

Word Squares: an introduction

Word squares, which are constructed of words written both horizontally and vertically to form a square, are extremely old.

They were certainly known to the ancient Romans; there's a famous palindromic one that is still found carved into ruins across the former Roman Empire.

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

In English, aficionados have constructed word squares of everywhere from three to nine letters.

A three-letter word square is termed an order three:

B O A
O L D
A D O

*A word square of four four-letter words is an **order four**.*

FOUR
OKRA
URNS
RASH

We'll be playing with **order fives**.

For the purists, a good word square restricts itself to the uncapitalized, unpunctuated stuff of major dictionaries. But mine

will follow crossword puzzle conventions. Proper nouns, current slang, hyphenated words, common foreign words, variant spellings, the odd two-word phrase: all are here!

How to play:

Each square is clued & solved as in a crossword puzzle:

1. Necktie style racecourse

2. Find an answer to

3. Bits of evidence

4. Open

5. Bad-tempered

A	S	C	O	T
S	O	L	V	E
C	L	U	E	S
O	V	E	R	T
T	E	S	T	Y

*Each solution is entered **twice**, both **horizontally** & **vertically**.
Solutions include well-known proper names.*

Words containing an apostrophe ("wasn't") are not identified as such in the clue; hyphenated words ("get-go") are so noted, as are a few variant spellings, & the very few two-word phrases ("let go").

Most clues are simple definitions (see #'s 2, 3, 4, 5 above).

Some, however, are framed as double definitions (see #1).

I'll add regularly to my store of puzzles, with the goal of posting at least 200, but I won't offer any solutions until there are 25 puzzles up, so that I can shuffle the solutions well enough to impede accidental discovery of the answers. What I WILL offer to provide some immediate help are some "lifeline letters."

In every word square there are five letters that feature in just one word; they paint a top left to bottom right diagonal line. In the sample puzzle, they are A-O-U-R-Y. I'll provide 1-2 lifeline letters with every puzzle, without saying where they fit. E.g. **A**, or (in alphabetical order) **R-U**.

For example, try this puzzle:

1 A/D where the winner finishes

2 A/D angry

3 A/D a radioactive gas, symbol Rn

4 A/D it's under the flesh of the plum

5 A/D principle or belief

Lifeline letter: **R**

And here's the solution (don't scroll down until you're ready to see it!):

**FIRST
IRATE
RADON
STONE
TENET**

For example, try this puzzle:
