

Codeword Cryptics

ANSWER: SALVATION

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This puzzle is a combination of two different crossword styles which are hinted at by the title. On the first page is a “codeword crossword” which instead of giving you clues, uses numbers in the crossword grid which each correspond to a specific letter. On the second page are a list of “cryptic crossword” phrases. Here’s a link to a guide breaking down how cryptic clues work and some tips on solving them: <https://www.dummies.com/games/crossword-puzzles/solving-cryptic-crosswords-for-dummies-cheat-sheet-australian-edition/>.

The flavor text gives you some conditions that are helpful in working through the codeword section. Basically, every single one of the words appears in Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, and no abbreviations or proper nouns are used. The word “siX” tells you that the number “6” in the codeword crossword corresponds to the letter “X”. There are a few different methods for figuring out the rest the number-letter pairs. Here’s a first step that can be extremely helpful:

You know that 6-9-37-9-69 is a word that goes X _ _ _ X, with the same letter in the second and fourth position. Using OneLook, you can find that the only word that fits these criteria within Merriam Webster’s Dictionary is:

XEBEC (a small three-masted Mediterranean ship with square sails)

Now that you have three more letter-number pairs, you just have to keep using a combination of logic and OneLook to fill in the rest of the crossword. An alternate approach that is very effective (credit to Yannick Yao for thinking of this) is to match the relative frequencies that the numbers occur to the frequencies that specific letters are used in the English language. For example, “E” is the most common letter, and its corresponding number “9” also happens to appear the most times out of any number in the crossword. Here’s the solution that you should eventually get:

	O	A	R			F	E	Z		F	U	I	L	
O	P	P	O		T	O	M	E		O	S	M	I	A
F	I	N	D	T	H	E	M	I		X	E	B	E	C
A	N	E		W	I	S	E	N	T			R	U	E
Y	E	A		O	R		T		O	L	I	O		
			A	S	S			S	S	I	N	G	N	
S	P	A	M		T	A	M	O		P	H	L	O	X
Y	E	S	O			R	A	J			A	I	N	I
S	L	Y	E	R		I	K	A	T		L	O	O	S
	U	M	B	E	R	I			A	G	E			
		P	A	D	I		A		R	E		E	R	S
P	A	T			M	A	R	G	I	N		N	E	T
E	V	O	K	E		N	S	E	Q	U	E	N	C	E
W	I	T	A	N		B	O	N	A		B	U	O	Y
	D	E	E	D		A	N	T			B	I	N	

You'll notice that instead of spelling an individual word, the green boxes, once you put them together, actually give you the phrase:

FIND THE MISSING NUMBER IN SEQUENCE

This clue leads directly into the cryptic section of the puzzle. Each of the cryptic clues has a corresponding list of letters with one letter missing. Once you use the letter-number pairs from the codeword section to substitute in numbers, you get famous sequences that occur in the real world. Your goal is to find the number that is missing. By solving the cryptic clues, you should be able to figure out the sequence. Here's an explanation of the solutions:

For the first cryptic clue:

A rabble of vitae presenters, they write laws.

7 , 1 , _ , 4 , 53 , 7

The first part is the cryptic part and the second part is the normal crossword clue. "Rabble" clues off disorder and the fact that some letters need to be rearranged. If you anagram "vitae presenters," and keep in mind the phrase "they write laws," you get the answer:

REPRESENTATIVES

The number sequence is the number of house seats that the first alphabetical states have. The missing number is Arizona's seats:

9

For the second cryptic clue:

All a board? 'Yes it is' a side.

1 , 2 , 4 , _ , 10

The first part is the normal crossword clue and the second part is the cryptic clue. The strange spelling of "All a board" clues that this is referencing both trains and board games. For the cryptic part, if you look up the A-side of The Beatles' song "Yes it is," you get the answer:

TICKET TO RIDE

The number sequence is scoring schematic of the Ticket to Ride board game, giving you the missing number:

7

For the third cryptic clue:

From Clark to Wilson, before collecting taxes in Rome, Spooner permanently lived there.

