

From bants to zom-com, abacomancy to cromniomancy: what's in a word – or a phrase? The Tablet's omnivorous linguistic performer tests your prowess with all things verbal

**Words of the year 2021**

These words and phrases made it into the *Oxford English Dictionary* this year. What are the following?

- 1. **Kaitakitanga?** a. Japanese martial art. b. South American dance craze. c. Stewardship of the natural resources of a place.
- 2. **Bants?** a. Good-natured raillery. b. Underwear gendered for boys. c. Unit of electronic currency akin to bitcoin.
- 3. **Mukbang?** a. Small deer-like creature from the veldt. b. Video of someone eating large amounts of food while talking. c. Powerful earth-moving machine.
- 4. **Powerbomb?** a. Wrestling manoeuvre. b. Devastating contribution to Twitter. c. Spherical block of fizzy bath salts.
- 5. **Woo-woo?** a. Siren on a police car or ambulance. b. Dating app. c. Insult meaning irrational, outlandish, mystical.
- 6. **Zom-com?** a. Device used to contact one of the most powerful deities in the Marvel universe. b. Open source rival to Zoom. c. A comedy about zombies.
- 7. **Cam?** a. Pet name for beloved former Prime Minister's wife. b. Part of a revolving piece of machinery. c. To video oneself, often as part of one's sex-work.
- 8. **Sousveillance?** a. The state of women who live in a fundamentalist Islamic society. b. Observation or recording of police and other authorities by the public. c. Living in Paris on very little money.
- 9. **Negging?** a. Droning on and on, in Knightsbridge. b. Printing white-on-black, or reversing out. c. Insulting a woman in the hope that inducing low self-esteem will make her more available to you.
- 10. **Deadname?** a. Moniker employed by fans of ancient Californian psychedelic band. b. Simple grave marker. c. The discarded given name of a person who has changed gender.
- 11. **NFT?** a. National Festival of Theft. b. Nonfungible token. c. Not for the Timid.

**Britain on the couch**

Some currently advertised alternative therapies, available near you. What are they?

- 1. EFT; 2. Autogenic training; 3. Bowen therapy; 4. Transcranial magnetic stimulation; 5. Neurofeedback brain training; 6. Apitherapy; 7. Orgonomy; 8. Polarity therapy; 9. Radionics; 10. Pranic healing; 11. Rebirthing; 12. Rolfing; 13. EMDR: Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing therapy; 14. Self-hypnosis; 15. Sonopuncture; 16. Structural integration; 17. Trager approach; 18. Visualisation; 19. Spiritual mind treatment; 20. Water cure.



**Author! Author!**

What do all these works of fiction have in common, and who wrote them?

- 1. The Little Baby Snoogle-Fleejer;
- 2. The Devil's Tune; 3. The Clematis Tree;
- 4. State of Terror; 5. Chasing Men;
- 6. Lothair; 7. No Love for Johnnie;
- 8. Seventy-Two Virgins;
- 9. A Very British Coup; 10. Savrola.

**Famous last words (allegedly)**

According to the infallible wisdom of the internet, who croaked the following, immediately before croaking:

- 1. "Dictionary." 2. "Happy." 3. "Mozart!"
- 4. "Let's have a party!" 5. "I'm losing it."
- 6. "Pardonnez moi, monsieur." 7. "Good. A woman who can fart is not dead." 8. "This dying is boring."
- 9. "Bring me a bullet-proof vest." 10. "I knew it! Born in a hotel room and, goddamn it, dying in a hotel room."
- 11. "This is no way to live!" 12. "Good dog!"
- 13. "I want the world filled with white fluffy duckies." 14. "Damn it! Don't you dare ask God to help me!" 15. "Stopped."

**Things to come**

Here are some methods of divination. What are they?

- 1. Ogham; 2. Runes; 3. Tasseomancy;
- 4. Osteomancy; 5. Harusication;
- 6. Geomancy; 7. Abacomancy;
- 8. Bibliomancy; 9. Cleromancy;
- 10. Lithomancy; 11. Scrying;
- 12. Clairaudience; 13. Cromniomancy;
- 14. Oneiromancy; 15. Psychometry.

**A bakers' dozen**

- 1. *Shō taimu*; *Femutekku*; *Pikutoguramu*; *Yangu kearā*. Four Japanese Words of The

Year. What do they mean? Clue: they are derived from English.

