

8. Homophone double definitions

A relatively recent extension of the homophone clue is the *homophone double definition* clue, in which the wordplay is a second definition of the answer wrapped up in a homophone which does **not** use a synonym. For example,

Psychiatrist's vocal lesson (6)
Psychiatrist's / vocal lesson (6)

is a clue for SHRINK (slang for a psychiatrist), where one of its other meanings, to lessen, has been obscured as a homophone of "lesson", as indicated by "vocal". The "'s" is a linking word here because it is short for "is"; it is not marking possession, contrary to the surface.

Here's another one:

Animal holed up in auditorium (4)
Animal / holed up in auditorium (4)

This time we have the answer BEAR, which is both an animal and a verb meaning "hold up", the latter definition given as a homophone of "holed up", as indicated by "in auditorium".

Perhaps because they are extraordinarily difficult to write, this clue type is rather rare. I have personally only seen it crop up in more experimental publications such as The Guardian, and only ever with literal homophones, as stated above. My advice would be to keep in mind that this clue type exists, but not to go looking for it.