21 , 25 , 29 , 53 , 57 , 69 , 73 , _

The first part is the normal crossword clue and the second part is the cryptic clue. The cryptic part involves stitching a bunch of phrases together. “Before” gives you “pre”, a “Roman tax collector” was called a “Publican”, and “permanently lived there” gives you resident. Together this gives you:

PREPUBLICAN RESIDENTS

“Spooner” references William Archibald Spooner, a prolific Oxford don, ordained minister, and mentor to Edward Musgrove Strange. He was also famous for mixing up consonants, vowels, and morphemes in words. This clues off that you need to switch the words to:

REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTS

“Clark” and “Wilson” are the middle names of Herbert Hoover and Ronald Reagan, which further confirms this answer. The number sequence is a list of the years in which Republican Presidents were inaugurated, beginning with Hoover and ending with Reagan. This gives you the missing number:

81

For the fourth cryptic clue:

All set at Sret Night Motel, back on our trip.

27 , 29 , 30 , 35 , _

The first part is the cryptic part and the second part is the normal crossword clue. The word “back” clues that you need to read some of the words backwards to get the answer. Sure enough, “set at Sret Ni” spelled backwards gives you:

INTERSTATES

This is further confirmed by the word “trip” in the normal crossword section. The number sequence is a list of US interstate highways, giving you the missing number:

37

For the fifth cryptic clue:

Beginning my time abroad, I traveled under Columbus.

86 , 79 , 72 , 66 , _

The first part is the cryptic part and the second part is the normal crossword clue. The word “beginning” tells you to take the first letter of the subsequent words, giving you:

MTA

This is the Metropolitan Transportation Authority which runs the NYC subway system. “Traveled under Columbus” also hints at both this and the missing number, since “59th St. Columbus Circle” is a stop on the 1 train. The rest of the sequence are the stations leading up to this stop, which by putting everything together gives you the missing number:

59

For the sixth cryptic clue:

This prison's chapter had an odd pool title arc.

— , 37 , 38 , 30 , 37

The first part is the normal crossword clue and the second part is the cryptic clue. The word “odd” hints that you need to take the odd letters of the subsequent words, giving you:

POTTER

This is a reference to “Harry Potter.” The word “prison” hints you towards “The Prisoner of Azkaban” and “chapter” tells you to look at the number of chapters in the Harry Potter books, which is the number sequence. The number of chapters in “The Prisoner of Azkaban” and the missing number is:

22

For the seventh cryptic clue:

Every program was hiding men as angels.

6 , 10 , 11 , 3 , 1 , 135 , 9 , —

The first part is the normal crossword clue and the second part is the cryptic clue. The word “hiding” tells you to look for hidden words in the clue. If you look at the phrase “men as angels,” you can see that the hidden word is:

NASA

The sequence is the number of missions NASA launched in each of their programs, which is further confirmed by the phrase “every program.” An important note is that the missing number is supposed to be the number of ISS missions. Since this is an ongoing program, the number will change in the future. At the time of the puzzlehunt, this number was:

54

For the eighth cryptic clue:

Even in retirement, they sounded like jerk codes.

1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 5 , 6 , 7 , 8

The first part is the normal crossword clue and the second part is the cryptic clue. The cryptic part is especially tricky, since it involves a double transformation. The word “like” clues that you need to find synonyms for the words “jerk” and “codes” which are:

YANK KEYS

Now the word “sounded” is telling you to read these words together and hear what it sounds like, giving you:

YANKEES

The word “retirement” in the normal crossword section hints that the number sequence is looking at jersey numbers that the Yankees have retired. Since the number “8” was held by both Yogi Berra and Bill Dickey and retired twice, the missing number is actually:

8 (Note that DelFranco was responsible for this cruelty)

Now that you have found all the missing numbers, you need to put them all together to form the new sequence:

9781375922548

If you google this sequence, you will realize that it is the ISBN number of a book by Lewis Sperry Chafer. The title of the book and answer to the puzzle is:

SALVATION