- 2. *Probhouthos: lege segheqe. Θναπτομ πύλλομος ὑπο τρισὺ βέτεσι rebhḗ; Paulās áitejes en qémōntor ánoñtorwe.* This message is a new translation of a piece of warning text found in 37 languages on a 12cm by 5cm paper slip inside a children's treat. What, approximately, does it say, and what is the language? Clue: it's not a living language (but some people would like it to be).
- 3. Which energy company announced a move from The Hague to the UK, changing its 100-year-old name in the process, and how did it get its name?
- 4. Why did the discovery of a 3,500-year-old fragment of a milk jar in Tel Lachish in Israel cause a lot of excitement among language lovers in April?
- 5. What is the French word *iel*, and why did it upset the country's Minister of Education in November?
- 6. What is the Republicans' war chant "Let's Go Brandon" all about?
- 7. Which statesman favoured Franglais this year, declaring "*prenez un grip*" and "*donnez-moi un break*"?
- 8. Sumomomomomomomo achieved a sporting triumph in Tokyo on 1 November 2021. Who was she and how did she get her extraordinary name?
- 9. What is a "Pipehitter", and why did Mike Pompeo, US Secretary of State under Donald Trump, call upon "all unapologetic Americans" to become one?
- 10. Why has the French programming language *Coq* been renamed?
- 11. The modern placebo, memento and "pony up" derive from the Old Testament Psalms. How come?
- 12. Some English words we all get wrong: Blueprint; Compendium; Jejune; Nauseous; Fulsome; Effete; Enormity; Condone. What are their dictionary meanings?
- 13. Who were the original "slaves"?

**Five funny foreign formulations**

What do these sayings mean?

- 1. *Il n'a pas inventé l'eau chaude* (French). Literally: He did not invent hot water.
- 2. *Me cago en la leche* (Spanish). Literally: I poo in the milk.
- 3. *Kelsa ildiro badagi, magwina kundi keradnanthe* (Kannada). Literally: A jobless carpenter will carve his kid's arse.
- 4. *Geh dahin, wo der Pfeffer wächst* (German). Literally: Go over there where the pepper grows.
- 5. *On ne mélange pas les torchons avec les serviettes* (French). Literally: One doesn't mix one's bath towels with one's dishcloths.

# CHRISTMAS PUZZLES / Prize Acrostic

Enter answers to the 25 clues A–Y in the appropriate columns of the vertical grid, transferring the individual letters of each answer to the corresponding squares of the horizontal grid. When completed, the horizontal grid displays a single extended

quotation, and the lines to the left of the horizontal grid and across the top of the vertical grid display the author and source of that quotation. Just to make life more difficult, one word has been deliberately interpolated into the original quotation.

