

HOW DO YOU SOLVE CRYPTIC CROSSWORD CLUES?

A cryptic crossword clue has two distinct parts, in either order:

WORDPLAY | DEFINITION

DEFINITION | WORDPLAY

What kind of wordplay? Only what the clue clearly tells you to do ... even if it isn't clear when you first read it. Any kind of fair wordplay is on the table; the following examples show the most common kinds.

Classy lady | **made** bananas (4)

MADE
DAME

▶ **ANAGRAM** Look for words indicating motion or disorder

Numbers in parentheses are how long the word is — commas indicate **TWO WORDS** (3,5) like so.

Caused to be **endlessly** | **upset** (3)

MADE
MAD

▶ **DELETION** Look for words indicating loss or abridgment

Composed bit of dialogue for **French girl** (8)

MADE + LINE
MADELINE

▶ **CHARADE** Build an answer out of synonyms and other bits and pieces

Created | **commercial** **plugging me** (4)

AD ME
M(AD)E

▶ **CONTAINER** Look for words indicating covering or inserting

Flipped **processed** | **cheese** (4)

MADE
EDAM

▶ **REVERSAL** Look for words indicating turning or rising

Housekeeper | **appointed by phone** (4)

“MADE”
MAID

▶ **HOMOPHONE** Look for words indicating speaking or hearing

Forced | **some comma deletion** (4)

MADE

▶ **HIDDEN** Look for words indicating an inner, partial or connected nature

Made | **like cheese that went bad** (6)

MOLDED

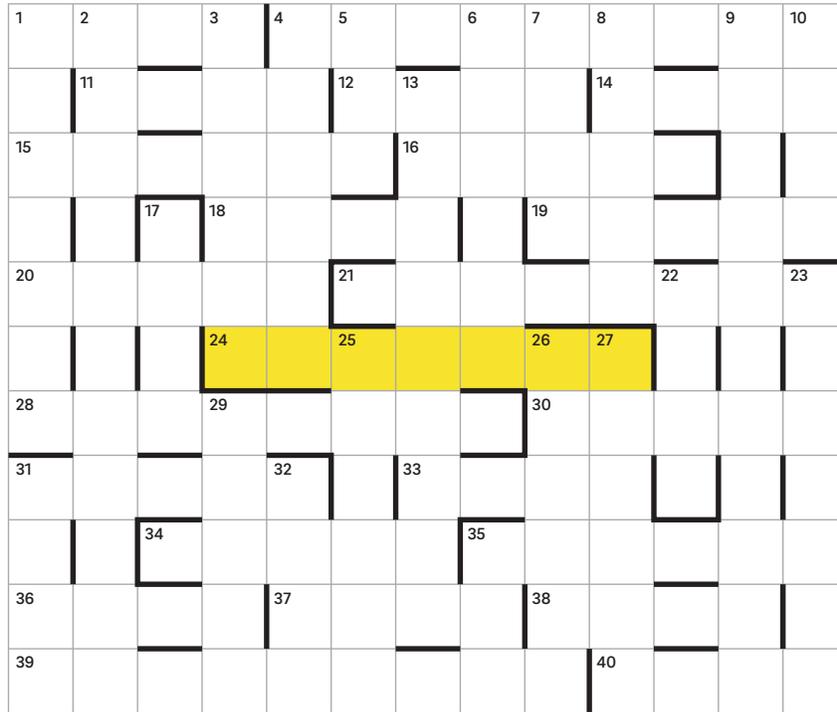
▶ **DOUBLE DEFINITION** No wordplay; just two meanings for one word

- The “surface” reading of a clue is intended to mislead. Deceptive capitalization? Odd punctuation? Yes and yes.
- Clues may have multiple kinds of wordplay. Keep an eye out for small pieces of wordplay within clues, such as “first in line” for L or “heart of stone” for O, and for common figures of speech, such as “carbon” for C, “Hawaii” for HI, or “five” for V.
- A question mark often warns the solver of an incoming pun.
- An exclamation point at the end may mean the clue is both 100% wordplay and 100% definition. This is called an **&LIT**, as in “and literally so.” For instance, “Horribly vile!” (4) is 100% a definition for EVIL, but also 100% wordplay instructions to treat V-I-L-E horribly — the “disorder” sense of anagrams.



Cryptics are trying to trick you, but fairly: When you get the answer, you'll see how the whole clue leads you there. Visit therackenfracker.com/start-here for more solving guides and beginner puzzles. **One last recommendation — bring a friend! Two minds are better than one.**

Song of the Summer



The return of Summerfest, the “world’s largest music festival” held in Milwaukee, got us thinking about music fans’ annual debate about the song of the summer. We think there’s a tune from one of 2022’s Summerfest acts that is uniquely qualified to be the all-time titleholder: That’s the shaded entry at 24-Across. The entry must be deduced by crossing letters, as must five other theme entries in the puzzle. Once you’ve determined our pick (and its qualifications), you’ll know how to transform those five entries into a final answer. The final answer won’t tell you the name of the act, but it will give you their opening number. The five theme entries include a hyphenated word, a person’s name, and two two-word phrases.

ACROSS

- 1. Fact: Wisconsin is one (almost) (4)
- 4. Can be real foolish to get even ... again (9)
- 11. Some Shakespearean line (4)
- 12. Advertisement editing out restricted term for Frank Gehry’s architecture? (4)
- 14. Brag of location of seats three back from the stage? (4)
- 15. Region of Europe not including capital of Sweden! (6)

- 16. Sister via text: “Easy! That’s Oscar from *The Office*” (5)
- 18. Wisconsin psychopath disappearing in skirt (4)
- 19. *See instructions*
- 20. Retreats east like an idiot (5)
- 21. Be awfully sober, nursing last drop of Molson, with someone ragging on you for drinking a macrobrew? (4,4)
- 24. *See instructions*
- 28. *See instructions*
- 30. Settling into North Dakota, pregnancy doc and I like some competition-free contracts (2-3)
- 31. Before *Monk* (5)
- 33. Laugh at Louis, a mediocre comic (4)
- 34. Dotty swallowing last of PBR from the tap (5)
- 35. Races horses around, captivating a Roman emperor (6)
- 36. Slash opening for Bowie – it might be better with Kiss? (4)
- 37. “Hello there!”: What Miss Piggy might say when hitting on you? (4)
- 38. It’s fundamental to integrity! (4)
- 39. *See instructions*
- 40. Aim at Tennessee/Kentucky bridge (4)

DOWN

- 1. Dishing spoiled clambake (7)

- 2. Ideal setup for a date: Change of footwear, BLT (5,3,3)
- 3. According to new arrangement, reset Mother (6)
- 4. Pirated Taylor Swift album includes “Help!” (6)
- 5. Back-up copy for author of emissions reports (3, init.)
- 6. “Good Luck Charm,” “The Best,” “Beast of Burden,” “Crossroads” (6)
- 7. Tall pine (4)
- 8. Scare off those who get straight As? (5)
- 9. Concentrate on diet colas in error (11)
- 10. Said to employ females who only get haircuts once a year? (4)
- 13. *See instructions*
- 17. All about Macintosh component (4)
- 22. Captures North America? Poppycock (4)
- 23. *See instructions*
- 25. If I may be found during mo. of Christmas, like Jesus? (6)
- 26. Free time after school in Chapel Hill (6)
- 27. Pre-K so involved with some sticks (6)
- 29. Something flying in your ear is more painful (5)
- 31. Academic written up for parking (4)
- 32. What cheerleaders specialize in: rash dancing (4)
- 35. Case for muffler falls off vehicle (3)

