, TIM, COR), OT (Old Testament), NT (New Testament)
Bowled	B

Bravo	B
Bridge Partner	N, E, W, S
Britain, British	B, UK
Business	CO

C

Cabinet maker	PM (Prime Minister)
Can opener	C
Carbon	C
Cardinal	N, E, W, OR S
Caught	C (Cricket)
Centre	C
Centre/Central	The middle letter(s) of an adjacent word, eg Central Park = AR
Champion	ACE
Charged particle	ION
Charlie	C
Church	C, CE, RC
Close-up	CU
Commentary	VO
Conservative	NAT
Copper	CU
Cricketers	XI
Cuba	C

D

Daughter	D
Day	D, M, MON, T, TUE, W, WED, and so on
Detective	D, DI, DS, PI
Distance	K, M, IN(CH), MM
Doctor	DR, MO, MD, MB
Draft	MS
Duck	O (Cricket)

E

Early Start	E
East	E
Egg	O
Egghead	E
Eleven	XI
End (Of)	The last letter of the following word
End of May	Y
England, English	E

Era	AD, BC, AGE
Erstwhile	EX
Evening	PM
Eye Opener	E
F	
Fashionable	IN
Fifty	L
Firm	CO, BUS, HARD
First (of)	The first letter of the following word
First born	B
First Class	AI
First of April	A
Five	V
Flourine	F
Flower	R (River – it flows)
Footballers	RU, FA
Force	G (Gravity)
Former lover/spouse	EX
Fraud	CON
Frenchman	M
G	
General	G
German(y)	G, D
Gold	OR (Heraldry), AU (Chemistry)
Good Person	ST
Graduate	BA
Grand	G
Gravity	G
H	
Head	NESS (or initial of adjacent word)
Henry	H
Hesitation	ER, UM
Horse	GG
Hospital, Hotel	H
Hundred	C (Roman numeral)
I	
Icy (I hear)	IC
In	perhaps container indicator
Initially	The first letter of adjacent word
International	I
Iodine	I (Chemistry)
Italian and	E
J	
Japan	J

Joule	J
June	J
Justice	J
Journalist	ED
Just	FAIR
K	
Know	KEN
Kansas	KS
Karate Expert	DAN
Kilo	K
Kiss	X
Known as	AKA
L	
Last	The last letter of the following word
Late	D (Dead)
Latin	L, LAT
Lag	CON
Lately	EX
Lead	PB
Leader writer	ED
Like	AS
Little time	S, MO
Loud	F (forte)
Love	O (Tennis)
M	
Managing	IC
Manuscript	MS
Many	C, D, M (Roman numerals)
Matelot	TAR
Medico	DR, MO, MD, MB
Member	LEG, ARM
Member or Politician	MP
Mercury	HG
Metal	FE, AL, SN, CU
Midday	M
Model	T (as in Ford) POSE
Morning	AM
Mother	DAM, MA, MUM
N	
Narration	VO
Noisy	F (FORTE)
Noon	M
Note	NB, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, DO, DOH, RE, ME, MI, FA, , SO, SOH, LA, TE, TI
Number	I, V, X, L (Roman numerals)

O

Old copper	D
Old town (city)	UR
One	I, A, AN
Organisation	UN
Orient(al)	E

P

Pages	PP
Parking	P
Particle	ION
Party	DO
Peacekeepers	UN
Performing	ON
Phosphorus	P
Point	N, E, W, S
Pole	N, S
Positive response	Y
Post-graduate	MA
Pound	L, LB
Power	AC
Previously	EX
Prisoner	CON
Provided	IF

Q

Quack	DR, MO, MD, MB
Queen	ER
Quiet	P (piano)

R

Railway (lines)	RY
Ratio	PI
Ray	X (Ray)
Religious	PI, NUN
River	R
Rotten	OFF

S

Sailor	AB, TAR, JACK, SALT
Salt	TAR, AB, JACK (sailor)
Saturday/Sunday	S
Scotsman	IAN, MAC, MC
Script	MS
Seaman	AB, ABS, TAR
Second	S
Second rate, class	B
Ship	SS
Side	L or R
Silver	AG (Chemistry)
Small Distance	MM
Social Function	DO
Social Worker	ANT, BEE
Society	S

Sodium
Some French
Song
State

NA
DES
AIR, ARIA
CA, NY, MO, MA, AL, any
other of the Australian or
United states
CON, DEN, READ
ST
OFF, ON