A 103	B 13	C 98	D 107	E 249	F 112	G 144	H 106	I 175	J 140	K 290	L 264	M 133	N 113	O 101	P 322	Q 179	R 45	S 66	T 252	U 36	V 96	W 310	X 2	Y 158
A 207	B 91	C 291	D 139	E 23	F 149	G 276	H 162	I 303	J 178	K 125	L 294	M 80	N 49	O 67	P 146	Q 116	R 277	S 12	T 224	U 266	V 1	W 63	X 336	Y 230
A 79	B 240	C 142	D 187	E 65	F 191	G 335	H 77	I 32	J 4	K 33	L 244	M 296	N 194	O 127	P 203	Q 287	R 316	S 168	T 169	U 87	V 347	W 237	X 239	Y 286
A 343	B 186	C 70	D 41	E 83	F 8	G 121	H 7	I 273	J 334	K 321	L 213	M 31	N 34	O 202	P 38	Q 328	R 78	S 124	T 39	U 14	V 35	W 37	X 24	Y 130
A 22	B 30	C 225	D 231	E 318	F 332	G 155	H 114	I 354	J 297	K 3	L 197	M 283	N 177		P 182	Q 44	R 11	S 226	T 94	U 190	V 171	W 292	X 302	Y 81
A 183	B 212	C 351	D 9	E 299	F 108	G 27	H 272	I 136	J 21	K 223	L 167	M 166	N 295		P 211	Q 280	R 339	S 313	T 141	U 154	V 115	W 270	X 284	Y 40
A 228	B 199	C 317	D 85	E 74	F 69	G 250	H 132	I 20	J 72	K 238	L 54	M 5	N 217		P 221	Q 143	R 152	S 227	T 349	U 198	V 306	W 109	X 50	Y 195
	B 126	C 268	D 164	E 174	F 236	G 342	H 243	I 145	J 156	K 119	L 110	M 117	N 262		P 64	Q 210	R 59	S 153	T 51		V 159	W 345	X 181	Y 148
	B 271	C 134	D 338	E 6	F 128	G 105	H 52	I 82	J 315	K 71	L 245	M 56	N 16		P 279	Q 311	R 255	S 304	T 248		V 151	W 232	X 325	Y 17
		C 161	D 157	E 229	F 92	G 307	H 216	I 48	J 131	K 308	L 19	M 312	N 188		P 267	Q 76	R 209	S 93	T 129		V 200	W 43	X 189	Y 275
		C 47	D 57		F 314	G 88	H 341	I 184	J 214	K 247	L 192	M 218			P 111		R 281	S 219			V 100	W 241	X 256	Y 220
		C 120	D 337		F 26	G 356	H 319	I 263	J 346	K 61	L 253	M 326			P 293		R 309	S 333			V 235	W 75	X 137	Y 285
		C 278	D 150		F 97	G 288	H 28		J 246	K 84	L 60	M 102			P 10		R 242	S 301			V 62	W 104	X 123	
		C 331	D 254		F 260		H 257		J 68	K 147	L 206	M 160			P 165		R 90				V 135	W 204	X 170	
		C 176			F 353		H 172		J 269	K 193	L 340	M 173			P 352		R 258				V 89	W 46	X 320	
		C 15			F 300		H 86		J 259	K 42		M 234			P 53		R 29				V 215	W 289	X 118	
		C 233			F 55		H 298		J 201	K 261		M 205			P 324		R 330				V 323	W 305	X 95	
		C 25			F 222		H 208			K 282		M 265				R 122					V 73		X 99	
		C 251			F 274		H 58			K 355		M 348									V 18		X 350	
		C 196			F 163		H 327			K 329		M 344												
					F 180		H 138					M 185												

- A.** Pine for a knees-up with very short delivery. (4,3)
- B.** Immerse hard strap and make two characters come together as one. (9)
- C.** '----- Road'. (*We're off to see the Wizard ...* E.Y. Harburg). (6,3,6,5)
- D.** 'As Jehu entered the gate, she said, "-----, murderer ..."' (2 Kings, RSV). (2,2,5,5)
- E.** Trevor upset about Rhine dock disaster between New Jersey and New York. (5,5)
- F.** 'He was of the faith chiefly in the sense that the church he ----- was Catholic' (Kingsley Amis). (9,3,3,6)
- G.** 'It'll do him good to lie there unconscious for a bit. Give -----' (N.F. Simpson). (3,5,1,4)
- H.** 'A day that hath no *pride*, -----, ----- doth not usher it in, nor tomorrow shall not drive it out' (John Donne). (3,9,9)

- I.** Strange hoax – the plums are eye-popping. (12)
- J.** 'There was a tabernacle made: the first, wherein -----, and the table' (Hebrews, AV). (3,3,11)
- K.** 'The Camel's Hump is an Ugly Lump Which well -----' (Rudyard Kipling). (3,3,3,2,3,3,3)
- L.** 'My prime of youth is but a frost of cares; my feast ----- of pain' (Chidiock Tichborne). (2,3,2,3,1,4)
- M.** 'Broad of Church and "broad of mind", Broad before and broad behind, A keen ecclesiologist, A -----' (John Betjeman). (6,5,10)
- N.** Mix together ink and oak and hang them on the man who was once Prince Carl of Denmark. (4,6)
- O.** Depict characters at the heart of slim notebook. (4)
- P.** 'King Solomon drew merchantmen, Because of his desire, For peacocks, apes and -----, ----- unto Tyre' (Rudyard Kipling). (5,4,8)

