

# The Book of Great Words

First Edition

*By Christopher Jury*

2009 National Spelling Bee Champion

# Preface

To All Spellers, Friends of Spellers, and Interested Parties,

*The Book of Great Words* is intended to be a guide to the calibre of words one should expect to receive at the National Spelling Bee and the Scripps National Spelling Bee in the United States. It contains a list of 231 carefully chosen high-level spelling words which are likely to make even the most proficient of the top spellers in the competition want to hide behind a chair and cry out “Mummy!” in a stentorian voice, making everyone in earshot cringe. This was exactly my intent when I crafted the list. It incorporates very difficult words precisely for the challenge of making you learn new and unfamiliar words, many of which are impossible to work out without knowledge of their language of origin and the correct associated spelling patterns, and some of which are impossible to work out even so. I encourage you to rigorously go over this list and learn every word in it perfectly (there is a big chance they will be in the Spelling Bee), and for assistance in this task I have devised seven crosswords which accompany the list and include every word on it. As you gradually study each word, look up its meaning in the dictionary and use it in a sentence. Revise and redo this several times. Then, at the end when you have completed the list, you can go through the crosswords and test yourself by filling out words from their definitions (when you’ve done, check their spellings!). Remember to revisit the words you cannot remember or spell correctly.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of learning the definitions of each words as well as their spellings and pronunciations, as this is a key component of helping you remember, and most importantly spell the word. It is simply not sufficient to glance down a list of words, read each one, and hope that you remember them when you are trembling on stage ready to spell your word. The words which are easiest to spell are the words which you **know**, not in the sense that you have come across them through some sort of fatuous rote learning process, but in the sense you **understand** their meaning, can use them in **your own** sentence, and know their correct spelling. After the list and crosswords, there are tips on spelling words from various **languages of origin** (gasp!), and knowing these tips and the “rules” (sort of) that they imply is a really important tool that can help you out with the most difficult words. If you study these rules and test yourself on them by applying them to words in your list (there are plenty of applicable ones) and by attempting to spell perplexing words randomly selected from the dictionary (if you have a more advanced one, try online dictionaries if you’re stuck) you can become more and more proficient at being able to spell really difficult (especially foreign ones) that are just thrown at you (something that will definitely happen at the Spelling Bee).

Perhaps the last and probably most important aspect of spelling success is something that is most likely out of your control at this stage. The very best spellers all share something in the respect that at the moment before they start competitive spelling, before they are concerned with or aware of it, they have a vibrant love for words and the English language. They are good readers, good writers, good speakers, and they already have a large reservoir of words permanently stored up in their head; a sizable vocabulary is very important. Some who has a deep general knowledge and takes pleasure in the kind of delighting knowledge that can be obtained from encyclopaedias certainly has an

advantage. I hope sincerely that in the process of studying this *Book of Great Words* you will increase the size of your own vocabulary, and that if you use correctly, it will give you an extra edge and boost on your way to spelling success. Enjoy it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Jury". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "C" and a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Christopher Jury  
2009 National Spelling Bee Champion

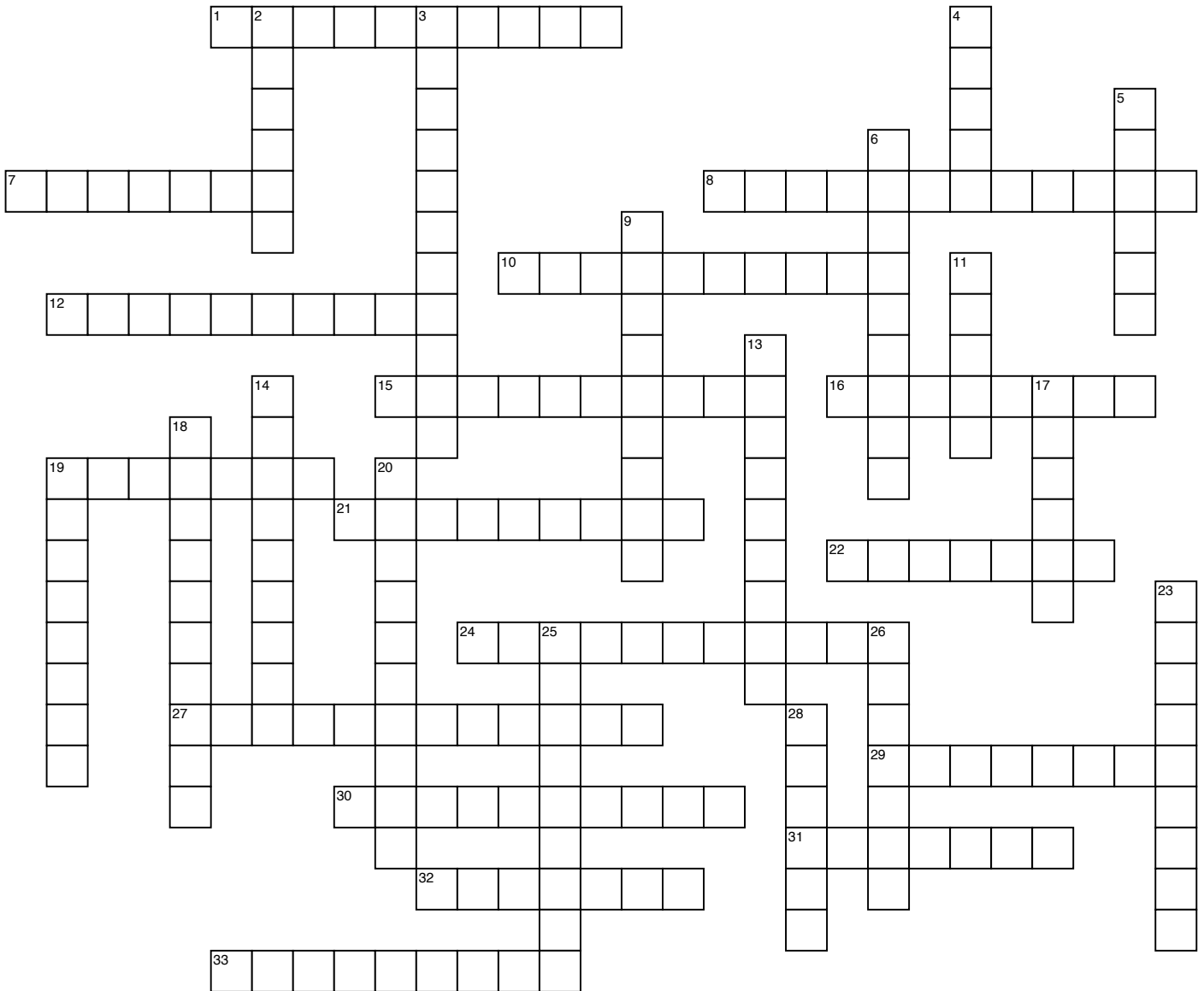
# *The List*

truculent	propensity	fasciation
inanition	ramshackle	finagle
avatar	opine	ersatz
orientate	subreption	gneiss
melange	arriviste	dilettante
approbation	penury	xanthic
cognizable	apathy	revanche
propagate	sandbag	prelapsarian
anneal	deviance	traduce
modicum	muishond	deipnosophist
kindred	ostensibly	myrmecology
posthaste	alacrity	bouleversement
veritable	rosaceous	sansculotte
scavenger	accoucheur	bharal
chockablock	acaulescent	tatterdemalion
livid	anathematize	rinkafadda
treacle	avuncular	oophagous
iconoclast	bacchanal	posse
attitudinize	badinage	massasauga
foursquare	ascetic	imprimatur
titivate	armoire	genuflect
puckish	ampullaceous	quondam
incandescent	alette	coeval
hierophant	equestrienne	elysian

gadarene	microcosm	kirtle
ahisma	ostracism	inveigh
terpsichorean	panache	sforzando
viand	panegyric	clerisy
ageusia	beignet	oneiromancy
babiche	plebeian	pantofle
boudoir	psilosis	atelier
caique	pulchritude	czardas
carrefour	sanguine	vernissage
catafalque	setaceous	abecedarian
caterwaul	sturgeon	wye
convive	tachymeter	usufructuary
daguerreotype	tamburitza	guillemot
demagoguery	thalassic	colporteur
demesne	triskaidekaphobia	obsequium
demitasse	truncheon	seneschal
diaphanous	whippoorwill	escritoire
escutcheon	dominicker	phosphorescence
exsiccate	accipitrine	portiere
gallimaufry	montmorillonite	argentiferous
histrionic	huisache	orgulous
hyperpyrexia	involucre	runcation
ichthyophagist	surcease	joual
innuendo	empleomania	loupe
insomnolence	primogeniture	gyre
interregnum	sybaritic	vendeuse
juvenescence	harijan	whilom
enterorrhagia	entrechat	epiphloedal

aiguille	erythromycin	kairos
apparat	eviscerate	Gestalt
arborvitae	excelsior	Keatsian
bodegon	farfalle	kibbutzim
braunschweiger	ferrule	kouros
butadiene	flehmen	lisle
cantabank	flurriment	macarize
carnauba	fortuitous	manoir
Chalkosideric	frontolysis	meliority
Chartreux	fructiferous	mendacity
chatelaine	fustian	mignonette
chylophyllous	galanterie	mostaccioli
clochard	gastralgia	myasthenia
clou	geocarpic	mycetismus
concatenate	giusto	naissance
coriaceous	gauche	nematognath
crescive	grieben	nidificate
cuchifrito	guttiferous	niveau
damascened	hendiadys	noyade
decastich	neologism	oblocutor
defalcator	Freudian	occision
diapedesis	Jungian	octateuch
digoneutic	psychasthenia	oleiferous
dirhinic	drepaniform	ommatophore
doryline	holard	omodynia
ecce	hyponychium	opprobrious
echard	impetrate	ordonnance
enceinte	jeroboam	ornithomyzous

# Puzzle No. 1



Christopher Jury

## ACROSS

- 1 dilapidated, rickety
- 7 impish, whimsical
- 8 white, glowing or luminous with intense heat
- 10 secret, underhanded, unlawful or unfair representation through suppression or fraudulent concealment of facts
- 12 one who attacks the established beliefs, ideals, customs or institution
- 15 capable of being known
- 16 to dress up
- 19 a small portion
- 21 speed in travelling (as of a post or courier)
- 22 a bag filled with sand
- 24 very full : crowded, crammed
- 27 to assume or practice attitudes

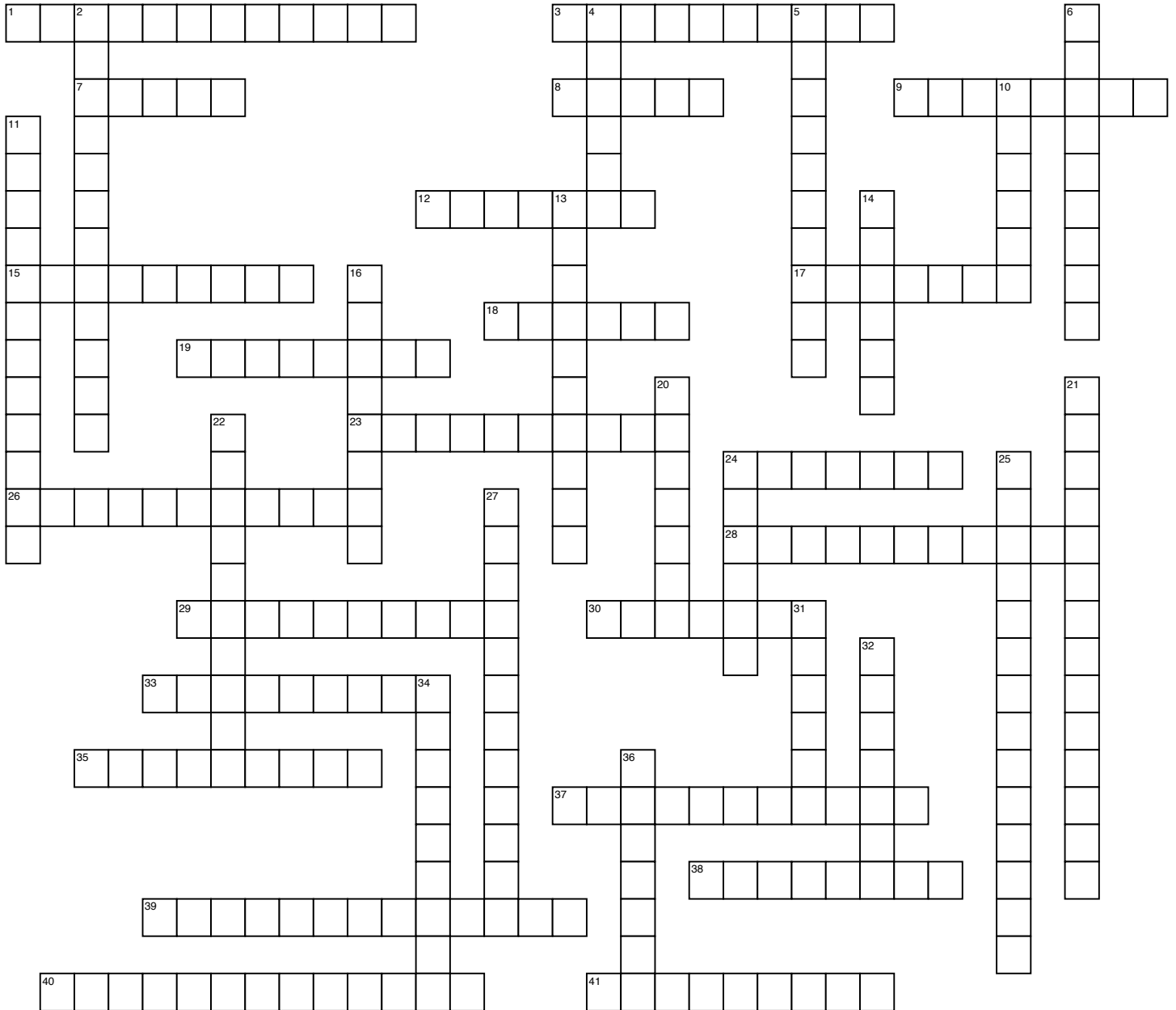
- 29 differing quality or state
- 30 a natural inclination
- 31 a blend of molasses, invert sugar and corn syrup used as a table syrup
- 32 a mixture of incongruous elements
- 33 one who employs any means however unscrupulous or questionable to achieve success

## DOWN

- 2 absence or lack of feeling or emotion
- 3 proof
- 4 give a formal opinion about
- 5 extreme poverty
- 6 the condition of being empty
- 9 to cause to spread out
- 11 discoloured by or as if by bruising

- 13 not false, unreal, imaginary or metaphorical
- 14 feeling savage ferocity
- 17 to heat (as glass) in order to fix laid-on colours
- 18 a priest in Ancient Greece or a spokesman or interpreter
- 19 a type of southern African weasel that is black with white stripes and that emits a fetid odour when disturbed
- 20 having four equal sides and four right angles
- 23 a rubbish collector
- 25 to face the east
- 26 a natural grouping
- 28 an incarnation in human form

# Puzzle No. 2



Christopher Jury

## ACROSS

- 1 to denounce or curse
- 3 the act of bandaging
- 7 a crowd usually sharing some common interest
- 8 an article of food
- 9 revenge
- 12 having been formerly
- 15 a person who assists during childbirth
- 17 to turn from one language or form into another
- 18 a metamorphic rock
- 19 light, playful banter
- 23 an Irish dance
- 24 sweetly blissful
- 26 stemless
- 28 a political extremist or radical
- 29 to all outward appearances
- 30 a person who practices self-denial for religious reasons
- 33 of or pertaining to an uncle
- 35 living or feeding on eggs

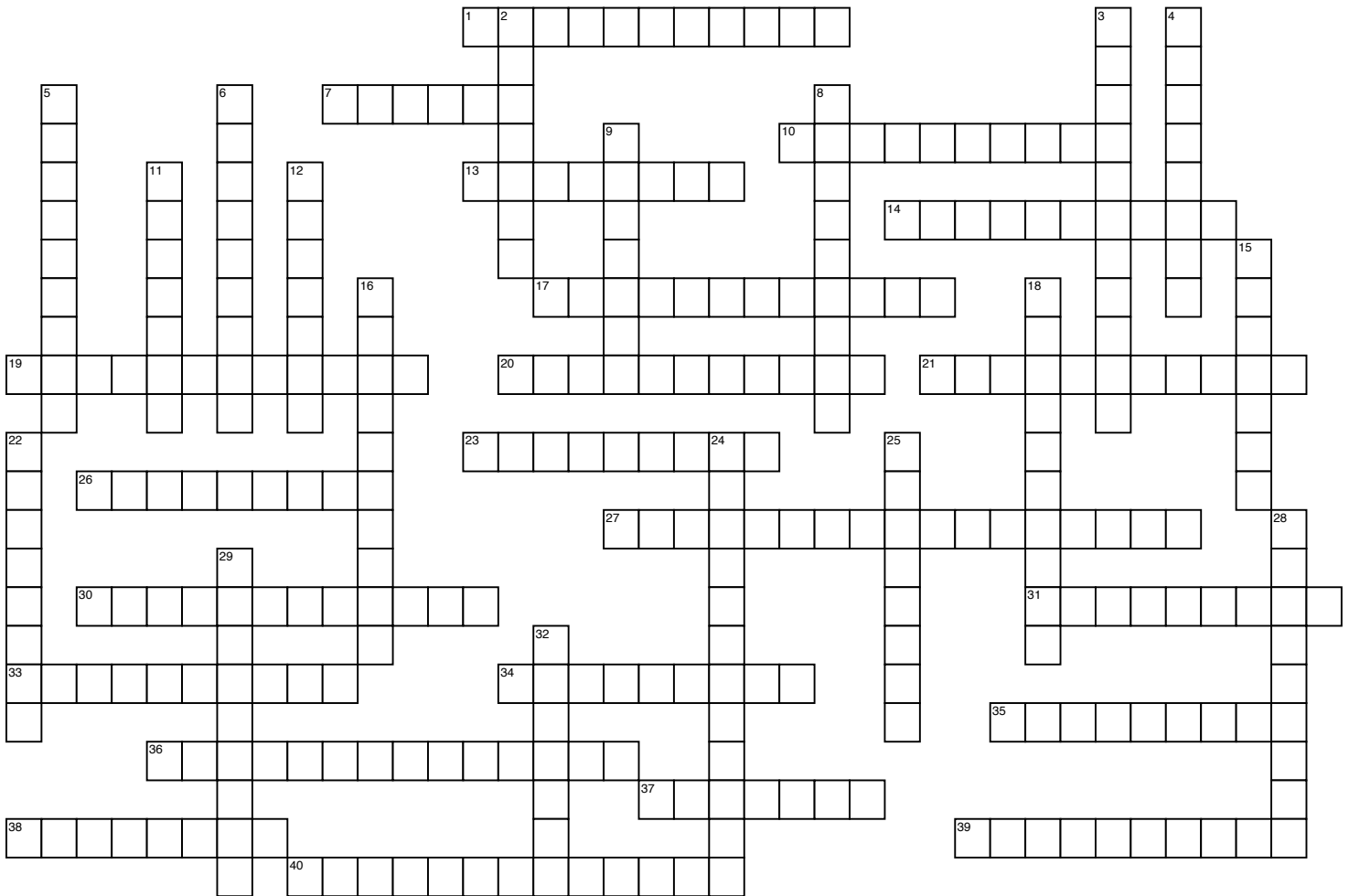
- 37 the study of ants
- 38 rushing precipitously forward
- 39 dancing, choreography
- 40 a person skilled in table talk
- 41 to bend the knee

## DOWN

- 2 bottle-shaped
- 4 tuna
- 5 a licence to print or publish
- 6 drunken revelry
- 10 a small wing of a building
- 11 belonging to the time before the fall of man
- 13 a person who takes up an occupation as an amusement
- 14 a wild sheep found in the Himalayas and Tibet
- 16 cheerful readiness
- 20 of, relating to, or tending toward a yellow colour
- 21 overturning, reversal
- 22 a small rattlesnake

- 24 serving as a substitute
- 25 a person dressed in ragged clothing
- 27 a woman who rides horses
- 31 of the same or equal age or antiquity
- 32 to cheat or swindle someone
- 34 resembling a rose
- 36 a large wardrobe

# Puzzle No. 3



Christopher Jury

## ACROSS

- 1 a hodgepodge or jumble
- 7 a Mediterranean sailing vessel
- 10 a Yugoslavian stringed instrument
- 13 the falling out of hair
- 14 deliberately affected
- 17 a nocturnal bird of North America
- 19 the state of being youthful
- 20 the time during which a throne is vacant between the end of the reign of a sovereign and the ascension of his successor
- 21 beauty
- 23 an eulogistic oration or writing
- 26 a little world
- 27 fear of the number thirteen
- 30 exceptionally high fever
- 31 exclusion by general consent from common privileges or social acceptance
- 33 characterized by extreme delicacy of form
- 34 a crossroads
- 35 of or relating to the sea or ocean
- 36 one that subsists on fish
- 37 dash or flamboyance in style and action
- 38 a type of fish
- 39 an ornamental structure used in funerals for the lying of the body
- 40 a obsolete method of producing pictures

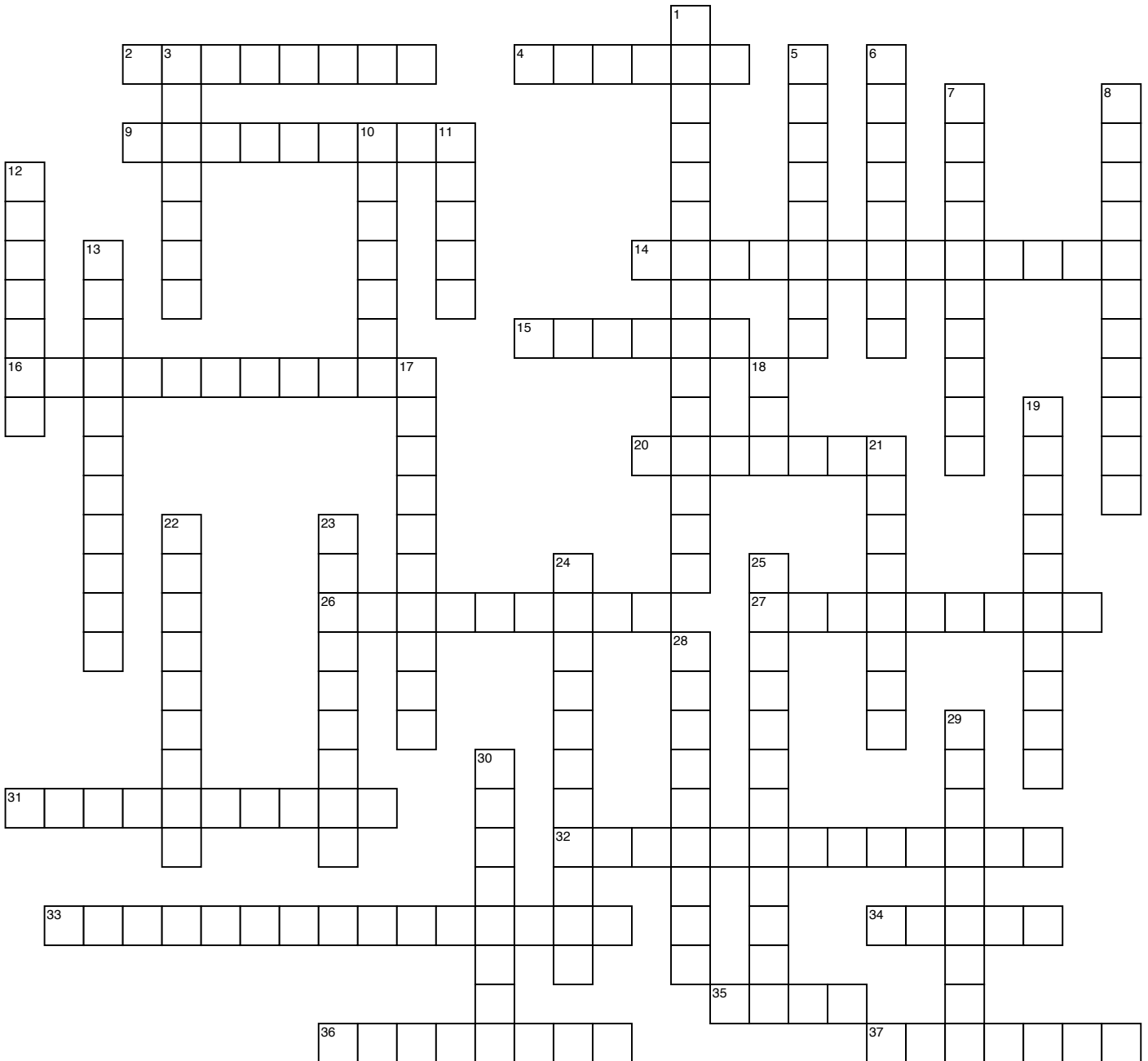
## DOWN

- 2 the impairment of the sense of taste
- 3 a principles or practices of a political leader who seeks to gain personal or partisan

advantage by extravagant claims, promises or charges

- 4 ardently or confidently optimistic
- 5 bristly
- 6 a small cup of coffee usually taken black
- 8 to make a harsh cry
- 9 a fellow banqueter
- 11 legal possession of land as one's own
- 12 a light square doughnut usually sprinkled with sugar
- 15 a woman's dressing room
- 16 a instrument for determining quickly the distances, bearings and elevations of distant objects in a survey
- 18 a defined area on which armorial bearings are depicted
- 22 a covert allusion to something not directly named
- 24 sleeplessness
- 25 one who is not of noble birth
- 28 to drive moisture from
- 29 a policeman's club
- 32 a thread or throng of sinew

# Puzzle No. 4



Christopher Jury

## ACROSS

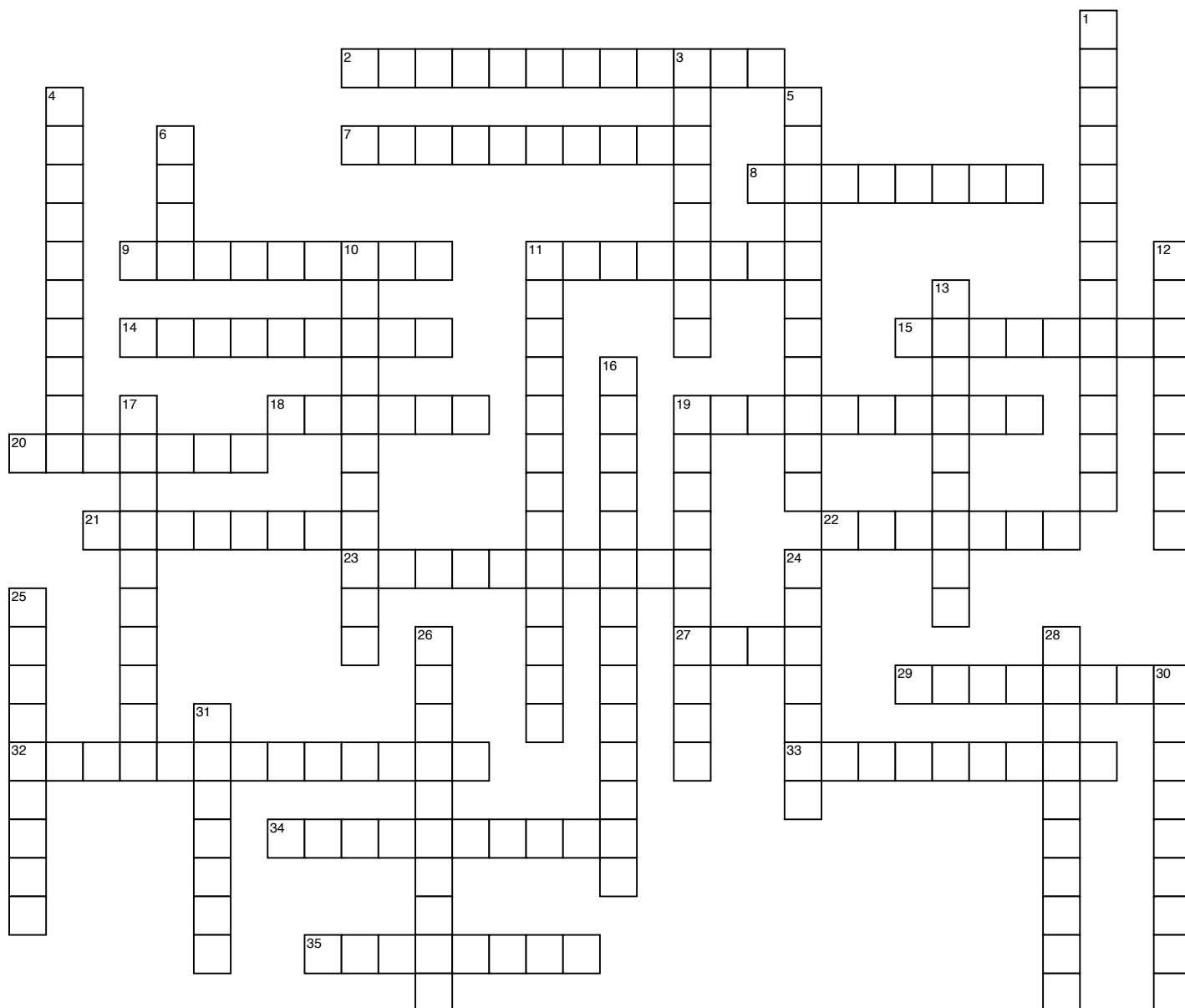
- 2 a bedroom slipper
- 4 at a time in the past
- 9 a bailiff of a great medieval lord or king
- 14 the state of being the firstborn of the children of the same parents
- 15 a garment resembling a tunic or coat usually reaching to the knees
- 16 relating to the typical hawk
- 20 to protest bitterly or violently
- 26 accented
- 27 marked by luxury or voluptuous living
- 31 a peddler of books
- 32 producing or containing silver
- 33 luminescence that perceptible with characteristic rate of decay after the exciting cause ceases to act
- 34 spoken Canadian French
- 35 to cause to turn around
- 36 a saleswoman
- 37 the well-educated or learned class

## DOWN

- 1 a soft clay mineral
- 3 an artist's studio or workroom

- 5 proud, haughty
- 6 a curtain hanging across a doorway
- 7 a day before the opening of an exhibition of painting reserved for the painters to varnish
- 8 a mania for holding public office
- 10 a member of the outcaste group in India
- 11 a magnifying glass used by jewelers and watchmakers
- 12 a Hungarian couple dance that starts very slowly and ends in a rapid whirl
- 13 one that is learning the rudiments of something
- 17 a piece of furniture resembling a bureau
- 18 the letter Y
- 19 an American breed of domestic fowls
- 21 a thorny shrub or small tree found abundantly in the southern United States
- 22 removal of weeds
- 23 the customary respectful behaviour due from a freedman to his patron or former master under Ancient Roman law
- 24 divination by means of dreams
- 25 one having the use or enjoyment of something
- 28 a narrow-billed auk of the northern seas
- 29 one or more whorls of bracts situated below and close to a flower, flower cluster or fruit
- 30 to desist from

# Puzzle No. 5



Christopher Jury

## ACROSS

- 2** a broad-spectrum antibiotic resembling penicillin  
**7** a deep-fried cube of pork  
**8** being with child  
**9** a gaseous hydrocarbon that is used chiefly in making synthetic rubber  
**11** a wax obtained from the surface of leaves of a fan palm of Brazil  
**14** a poem or stanza of ten lines  
**15** butterfly-shaped pasta  
**18** the soil water that is unavailable to plant organisms  
**19** a defaulter  
**20** a band of metal enclosing the end of a cane  
**21** any of various large ants that are blind except for the functional males  
**22** the political machine of the Communist party  
**23** the passage of blood cells

through capillary walls into the tissues

- 27** used to call attention often to one persecuted unjustly  
**29** affecting both nostrils alike  
**32** bleeding from the intestine  
**33** fine curved shavings of wood  
**34** disembowel  
**35** a sharp-pointed pinnacle of rock commonly found in glaciated mountains

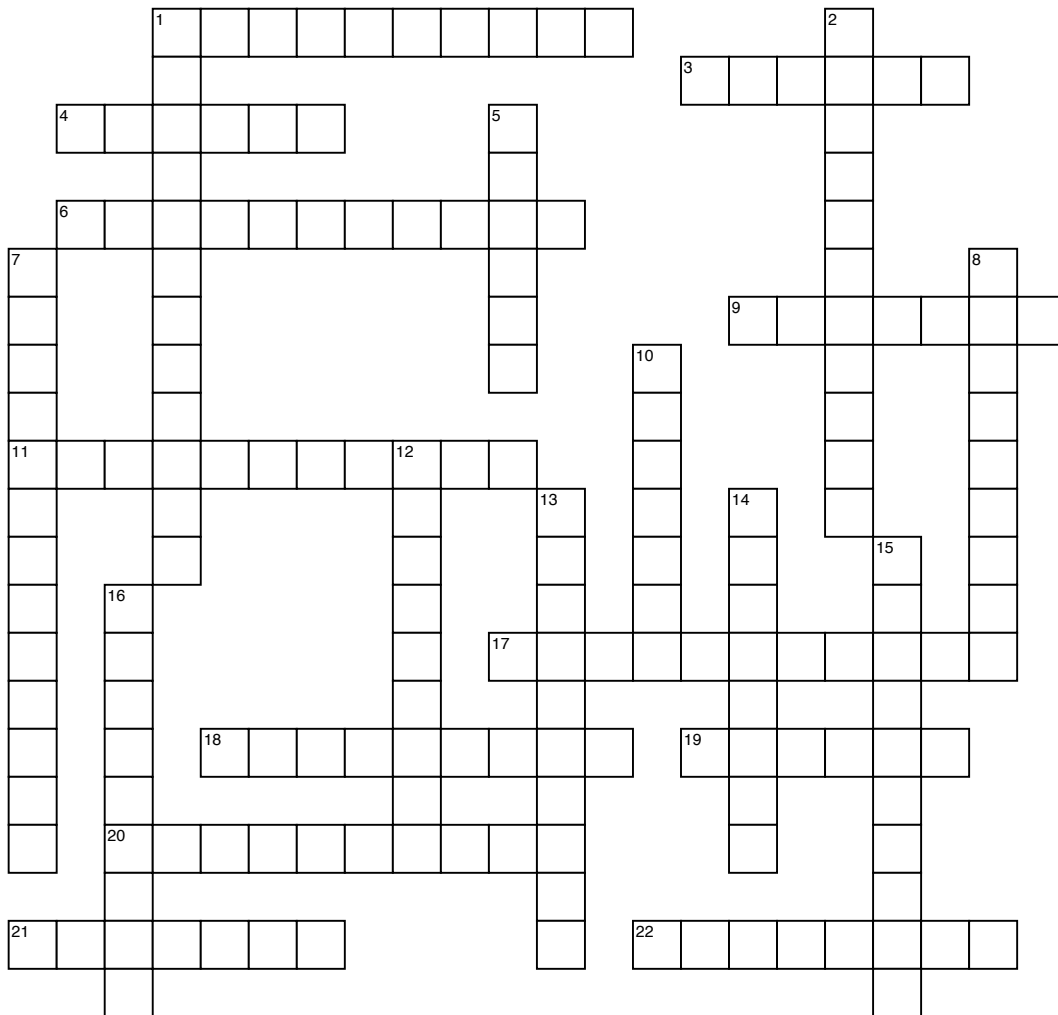
## DOWN

- 1** having fleshy or succulent leaves  
**3** a bell tower  
**4** an ornamental chain worn at a woman's waist  
**5** link together  
**6** the point of chief interest  
**10** growing upon the surface of bark  
**11** of the transitional period between the Bronze and Iron

Ages

- 12** increasing  
**13** a ballad singer  
**16** smoked liver sausage  
**17** a tree or shrub having flat branches disposed in two vertical rows and scalelike closely overlapping leaves  
**19** decorated with inlaid work of precious metals  
**24** a mammalian behaviour in which the animal inhales with the mouth open and upper lip curled to facilitate exposure of an olfactory organ to a scent  
**25** a leap during which a ballet dancer repeatedly crosses the legs  
**26** like leather in appearance  
**28** having two broods in one year  
**30** a breed of French domestic cat  
**31** a Spanish painting that depicts everyday life

# Puzzle No. 6



Christopher Jury

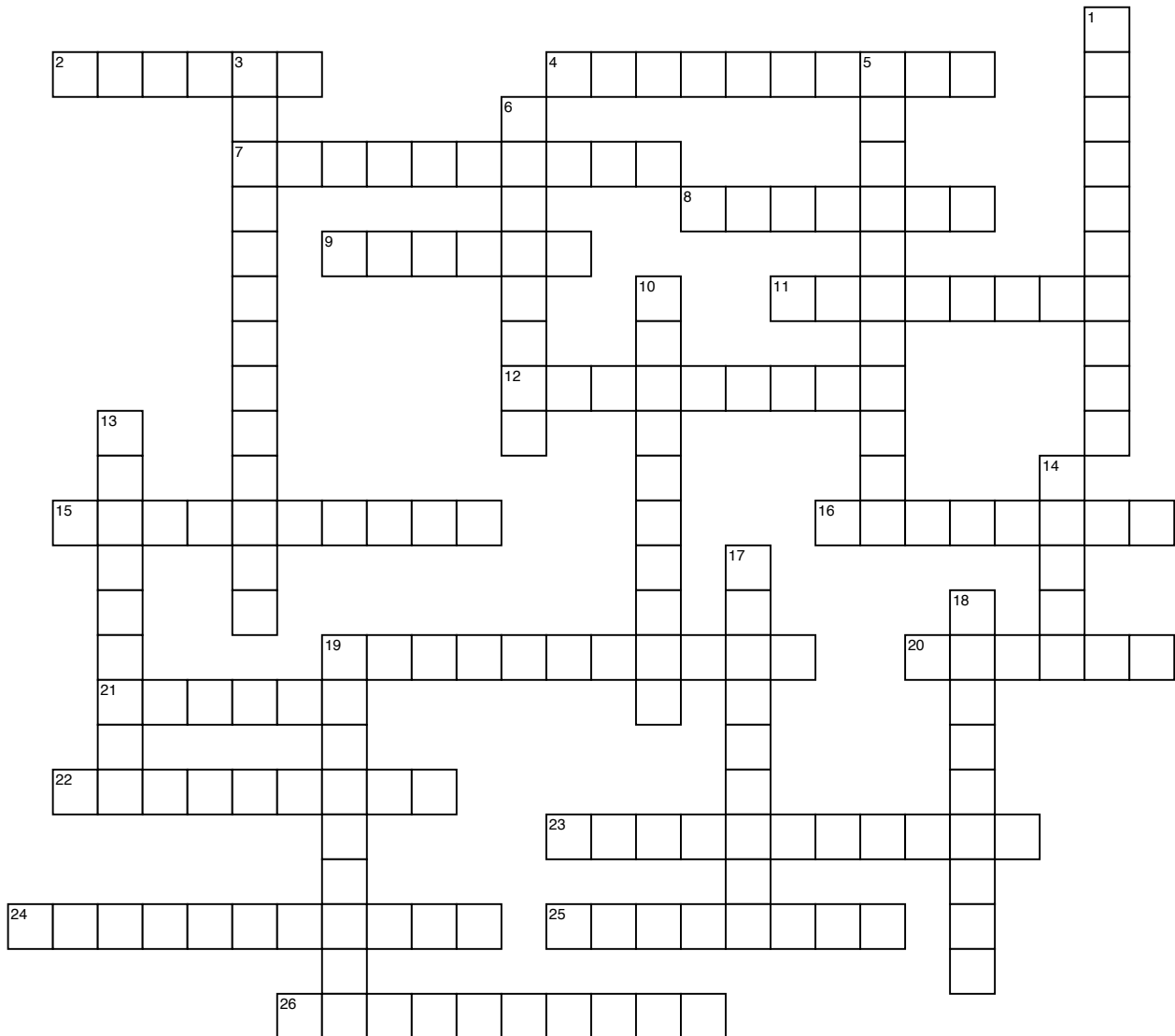
## ACROSS

- 1 occurring by chance without evident causal need or relation
- 3 a time when the conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action
- 4 lacking in social graces
- 6 yielding gum
- 9 cracklings from goose fat usually salted
- 11 a thickened layer of epidermis beneath the free end of a nail
- 17 a process tending to destroy a meteorological front
- 18 producing the fruit beneath the surface of the ground
- 19 the entire water content of the soil
- 20 a nonessential movement added to the classical musical suite
- 21 exaggerated
- 22 relating to the theories of Sigmund Freud and his system of psychoanalysis

## DOWN

- 1 bearing or producing fruit
- 2 shaped like a sickle
- 5 in strict tempo
- 7 a psychoneurosis in which one feels unable to resolve doubts or to resist phobias, obsessions etc.
- 8 the expression of an idea by two nouns connected by "and" instead of by a noun an adjective
- 10 relating to C.G. Jung whose psychological doctrines stress the opposition of introversion and extraversion and the concept of mythology and cultural and racial inheritance in the psychology of individuals
- 12 ask for
- 13 a state of being agitated
- 14 an oversized wine bottle holding about four quarts
- 15 pain in the stomach
- 16 a new word

# Puzzle No. 7



Christopher Jury

## ACROSS

- 2** a sculptured figure of a Greek youth as an athlete  
**4** producing any of various substances that are typically greasy viscous combustible liquids  
**7** build a nest  
**8** of the psychology which is the study of perception and behaviour from the standpoint of the organism's response to configurational wholes with stress on the identity of psychological and physiological events and rejection of atomistic or elemental analysis of stimulus, percept and response  
**9** a manor house or country residence in a French-speaking country  
**11** pain in the shoulder  
**12** a collection of eight books  
**15** an annual that is native to northern Africa and is widely cultivated for its long racemes of fragrant greenish yellow or greenish white flowers  
**16** characteristic of the English poet John Keats or his poetry  
**19** a pasta in the form of a short tube with oblique ends  
**20** a level or plateau especially in a progression  
**21** a mass drowning

- 22** the quality of state of being given to deception

- 23** a catfish  
**24** expressive of contempt or distaste usually mingled with reproach and an implication of inferiority  
**25** pronounce happy or blessed  
**26** mushroom poisoning

## DOWN

- 1** a company of French men-at-arms  
**3** parasitic on birds  
**5** a movable narrow stem that attaches a eye to the whole body of an organism  
**6** an act of slaughtering  
**10** muscular debility  
**13** an original issue or growth  
**14** a smooth tightly twisted thread  
**17** a disputer  
**18** collective farms or settlements in Israel organized on a communal basis  
**19** the quality or state of being better

# SPELL IT! OF THE SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE AND I SHARE SOME ETYMOLOGICAL SPELLING TIPS:

## SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM LATIN

1

One of the hardest things to remember about words from Latin is whether an internal consonant (like rr in interrupt) is doubled. To reinforce your memory of the correct spelling, try to remember related words all together (like interrupt along with interruption or necessary along with necessity).

2

The \ü\ sound (as in ooze) is nearly always spelled with u in words from Latin. It typically follows a \d\, \j\, \l\, \r\, or \s\ sound. After other consonants, this sound normally becomes \yü\ (as in bugle, subterfuge, ambiguity, and prosecute and in one pronunciation of refugee).

3

Beware of words like crescent in which the \s\ sound is spelled with sc in words from Latin. Other examples include visceral, discern, discipline, susceptible, and corpuscle.

4

A related tip: When you hear within a word from Latin the \s\ sound followed by any of the sounds of e (long, short, or schwa), there's a possibility that the \s\ sound is spelled with c as in exacerbate, access, adjacent, condolences, facetious, and necessary.

5

The letter i is a vowel often used to connect two Latin word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (\ə\), and you must guess at the spelling of this sound, the letter i might be a good guess: See carnivore and herbivore. Other examples include words that end in iform such as oviform and pediform.

6

The letter k rarely appears in words from Latin, and its sound is nearly always represented by c as in canary, prosaic, canine, mediocre, Capricorn, cognition, ductile, incorruptible, vernacular, innocuous, and many other words.

7

The letter x often gets the pronunciation \gz\ in words from Latin (as in exacerbate and exuberant).

8

The combination ious ends many adjectives of Latin origin. When the consonant that precedes ious is c or t, the sound of the final syllable is \shəs\.

as in precocious, facetious, ostentatious, and pernicious. It is important to keep in mind that several adjectives from Latin ending with this sound end in eous rather than ious. In such instances, the definitions of the words usually contain phrases such as “consisting of,” “resembling,” or “having the characteristic of.” Examples include words herbaceous, cetaceous, and lilaceous.

## **SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM GREEK**

1

In a few words from Greek, e appears at the end of a word and has long e sound \the e in ME\: Some examples are acme, apostrophe, and hyperbole.

2

A k\ sound in English often represents a sound from Greek that we don't actually use, and the most common spelling of this sound in English is ch: See anachronism, arachnid, character, chronic, chronology, dichotomy, gynarchy, hierarchy, matriarch, melancholy, notochord, patriarch, synchronous, and tachometer.

3

The most frequent sound that y gets in words from Greek is short i (\i\ ) as in acronym, calypso, cryptic, cynical, dyslexia, eponym, homonym, myriad, Olympian, polymer, symbiosis, synchronous, synergy, synonym, synopsis, and syntax.