Study
Street
Switch Position

T

Team	XV, XI
Teetotaler	TT
Ten	X
Thanks	TA
The French	LA, LE, LES
The German	DIE, DAS, DER
The Italian	IL
The Maori	TE
The Spanish	EL
Thousand	M, K
Thousand Dollars	G
Tin	CAN, SN
Ton	C (hundred)
Tory	CON, NAT
Trendy	IN
Trickster	CON
Turn	U (or reversal indicator)

U

Union, University	U
Unknown	X, Y
Unpaid	HON
US City	LA, NY, SF
Used to be	EX

V

Very Loud	FF (forte)
Very Quiet	PP (piano)
Vessel	SHIP, MUG, CUP
Vitamin	A, B, C, D, E,

W

Way	RD, ST, AV, AVE
When	AS
Work	OP (music)
Working	ON
Worker	ANT, BEE
Wowser	TT

Y

Yes	Y
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Note also:

Directions	LEFT (L), RIGHT (R), NORTH (N), SOUTH (S), EAST (E), WEST (W).
Grades	GOOD (G), EXCELLENT (E), SATISFACTORY (S), FIRST-CLASS (A), SECOND-RATE (B), AVERAGE (C), POOR (D), FAILING OR FAIL (F)
Cards	ACE (A), KING (K), QUEEN (Q), JACK (J)
Roman Numerals	ONE (I), FIVE (V), TEN (X), FIFTY (L), HUNDRED (C), FIVE HUNDRED (D), THOUSAND (M)
Geography	LAKE (L), SEA (S), RIVER (R)
Weights & Measures	PINT (P), QUART (Q), METRE (M), CUBIC CENTIMETRE (CC), MILLIMETRE (MM), HEIGHT/HIGH (H), WIDTH/WIDE (W), LENGTH/LONG (L)
Times & Dates	TIME (T), YEAR (Y), DAY (D), MINUTE (M), SECOND (S), MONDAY (M), TUESDAY (T), WEDNESDAY (W), THURSDAY (T), FRIDAY (F), SATURDAY (S), SUNDAY (S)
Politics	GREEN (G), LABOUR (L), LIBERAL (L), NATIONAL (N), DEMOCRAT (D), REPUBLICAN (R)
Shapes	CIRCLE, BALL, RING, BAGEL, WREATH (O), HOOK (J), SPECS (OO)
Rainbow Colours	RED (R), ORANGE (O), YELLOW (Y), GREEN (G), BLUE (B), INDIGO (I), VIOLET (V)
Greek alphabet	ALPHA BETA GAMMA DELTA ... OMEGA.
Nato Spoken alphabet	ALPHA BRAVO CHARLIE DELTA ECHO FOXTROT GOLF HOTEL ... YANKEE ZULU

Anagram indicators

Tenses and parts of speech vary, eg deviant, deviated, deviates, deviating, deviation, deviously.

A	B			
aberrant	badly	contorted	disarray	entangled
abnormal	battered	convert	disaster	erratic
abnormally	becomes	cook	discordance	erroneous
about	bent	correction	disguise	eruption
absurd	bewildered	corrupted	disintegrated	exceptional
accident	bizarre	could be	dislocate	excited
accommodated	blunder	crash	dismantled	explosion
accidental	botched	crazy	disorder	
adapt	breaking	crooked	disorganise	
addle	brewed	crude	disperse	F
adrift	broadcast	crumbling	disposed	fabricate
adjusted	broken	crush	disruption	failure
afresh	buckles	cunning	dissembling	falsified
after a fashion	building	curious	dissipated	faltering
agitated	bungled		distortion	fanciful
alter	by accident	D	distracted	fashioned
altered		damage	distributed	faulty
all wrong		dancing	disturb	fiddle
alternatively	C	dealt with	divergent	fixed
amiss	calamitously	deception	divert	flawed
anew	can be	decomposed	doctor	flounder
anyhow	catastrophically	defective	dotty	flummoxed
assembly	cavorted	deformed	dreadful	foolish
askew	changed	demented	dreadfully	for a change
astray	chaotically	deplorably	dressed	forged
at sea	characters	deployed	drunken	form of
at sixes and sevens	chopped up	deranged	dubiously	fractured
at odds	clumsy	derivative		fragments
awful	cocktail	design	E	freakish
awfully	collapse	devastated	eccentric	free
at variance	comical	developed	effected	frenzied
awkwardly	complicated	deviant	emend	fresh
awry	components	deviously	emended	frisky
awkward	composed	dicky	engendering	frolic
	concoction	different	engineered	from
	confuse	difficult	ensemble	fudge
				funny

G

garbled
gets
gives
go off
go to pot
go to the dogs
go wrong
goes
grotesque
gyrate
gyrates

H

haphazard
havoc
haywire
higgledy-piggledy
horribly

I

idly
ill-disposed
impaired
imperfect
improper
in a bad way
in a tizzy
in confusion
in disguise
in other words
in ruins
incorrect
ingredients
inordinately
insane
intricate
involved

J

jerky
juggled
jumble

K

kind of
kinky
knotted

L

lawless
let loose
letters of

liquid
loosely
lousily
lousy
ludicrous
lunatic

M

mad
make a bungle of
makes
maladroit
maltreated
managed
mangled
manifestation
manipulated
marred
mashed
mauled
maybe
mayhem
meandering
medley
mended
mercurial
messed
metamorphosis
mince
mingled
miserable
mishandled
mishap
mistake
mix
mobile
model
modified
molested
mongrel
moulded
moving
muddled
mutative
mutilated
mysterious

N

nasty
naughty
negotiation
new
new style
newly formed
newly made
not exactly

not straight
novel

O

obscure
obstreperous
occasion
odd
off
operate
order
organisation
originally
otherwise
out
over

P

peculiar
perhaps
perverse
perverted
phoney
pie
placed
plagued
plastic
poor
possibly
potentially
prepared
problematic
processing
production
pulverised
put another way
put straight

Q

queer
questionable

R

rabid
ragged
rambling
ran amok
readjusted
rearrange
rearranged
rebel
rebellious
rebuilding
recast

recreate
rectified
refined
reformation
reformed
refractory
regenerate
regulation
remade
rendering
rendition
renovated
re-ordered
repack
repair
replacement
reproduced
reshaped
reshuffle
resolved
resort
reveal
revolting
revolutionary
revolution
rewrite
rickety
ridiculous
rigged
riot
rocky
roving
rude
ruffled
ruin
rum

S

sadly
scramble
set
set out
shaken
shaped
shattered
shift
shuffle
shuffled
silly
slipping
slipshod
sloppy
slovenly
smash
somehow
sorry
sort

spoil
spoilt
sport
sporting
spurious
stew
stir
strange
stumbling
stupid
surprising
swirled
switches

T

tampered with
tangled
tattered
tattered
temper
tempestuous
tentatively
terribly
thrown
tip
tipsy
to pot
torn
tortuous
toss
transformed
translate
translated
transport
treacherous
treated
tricky
troubled
troublesome
tumultuous
turbulent
turn
turned
twist
twisting

U

uncertain
unclear
uncommon
undecided
undisciplined
undone
uneasy
unfamiliar
unhappy
unnatural

unorthodox
 unravelled
 unreliable
 unrest
 unsound
 unstable
 untidy
 unusual
 upheaval
 upset
 used

V

vacillating
 vandalise
 variable
 vary
 violent
 volatile

W

wandering
 warp
 way out
 wayward
 weird
 well-varied
 went off
 wild
 woolly
 work out
 works
 worried
 woven
 wrecked
 wrong

Charade indicators

after
 approaches
 before
 central
 follows
 gets
 going after
 heart of
 joining
 needs
 on
 preceding
 provides
 providing
 under
 with

Container indicators

admitting
 around
 boxing
 bridging
 catching
 circling
 clutching
 contains
 embraces
 encloses
 enfolding
 envelopes
 enveloping
 holds
 importing
 in
 outside
 ringing
 round
 surrounding
 wraps

Deletion indicators

abstracted
 decapitate
 docked
 don't end
 don't start
 endlessly
 headless
 heartlessly
 losing head
 minus
 removing
 topless
 without

Homophone indicators

heard
 it's reported
 orally
 it's said
 reportedly
 say
 sounds
 sounds like
 to the audience
 to the listener
 vocally
 we hear

Hidden word indicators

A bit of
 contains
 demonstrates
 from
 held by
 hiding
 holds
 in
 inside (which)
 insider
 reveals
 some (of)

Reversal indicators

backing
 coming up
 flipping
 go(ing) back
 over
 raised
 returns
 rising
 turned
 turned up
 turns
 up
 written up