- Q.** Estimate audibly permitted when you estimate audibly. (5,5)
- R.** 'It ----- get a good book read' (Ralph Waldo Emerson). (5,6,5,2)
- S.** The world's a bubble; and the life of man -----' (Francis Bacon). (4,4,1,4)
- T.** 'And the Lord said, who will ----- king of Israel, that he may go up and fall ...?' (2 Chronicles, AV). (6,4)
- U.** 'I want to -----, But I won't [-----]' (Irving Caesar). (2,5)
- V.** 'Too ----- of reality, too thin and you end up dead' (Shazia Mirza). (4,3,3,4,5)
- W.** 'What music is more enchanting than the voices ----- you can't hear what they say?' (Logan Pearsall Smith). (2,5,6,4)
- X.** 'Though I were perfect, yet -----: I would despise my life' (Job, AV). (5,1,3,4,2,4)
- Y.** 'Do your bit to save humanity from lapsing back into barbarity by reading all the -----' (Richard Hughes). (6,3,3)

1 V	2 X	3 K	4 J	5 M	6 E	7 H	8 F	9 D	10 P	11 R	12 S	13 B	14 U	15 C	16 N	17 Y	18 V	19 L	20 I	21 J			
22 A	23 E	24 X	25 C	26 F	27 G	28 H	29 R	30 B	31 M	32 I	33 K	34 N	35 V	36 U	37 W	38 P	39 T	40 Y	41 D				
42 K	43 W	44 Q	45 R	46 W	47 C	48 I	49 N	50 X	51 T	52 H	53 P	54 L	55 F	56 M	57 D								
58 H	59 R	60 L	61 K	62 V	63 W																		
64 P	65 E	66 S	67 O	68 J	69 F	70 C	71 K	72 J	73 V	74 E	75 W	76 Q	77 H	78 R									
79 A	80 M	81 Y	82 I	83 E	84 K	85 D	86 H	87 U	88 G	89 V	90 R	91 B	92 F	93 S	94 T	95 X	96 V						
97 F	98 C	99 X	100 V	101 O	102 M	103 A	104 W	105 G	106 H	107 D	108 F	109 W	110 L										
111 P	112 F	113 N	114 H	115 V	116 Q	117 M	118 X	119 K	120 C	121 G	122 R												
	123 X	124 S	125 K	126 B	127 O	128 F	129 T	130 Y	131 J	132 H	133 M	134 C	135 V										
136 I	137 X	138 H	139 D	140 J	141 T	142 C	143 Q	144 G	145 I	146 P	147 K	148 Y	149 F	150 D	151 V	152 R	153 S	154 U	155 G				
156 J	157 D	158 Y	159 V	160 M	161 C	162 H	163 F	164 D	165 P														
166 M	167 L	168 S	169 T	170 X	171 V	172 H	173 M	174 E	175 I	176 C	177 N	178 J	179 Q	180 F	181 X	182 P	183 A	184 I					
185 M	186 B	187 D	188 N	189 X	190 U	191 F	192 L	193 K	194 N	195 Y	196 C	197 L	198 U	199 B	200 V	201 J	202 O	203 P	204 W	205 M	206 L	207 A	208 H
209 R	210 Q	211 P	212 B	213 L	214 J	215 V	216 H	217 N	218 M	219 S	220 Y	221 P	222 F	223 K	224 T	225 C	226 S	227 S	228 A	229 E	230 Y	231 D	
	232 W	233 C	234 M	235 V	236 F	237 W	238 K	239 X	240 B	241 W	242 R	243 H	244 L	245 L	246 J								
247 K	248 T	249 E	250 G	251 C	252 T	253 L	254 D	255 R	256 X	257 H	258 R	259 J	260 F	261 K	262 N	263 I	264 L	265 M	266 U	267 P			
268 C	269 J	270 W	271 B	272 H	273 I	274 F	275 Y	276 G	277 R	278 C	279 P	280 Q	281 R	282 K	283 M	284 X	285 Y	286 Y	287 Q	288 G			
289 W	290 K	291 C	292 W	293 P	294 L	295 N	296 M	297 J	298 H	299 E	300 F	301 S	302 X	303 I	304 S	305 W	306 V	307 G	308 K	309 R	310 W		
	311 Q	312 M	313 S	314 F	315 J	316 R	317 C	318 E	319 H	320 X	321 K	322 P											
323 V	324 P	325 X	326 M	327 H	328 Q	329 K	330 R	331 C	332 F	333 S	334 J	335 G											
336 X	337 D	338 D	339 R	340 L	341 H	342 G	343 A	344 M	345 W	346 J	347 V	348 M	349 T	350 X	351 C	352 P	353 F	354 I	355 K	356 G			

