10. Charades

Named for the parlour game and not entirely dissimilar, the *charade clue* presents the answer as a chain of other words, abbreviations and even other items of wordplay. For example, in

Bloody loads of bills (8)
Bloody loads / of bills (8)

REDRAFTS (bills of exchange, in financial parlance) is presented as a combination of RED (bloody) and RAFTS (loads), with "of" as linking word.

Most words do not split up perfectly into other words, so abbreviations are often drafted in to plug the shortfall, e.g. with

Universal acclaim provides lift (7)
Universal acclaim / provides lift (7)

for UPRAISE (lift), as a combination of U (universal, as in British film classification) and PRAISE (acclaim), with "provides" as linking word.

Charade clues come with their own type of indicator, the *juxtaposition indicator*, which optionally indicates how component words are arranged relative to each other. Some join elements in the same order, as in

Substitute for x and y (5)
Substitute / for x and y (5)

which clues PROXY (substitute) as a combination of PRO (for, as in "in favour of [a particular side of an argument]") plus the literal letters X and Y, where PRO X is joined with Y by the juxtaposition indicator "and" (alternatively, X and Y are joined by "and", which is then placed next to PRO). Note that "for" looks like a linking word, but is actually part of the wordplay!

Other juxtaposition indicators reverse the order:

Demonstrate experiment after a short time (6)
Demonstrate / experiment after a short time (6)

This guides us towards ATTEST (demonstrate) as TEST (experiment) **after** A (indicated literally) T (abbreviation for "time", as indicated by "short").

Some juxtaposition indicators, such as "with", are ambiguous. In

Copper with head wound (3,2)
Copper with head / wound (3,2)

the wordplay "copper with head" could mean one of two things: either "word meaning 'copper' followed by word meaning 'head'" or "word meaning 'head' followed by word meaning 'copper'" – both are plausible interpretations of "copper with head". In this case,

we have CU (chemical symbol for copper) + TUP (head [of a steam hammer, etc.]) in the same order as in the clue, yielding CUT UP (wound).

Recall that crossword clues come in two varieties depending on how the answers are entered into the grid: "across" clues and "down" clues. When dealing with down clues in cryptic crosswords, we consider not only the answer itself as running down the page, but also all elements of wordplay. This convention, which I will refer to as the *vertical convention*, mainly affects reversals and a handful of letter selection indicators (see upcoming sections), but also has a part to play with juxtaposition indicators. Consider, for example, the down clue

<div align="center">

Try on a coat (5)

Try on a / coat (5)

</div>

where we must place TEST (try) **on** A to get TESTA (seed coat). Here we are making explicit use of the vertical convention: in an across clue, placing TEST "on" A makes no sense because everything runs horizontally. The required dimension simply doesn't exist.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, elements of wordplay, including homophones and anagrams, can be freely used as components in a charade clue. Here's one which uses a homophone:

<div align="center">

Reportedly very small rocks (5)

Reportedly very / small / rocks (5)

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This is a charade of REEL (homophone of REAL [very, as an intensifier] as indicated by "reportedly") and S (abbreviation for "small") leading to REELS (rocks, as a verb). An example with an anagram would be:

<div align="center">

High on herb with morning wood (8)

High on herb / with morning / wood (8)

</div>

This one instructs us to combine an anagram of ON HERB (as indicated by "high", as in "stoned, drunk") with AM (abbreviation for "ante meridiem", i.e. morning) to obtain HORNBEAM (a type of hardwood).

Charade clues work with any item of wordplay save for hidden answers – as do several upcoming clue types – which allows clue-writers to nest wordplay devices to produce what I call *complex clues*. There is no reason, for example, why a clue couldn't be a complex charade consisting of an anagram followed by three abbreviations followed by two homophones. In "real" crosswords, the majority of the clues are complex clues, so these are what we will slowly be building towards over the coming sections.

Other juxtaposition indicators found in charade clues include "above", "behind", "by", "married to" and "over". There is also a short list available at Cryptipedia.