4

A long i sound (the y in MY) in a word that comes from Greek is sometimes represented by y, especially after h, as in hydraulic, hydrology, hygiene, hyperbole, hyphen, hypothesis, cynosure, dynamic, gynarchy, pyre, and xylophone.

5

In ancient Greek, the letter phi (pronounced \f + the y in MY\ ) represented a breathy or “aspirated” version of the sound that is represented in English by f. Speakers of Roman-alphabet languages did not have this sound or a corresponding letter, so they substituted the \f\ sound but memorialized the original sound of phi by using ph to spell it. As a result, the English \f\ sound almost always appears as ph in words of Greek origin. Consider, for example: amphibious, apostrophe, cacophony, diphthong, epiphany, euphemism, hyphen, metamorphosis, metaphor, periphery, phenomenon, philanthropy, philately, philhellenism, spherical, topography, xylophone, and zephyr. Hundreds of words in English derived from Greek show this spelling.

6

The letter o is the vowel most often used to connect two Greek word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (\ə\ ) as in xylophone, notochord, androcentric, orthodox, ergonomic, geonics, and asthmogenic, and you must guess at the spelling of this sound, the letter o is a very good guess. The words hypnotist, geometric, and electrolyte are among the many, many words made of Greek word elements connected by o.

7

The \j\ sound is always spelled with g in words from Greek. Why? When the \j\ sound appears in words of Greek origin, it does so as an anglicized pronunciation of a root originally pronounced with a hard g.

8

A schwa in words from Greek is occasionally spelled with y: See analysis, etymology, misogynist, odyssey, and zephyr.

## **SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM FRENCH**

1

French nearly always spells the \sh\ sound with ch, and this spelling of the sound is very common in words from French. Chagrin, chauvinism, and crochet are examples.

2

A word from French ending with a stressed \et\ is usually spelled with ette as in croquette and layette.

3

A long a sound (\the ay in MAY\ ) at the end of a word from French can be spelled a number of ways. One of the more common ways is with et as in cachet, crochet, and croquet.

4

The /yay/ sound at the end of French words is usually spelled ier. Dossier and sommelier are examples.

5

A long e sound (\the e in ME\ ) at the end of a word from French can be spelled with ie as in prairie and sortie. (But beware, as occasionally it can be spelled ee as in fricassee and marquee).

6

Words ending with the \age in COLLAGE\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelled age as in garage, mirage, dressage, barrage, camouflage, entourage, and fuselage.

7

A \k\ sound at the end of a word from French is often spelled que as in mystique, boutique, and physique.

8

The \ü\ sound (as in rouge and many others) in words from French is usually spelled with ou. Sometimes, however, it is spelled with u as in tutu and ecru.

9

When the \sh\ sound occurs at the end of a word from French, there is nearly always a silent e that follows it, as in quiche and gauche.

10

Words ending with an \ade in FADE\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelled ade as in fusillade.

11

French speakers have a number of vowels that English speakers modify in pronunciation. Our way of pronouncing the French aise (pronounced \ez\ in French) is usually \a in FATHER + z\.

## SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM GERMAN

1

Don't shy away from consonant clusters! German words often have combinations of three or more consonants that don't occur in thoroughly English words. Examples include ngst in angst, sch in schadenfreude, schn in schnauzer, and nschl in anschluss.

2

A \k\ sound in a word from German is usually spelled with k at the beginning of a word or syllable (as in kitsch and einkorn) and often with ck at the end of a word or syllable (as in knapsack and glockenspiel).

3

A long i sound (\the y in MY\) usually has the spelling ei in words from German, as in fräulein, Meistersinger, zeitgeber, and several other words on the list.

4

The \f\ sound, especially at the beginning of a word, is sometimes spelled with v in German words as in vorlage. Other examples include the words herrenvolk and volkslied.

5

The letter z is far more common in German than in English. Note that its pronunciation is not usually the same as English \z\. When it follows a t, which is common, the pronunciation is \s\ as in spritz, pretzel, blitzkrieg, and several other words on the list.

6

The \sh\ sound in words of German origin is usually spelled sch as in schadenfreude, whether at the beginning or end of a word or syllable. In schottische, you get it in both places!

7

A long e sound (\the e in ME\) usually has the spelling ie in words from German, as in blitzkrieg and glockenspiel.

8

The letter w is properly pronounced as \v\ in German, as you hear in one pronunciation of edelweiss and in wedel and Weissnichtwo. Many German words, however, have become so anglicized that this pronunciation has vanished. Many people, for example, say “bratwurst,” not “bratvurst.

## **SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM OLD ENGLISH**

1

Old English likes double consonants following short vowels, especially if the vowel is in a stressed syllable. Examples include quell, paddock, mattock, sallow, fennel, hassock, errand, barrow, kipper, and Wiccan.

2

A long a sound (\the ay in MAY\) at the end of words from Old English is nearly always spelled ay as in belay.

3

Long e (\the e in ME\) at the end of an adjective or adverb from Old English is nearly always spelled with y. Examples include dreary, watery, windily, fiery, creepy, daily, stringy, timely, womanly, and chary.

4

Long o (\the o in GO\) at the end of words from Old English is typically spelled with ow as in *sallow* and *barrow*. By contrast, a long o at the end of a word in many languages that English has borrowed from is simply spelled with o.

5

When the syllable \səl\ ends words from Old English, it is nearly always spelled *stle*, with the t being silent (as in *gristle* and *nestle*).

6

Silent gh after a vowel is common in words from Old English, as in *slaughter*. Silent gh usually appears after i in words like *plight* (not on the study list) and *nightingale*, and it signals that the vowel is pronounced like \the y in MY\.

7

The vowel combination oa in words from Old English is nearly always pronounced as long o (\the o in GO\) as in *loam* and *goatee*. Examples include *shoal*, *boastful*, and *gloaming*.

8

Silent e on the end or not? For words from Old English that end in either hard th or soft th, remember this: More often than not, soft th will have a silent e at the end of the word. Consider, for example, *bequeath*, *dearth*, *kith*, *hearth*, and *hundredth* versus *blithe*, *tithe*, and *lithe*. Interestingly, the word *blithe* can be pronounced both ways.

## MY NUMBER ONE TIP:

Work on your pronunciation of words. Make sure you aren't just trying to memorize enormous lists of words by looking down them hoping that you will remember every one, because the chances are that you might not remember any of them at all, and if you do, you might think it is pronounced differently (for example, according to how it looks) than it actually is. Say each one you look at and research its language of origin and its definition. It's a very slow process but the words really stick in your mind and you will be surprised how quickly your mind starts to unconsciously recognize spelling patterns in languages.