**PRIZES:** This year we are offering a £75 Amazon voucher to the sender of the first correct solution opened on Friday 7 January 2022. Each of the five runners-up will receive a £25 Amazon voucher. Photocopies will be accepted. The editor's decision is final. Post your entries to: **Acrostic, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY.** Please include an email address, if available. The answers and the winners' names will appear in *The Tablet* dated Saturday 15 January 2022.

## SUDOKU

Level: Hard

6	2	8		3				
3				8				
	4						3	
	5	1		7				
	6				4			7
				9				2
		2			6			4
	7			2	3	9		6
1							5	2

Each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.  
The solution will appear in the 15 January 2022 issue.

### Solution to the 27 November puzzle

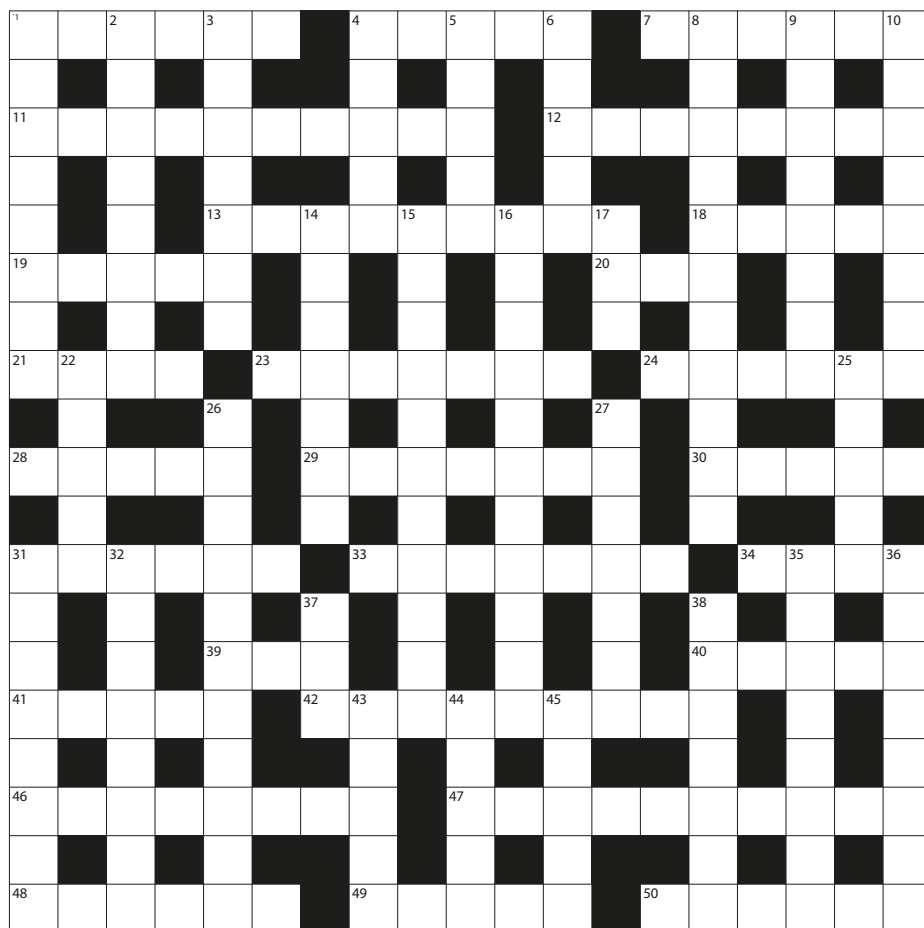
1	2	4	8	9	6	7	3	5
3	9	7	4	1	5	8	2	6
5	6	8	2	3	7	9	1	4
6	5	9	1	4	8	2	7	3
2	4	3	5	7	9	1	6	8
8	7	1	6	2	3	4	5	9
9	8	5	7	6	1	3	4	2
7	3	2	9	5	4	6	8	1
4	1	6	3	8	2	5	9	7

**Across**

- 1 William, captain of the *Royal Mary*, discovered [1643] Christmas Island (6)
- 4 Songs reflecting Christian worship such as by Fr Faber and Fr Caswell (5)
- 7 Septimus, the dowager's butler in *Downton Abbey* (6)
- 11 Handwritten work of literature or music (10)
- 12 Type of feast such as Easter Sunday (8)
- 13 Ebbing of coastal water leaving permanent new land (9)
- 18 Weapon used in martyrdom of St Stephen, commemorated 26 December (5)
- 19 A theatrical farewell (5)
- 20 River giving name to city and cathedral in Devon (3)
- 21 Direction from which the Three Wise Men came (4)
- 23 ----- Aetius, last general of the Western Roman Empire, defeated Attila (7)
- 24 House of the last Catholic king of England (6)
- 28 See 49 Across
- 29 Headwear of a priest, colour determined by clerical rank (7)
- 30 & 31 Down: Monument in Paris remembering those who died for France in war (3,2,8)
- 31 Marsh Arabs' war canoe, used by British in First World War (6)
- 33 Member of the Spanish nobility from the Middle Ages (7)
- 34 Birds symbolically associated with wisdom (4)
- 39 English cathedral built on an isle (3)
- 40 Type of accent, as in 'Señor' (5)
- 41 Window and Newman's college at Oxford (5)
- 42 Halls of ----- vacated by students over Christmas break (9)
- 46 Country where usual 'Merry Christmas' greeting is '*Feliz Navidad*' (8)
- 47 'The Church militant, the Church suffering, the Church -----' (10)
- 48 Substitute, often as a term for inferior items or food in hard times (6)
- 49 & 28 Across: Gogol story of Cossack legend inspiring rhapsody by Janáček (5,5)
- 50 Norway's annual Christmas tree gift is erected near his Column (6)

**Down**

- 1 The prayer of St Bernard to our most loving Virgin Mary (8)
- 2 Bowling game from Middle Ages, and 'falling' simile (4,4)
- 3 '*Nuper* ----- *Flores*', a 5 Down by Dufay in honour of Florence Cathedral (7)
- 4 Mainly Catholic republic of the Caribbean (5)
- 5 Usually Latin short choral work, but can be secular with instruments (5)
- 6 Dominic, boy saint of 'heroic virtue', pupil of St John Bosco (5)
- 8 Central American plants used for floral decoration at Christmas (11)
- 9 In mythology, drink or food of the gods (8)
- 10 'On --- ----- of Stephen', Wenceslas carol (3,5)



- 14 Cradle song, such as that by Brahms (7)
- 15 Famously experienced by J.H. Newman, G.K. Chesterton and Ronald Knox (11)
- 16 Version of *A Christmas Carol*, the first with John Leech interpreting Dickens' text (11)
- 17 World of Dvořák's Ninth Symphony (3)
- 22 Ground-covering plant also known as 'bugle' (5)
- 25 Village and Water in Cumbria associated with the poet Wordsworth (5)
- 26 Illumination in title of John Rutter carol (11)
- 27 & 35 Down: Composer of *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (7,8)
- 31 See 30 Across
- 32 Holiday coastlines, such as French or Cornish (8)
- 35 See 27 Down
- 36 Thomas, English furniture designer and author of books on the subject (8)
- 37 County town near where *Auld Lang Syne* author born (3)
- 38 Towering feature of church architecture (7)
- 43 Country providing protection for the Holy Family from Herod's soldiers (5)
- 44 Bury (at the end of title of Christina Rossetti's carol!) (5)
- 45 Greek equivalent name of the prophet Elijah (5)

**■ Solution to puzzle No. 783, 27 November 2020**

- Across:** 7 Ekron; 8 Isidore; 10 Topheth; 11 Cyrus; 12 Abel; 13 Bethpage; 15 Egyptian; 18 Laws; 20 Islam; 22 Marcion; 23 Aramaic; 24 Sheba.  
**Down:** 1 Septuagesima; 2 Prophecy 3 Ange; 4 Tishbe; 5 Milcah; 6 Zoar; 9 Easter Sunday; 14 Adamites; 16 Timnah; 17 Almuce; 19 Druse; 21 Leah.

