

Cryptic Logic Untangled – #11 Punctuation

Punctuation is generally a red herring, i.e. it adds no real meaning to the clue. It's simply there to make the clue more readable, or to misdirect the solver. However, sometimes it does serve a purpose and this can be hard to spot because the solver is then off their guard.

Just for Cosmetic Purposes:

He gets news about some beer! (8) => about → RE + beer → PORTER => REPORTER
Finished with some bowling? (4) => double definition => OVER

As Rebus-like Units of Meaning:

Having less hair **rubbish** (10) => BALDER + DASH => BALDERDASH
Making settlements: anti-iso **scandal** (12) => COLON + anagram => COLONISATION

Apostrophes:

Woman's officer in charge is very brave (6) => HER + OIC => HEROIC
Nothing sneaky here. This apostrophe is just for possession, translating as "her".
Colonist's dog ate the last lentil (7) => sett/L\er => SETTLER
This one stands for IS (or IS DEFINED BY) to indicate that the word-play is following.
Craft in his core (3) => hEART => ART
This one indicates a dropped H for the cockney pronunciation of HEART as 'ART.

Question Marks – a bit dodgy Often used where a definition is very loose, which is why they're also used for pun clues. Each example here has a definition that's questionable:

Hotel number for your highness? (6) => H + 8 => HEIGHT
Archer on a drinking spree? (6) => BENDER
Has lady visited a grog shop? (7) => she been? => SHEBEEN

Exclamation Marks – often called the &lit clue ("and literally so"). This is where the word-play also serves as part of the definition, i.e. the whole clue is the definition as well as containing a word-play:

Is a bit less **wobbly**! (10) => **Anagram**(isabitless) => STABILISES
Creature in river! (5) => in → HIP + river → PO => HIPPO
Sweet best to **keep** cold! (4-3) => cold → C >>**insert**>> best → CHOICE => CHOC-ICE

Ellipsis – sharing adjacent clue parts:

Ellipsis... between two clues is usually only there to make them read more smoothly. But some setters, like David Astle, can also use it (sometimes) to share a common word:

1. Works hard for pockets, **consuming**... (5,5) => TAKE/spain\S => TAKES PAINS
2. ... nation in aid **from the east** (5) => IN + aid(reversed) => INDIA

The word **nation** is part of both clues but only written in the second. It provides SPAIN to be inserted for #1. It also serves as the definition for INDIA in #2.

Crossword #11 – Punctuation

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
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ACROSS

- Shoes flowing from a 23-across? (5)
- Commerce from car tiff upset... (7)
- ... ironies less quiet (7)
- 9, 1-down** Shuffled rank, hoped for a full house! (5,4)
- Big tan meal stewed is a Persian dish! (4,6)
- Practical as blue bananas? (6)
- { }R worn for archery... (6)
- ... producer called Fletcher (10)
- Amin gets back to half-wit? (5)
- 22, 2-down** This waltz is finer period dancing! (5,2,4)
- Sole piece rattled the pale? (7)
- Poetic inspiration from no-frills aerator? (5)

NB: All clues have punctuation... What it means is up to you.

DOWN

- See 9-across
- See 22-across
- Legal proceedings await lust in tatters? (4,2,3)
- Pin-ups lose heart for palpitations? (6)
- 'is fastener 'as fangs (3)
- False urge echoed elfin tasteless? (4,4)
- Rougher elm sounds like a straightlaced trade? (8)
- Bombing Graces dinky? (9)
- Sea creature's a fin thus swimming! (4,4)
- Thin crack in Cockney's 'airway (8)
- Pope Mo transposes music for punks? (3,3)
- Cheese hamper, so to speak? (4)
- Bouffant, originally African... (4)
- ... king, to express disapproval (3)

