

The Opposite of Actuaries: A Verbal Dodecahedron

Since actuaries are known for mathematical complexity, we thought it would be fun to run a puzzle of verbal complexity (albeit with some mathematical elements): THE OPPOSITE OF ACTUARIES.

Instructions: The diagram would form a regular 12-sided solid if folded along the thick blue lines.

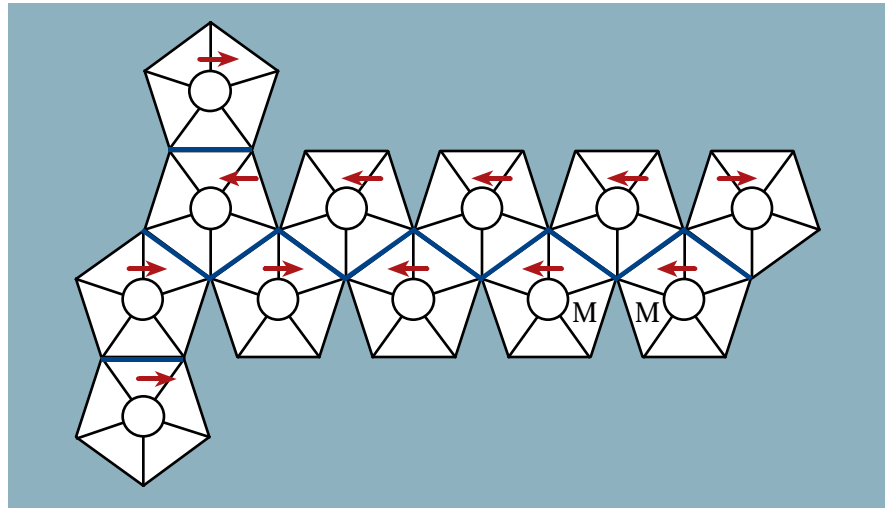
Each clue in group A leads to a six-letter word, each of which contains all the (mixed) letters of a five-letter word plus one extra letter. The five-letter words are clued in group B. The extra letters are entered in the centers of the appropriate pentagons with the associated five-letter words inscribed around them (in the direction shown by the arrows). At each edge of the solid, adjacent letters are the same.

When the diagram is complete, the central letters from 1 to 12 will give another definition of the opposite of actuaries.

Note: The clues aren't in order; The answer to clue #1 in group A is not necessarily associated with the five-letter answer to clue #1 in group B. The solver must figure out which answers are "associated" with each other and where to place them. One letter, with its duplication, has been printed to help you get started.

Example: The answer to a clue in group A might be desire; the answer to a clue in group B might be sired. Since desire is an anagram of sired (plus the letter E), sired would be entered (in the direction of the arrows) in a pentagon, surrounding the extra letter E, in such a way that the S, the I, the R, the E, and the D would each be duplicated in another word on the adjacent side of an edge.

The clues are cryptic clues. A straightforward definition takes up one end of a clue (left side or right side), and a twisted definition takes up the other. Puns, anagrams, formations, deletions, embedded words, and double definitions are among the twists. For example:



Singing grubs? They sang yesterday (7)

The answer to this seven-letter clue (of which there are none in this puzzle) would be Beatles. Why? Beetles are a kind of grub, and singing tells you that it must be heard (and thus a pun). "They sang yesterday" is a straightforward definition of Beatles.

For a further explanation of general cryptic puzzle clues, send an e-mail to the author at ttoce@alangray.com.

All answers are in English, except for one proper noun and one common foreign word. Ignore punctuation, which is designed to confuse.

Acknowledgment for the design of this puzzle goes to the very great puzzle maker Stephen Sondheim.

CLUES

GROUP A—Six-Letter Words

- ▶ Elementary theory of loveless accretion
- ▶ Vessel parked in Connecticut terminal
- ▶ Ted was drunk
- ▶ Curtain calls a question for a British gent at four
- ▶ Priest hears command to a doctor
- ▶ Re-aims battalions
- ▶ Vicar essentially supports fondling

- ▶ Hair splitter when your end is in Puerto Rico
- ▶ As cups tremble and boil (two words)
- ▶ One skipping satyr winds east for improvements
- ▶ One musical connection of a "boy's name" that bears a f'rinstance? (two words)
- ▶ Red rum rewinds killing

GROUP B—Five-Letter Words

- ▶ Our country—how old? That's just the way people talk
- ▶ Tremendous start and sprint toward what one leaves behind
- ▶ Devastatingly cuter and very disarming
- ▶ Crazy rates an Italian rock band
- ▶ Sad eats penultimate note and is full
- ▶ Mares scatter a copious supply of paper
- ▶ Fish swallows a duck
- ▶ Secants lose New Testament, silly examples!
- ▶ Rites wrong rows
- ▶ In Paris, following a casual serving of pears
- ▶ Reader, beginning to get the gist (a little mixed up), beams
- ▶ Red takes a hesitation and plays it back to make an objection