Answers: See Page 47

## CHRISTMAS PUZZLES ANSWERS

### The Language Quiz, page 00

#### Words of the year 2021

1. c. 2. a. 3. b. 4. a. 5. c. 6. c. 7. c. 8. b. 9. c. 10. c. 11. b.

#### Britain on the couch

1. Involves tapping the body in various key points. 2. Six standard phrases repeated every day to make your body feel heavy, relaxed and warm. 3. Massage of meridian lines and fascia along the lines of acupuncture. 4. The use of magnets to stimulate nerve cells in an attempt to alleviate depression and other psychiatric conditions. 5. Watch something you like, and look at a picture of your brain on a computer screen to see yourself becoming happy. 6. Bees and their products as therapeutic helpers. 7. Based on the theories of the American psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich, who believed he could capture “orgone energy”, his version of Freud’s libido, in a box akin to a Faraday cage. 8. Using the “universal laws of energy: attraction, repulsion and neutrality” to help mind and body. 9. Using radio-frequency waves to heal anyone, anywhere in the world. 10. Drawing energy from surroundings and channelling them into a subject’s body without touching it. 11. Using controlled breathing to relieve repressed childhood memories, including of birth. 12. Curing physical and emotional problems by realigning the fascia, the connecting tissue beneath the skin. 13. A technique to deal with trauma. 14. Self-explanatory. 15. A hand-made tuning fork is held over various points in the body. 16. The same as Rolfing. 17. More movement. Music optional. 18. Imagining a situation and thinking about how to deal with it. 19. Teaches you how to contact the “one spiritual being” who guides the universe and asks for help. 20. Drinking 1 to 1.5 litres of water quickly upon waking.

#### Author! Author!

All politicians. 1. US President Jimmy Carter. 2. Iain Duncan Smith. 3. Ann Widdecombe. 4. Hillary Clinton. 5. Edwina Currie. 6. Benjamin Disraeli. 7. Wilfred Fienburgh (MP for Islington North 1951-58). 8. Boris Johnson. 9. Chris Mullin. 10. Winston Churchill.

#### Famous last words (allegedly)

1. Joseph Wright, editor of *The English Dialect Dictionary*. 2. Raphael. 3. Gustav Mahler. 4. Margaret Sanger, birth control pioneer. 5. Frank Sinatra. 6. Marie Antoinette. 7. Sr Louise Marie-Thérèse de Saint Maurice. 8. Richard Feynman, physicist, educator, eccentric. 9. A murderer, James W. Rodgers, facing the Utah firing squad in March 1960. 10. Eugene O’Neill. 11. Groucho Marx. 12. Lenin. 13. Derek Jarman. 14. Joan Crawford. 15. The nineteenth-century English surgeon Joseph Henry Green.

#### Things to come

1. Using Celtic stick writing, originally carved by the Druids. 2. Using the runic writing of the Nordic cultures. 3. Reading tea leaves. 4. Studying bones. 5. Looking inside dead birds. 6. Reading signs and markings on the ground.

7. Examining dust. 8. Picking random passages from the Bible or other valued books to find out what is coming your way. 9. Using pebbles and dice. 10. Using stones and crystals. 11. Looking deeply into things, notably water, fire and crystal balls. 12. Hearing mysterious messages from far away, unheard by others. 13. Divining with onion sprouts. 14. Oneiromancy. Learning from your dreams. 15. Examining inanimate objects to learn about people.

#### A bakers’ dozen

1. “Showtime!” Shouted by announcers when baseball player Ohtani Shōhei attempted to beat a century-old record set by Babe Ruth.

**Femtech:** technology aimed at problems specific to women. **Pictogram.** The famous Olympic symbols were brought to life by performers at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, which took place in 2021. **Young carers:** those under 18 having to look after older relatives during the pandemic.

2. This message translates the warning inside a Kinder Surprise Egg. It says “Warning: read and keep. Toy not suitable for children under 3 years. Small parts may be swallowed or inhaled.” This version is in Modern Indo-European, a reconstruction of the 5,000-year-old language of much of Europe and Asia.

3. The company is Royal Dutch Shell, which is dropping the “Royal Dutch” part it acquired in 1907. It was founded by a man called Marcus Samuel, whose father (of the same name) owned a shop in Houndsditch, London, buying curios from sailors arriving in the Port of London. Among the most popular were seashells and objects decorated with them. Hence the name of the store, which the younger Marcus took over in 1869, rapidly diversifying into the export of machinery and oil.

