

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

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

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

DOWN

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

