

# Cryptic Classroom #3: Hidden Words

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**T**he purpose of this column is to help the fledgling solver recognize, understand, and master the wordplay found in cryptic crossword clues. Here, you will solve cryptic clues via straightforward lessons and examples broken down from the constructor's perspective. You'll also get an inside peek at clue writing, and opportunities to practice solving clues, all focusing on one type of cryptic clue per issue. In this third installment, I will discuss one of my favorite kinds of cryptic clues: hidden words. But first, let's recall some basic pointers for solving any type of cryptic clue:

1. Cryptic clues are part literal, and part wordplay. Each part on its own adequately represents the answer.
2. The literal and wordplay segments, when combined effectively, appear to have surface meaning.
3. It's up to the solver to determine the dividing point between the literal and wordplay parts.
4. Sometimes the literal part is at the beginning of the clue, and sometimes the wordplay comes first.
5. Punctuation or capitalization can usually be ignored.
6. The length of the answer (shown in parentheses) is sometimes a helpful hint as to what type of wordplay is being used.
7. Some clues include an indicator word that suggests the type of wordplay being used.

I love solving hidden word clues because the solution is in plain sight the entire time. The answer is simply spelled out in the wordplay portion of the clue, often broken up over two

or more words. For example, it is possible to find GAMES in "encoding a message" (encodinG A MESsage).

You can also expect the wordplay and literal portions to be connected by an indicator word. The indicator word suggests the answer is contained within another group of words; some examples are "conceals," "holds," and "hides." If we were to further develop a cryptic clue for GAMES, we would need a literal clue, like "puzzle magazine," and an indicator word (or in this case, two less obvious indicator words) that bridges the literal and wordplay segments in a meaningful way. "Puzzle magazine essential to encoding a message (5)" does the trick.

Here are two more examples of hidden word clues:

- Bedbug, for one, infests tapestry (4)  
Deep iceberg holds a great story (4)

The answer to the first clue is PEST. The literal portion of the clue is, "Bedbug, for one." The wordplay includes the indicator word, "infests." This indicator word tips the solver to look inside the word "tapestry" for the answer.

See if you can find a four-letter word hidden in the second clue. The literal portion of this clue, "a great story," comes after the wordplay. The indicator word is "holds." The solution, EPIC, is held inside "deEP ICEberg." As always, the length of the answer (given in parentheses) is useful as you search for the hidden words.

Give this puzzle a try. Every clue is a hidden word. And don't forget to join us on Facebook at Games Magazine Enthusiasts! Cryptic crosswords are a regular topic of discussion there.

## ACROSS

1. Arab's tract seems full of intangible ideas (9)
6. Metal lodged in painting (3)
7. Evangelist boarding the Mystery Machine, e.g. (3)
8. Heavy metal, for example, discovered in nitrogen recently (5)
9. Permits kept in book safe (3)
10. Epitaph etched in triptych (3)
12. Lemur always produces wall art (5)
14. Teachings reveal life energy (3)
15. Jerry taking misstep (3)
16. Sombre hearse drove, yielded, went over lines (9)

## DOWN

1. Cartoon features *Star Wars* droid (5)
2. Pressures on G. Smithers to produce musician (9)
3. Wry animation features actor Reynolds (4)
4. Havoc over lessons envelops nude (9)
5. Male offspring captured by prisoner (3)
11. Spare date got peeled (5)
13. Indian melody from "Over Again" (4)
14. Mongrel consumed by scurvy (3)

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