4. The milk jar was adorned with writing essential to those engaged in reconstructing the history of the alphabet.

5. *Iel* is a non-gender-specific third-person pronoun. Its inclusion in *Le Robert*, a heavyweight French dictionary, prompted the minister, Jean-Michel Blanquer, to Tweet that “inclusive writing is not the future of the French language”.

6. Brandon Brown, a racing driver, interviewed on live TV after a race. The reporter said his fans were chanting “Let’s Go Brandon”. They weren’t. They were chanting “F—k Joe Biden”. Now Republican politicians have adopted the “Brandon” chant as a coded way of saying what they think, without saying it.

7. Boris Johnson.

8. A three-year-old mare who claimed her maiden victory this year. Her name derives from a Japanese tongue-twister that means “Both sumomo and peaches are kinds of peaches”.

9. Pompeo was applauding a Tweet from a group called Champion American Values, which put up a supposed dictionary definition of a “Pipehitter” as someone “dedicated to stand against the radical Left’s agenda”.

10. *Coq* was originally CoC, for Calculus of Constructions. Unfortunately, *coq* is pronounced “cock”, which has caused trouble with both female users of the language and “laypersons” who are conducting their conversations about it in English.

11. **Placebo** comes from verse nine of Psalm 114:

*Placebo Domino in regione vivorum. Memento* – Latin for “I remember” – comes from Psalm 131. As for **pony up**, 25 March was the medieval “quarter-day” when lots of ordinary folk got paid. The Psalm mandated for that day was No. 119, which includes the words *Legem pone mihi, Domine, viam justificationum tuarum et exquiram eam semper*, meaning something like: “Lay down the law, Lord, of doing right and I will always keep to it”. *Legem pone*, later “pony up”, became a byword for “pay on the nail”.

12. **Blueprint:** The final plans before production. **Compendium:** a brief summary. **Jejune:** unsatisfactory. **Nauseous:** causing nausea. **Fulsome:** excessive, over-the-top. **Effete:** exhausted. **Enormity:** a crime or atrocity. **Condone:** forgive. 13. The original slaves were the Slavs. The Medieval Latin word *sclavus*, meaning slave, is identical to the word *Sclavus*, the name used for the people of Central Europe who had been enslaved by conquest.

#### Five funny foreign formulations

1. “He’s not the sharpest pencil in the box.” 2. “Oh dear!” (but stronger). 3. In the Kannada language slang of Southern India and Goa, something like “The devil makes work for idle hands”. 4. “Clear off!” 5. “People from different classes shouldn’t mix.”



■ Quiz compiled with the help of *The Babel Message: A Love Letter to Language* by Keith Kahn-Harris (Icon Books), *The Etymologicon* by Mark Forsyth (Icon Books), *The Wordhord* by Hana Videen (Profile Books),

*Language Log* (language.ig.idc.upenn.edu), *The Register* (theregister.com), numerous other websites and my multilingual friends in Cheltenham Book Club and Cheltenham Stories. Comments welcome: mail@johnmorrish.com

#### Solution to the Jumbo crossword, page 47

**Across:** 1 Mynors; 4 Hymns; 7 Spratt; 11 Manuscript; 12 Variable; 13 Reliction; 18 Stone; 19 Adieu; 20 Exe; 21 East; 23 Flavius; 24 Stuart; 28 Bulba; 29 Biretta; 30 Arc de; 31 Tarada; 33 Hidalgo; 34 Owls; 39 Ely; 40 Tilde; 41 Oriol; 42 Residence; 46 Paraguay; 47 Triumphant; 48 Ersatz; 49 Taras; 50 Nelson.

**Down:** 1 Memorare; 2 Nine-Pins; 3 Rosarum; 4 Haiti; 5 Motet; 6 Savio; 8 Poinsettias; 9 Ambrosia; 10 The Feast; 14 Lullaby; 15 Conversions; 16 Illustrated; 17 New; 22 Ajuga; 25 Rydal; 26 Candlelight; 27 Vaughan; 31 Triomphe; 32 Riviera; 35 Williams; 36 Sheraton; 37 Ayr; 38 Steeple; 43 Egypt; 44 Inter; 45 Elias.