

# Cryptic Crosswords : Section S — Symbols

## ONE and TWO-LETTER SYMBOLS and EQUIVALENTS (and some THREE LETTER)

### ALPHABETICAL LISTS by PRODUCT

This list is not and cannot be exhaustive!

It isn't feasible to present the general full list in the alternative alphabetical order of words and phrases since there are so many - and the phrasing is so variable.

Unfortunately such an ordering is what the beginner to cryptic crosswords may think is the thing to have! But it just doesn't work that way in practice.

Become accustomed, with practice, to the commonly encountered symbols and equivalents (an arbitrary list of these to be found at the end of this section). The eye and mind then becomes attuned to the likelihood of this kind of situation and, by experience, the vocabulary of symbols becomes extended.

There are 'crossword list' books available which have lists of words organised into categories (American states, fungi, etc) and by word length. They are useful for general browsing. I have yet to find that mine (*Crossword Lists, Anne Stibbs, Bloomsbury, 1989*) has actually provided me with the word I wanted at the time!

Quality dictionaries usually have lists of official abbreviations (=symbols). For the crossword solver the way that Chambers' now lists these, in the body of the dictionary, is a backward step!

There are specific lists for common categories of symbols following this general list. Entries asterisked in the general list are examples of products more fully listed in a separate category (chemical elements, music scales, etc)

<b>A</b>	
<b>a</b>	ampere, area, ante (before), article, associate, author, Austria, bomb, current, key, note, one
<b>aa</b>	Alcoholics Anonymous or abstainers, non-drinkers, temperance people, Automobile Association or car club, motorists, drivers
<b>ab</b>	jack, mariner, sailor, salt, tar, 'first two' (of lphabet)
<b>ac</b>	account, bill, charge, current,
<b>ad</b>	advert, bill, notice, this/our time
<b>ag</b>	silver*
<b>ai</b>	capital, first class, main road
<b>al</b>	Alan, Capone, gangster, lad, boy
<b>am</b>	before, noon, dawn, morning
<b>an</b>	article, one
<b>as</b>	Anglo-Saxon, arsenic*, like, while
<b>at</b>	beside, close
<b>az</b>	everything, street guide
<b>B</b>	
<b>b</b>	baron, black, (and hence 'soft' as in pencils), born, bowled, British, key, note*, second rate
<b>ba</b>	bachelor, degree, graduate,
<b>bb</b>	Boys' Brigade,

<b>bc</b>	shot(gauge)
	old times
<b>bd</b>	twice daily(=bis diem)
<b>bo</b>	(body) odour, smell
<b>br</b>	trains
<b>C</b>	
<b>c</b>	about, carbon*, century, chapter, cold, conservative (Tory), hundred
<b>ca</b>	about, accountant
<b>cd</b>	diplomats,, disc
<b>ce</b>	church
<b>ch</b>	church, honour
<b>co</b>	care of, commander (military chief etc), company, firm
<b>cr</b>	credit, 'in the black'
<b>cu</b>	copper*
<b>cv</b>	'life history'
<b>D</b>	
<b>d</b>	copper (Lsd), day, dead, degree, diamond, died, five hundred, late, (old) copper (as in Lsd)
<b>da</b>	American lawyer, attorney, lawyer
<b>dc</b>	current
<b>dd</b>	bishop, clergyman, day, divine, theologian
<b>de</b>	'of France' , 'of the French'
<b>di</b>	detective, Diana, huntress, policeman,

<b>do</b>	princess
	act, as before, ditto, fuss, party
<b>dr</b>	doctor, medic
<b>dv</b>	'God willing'
<b>E</b>	
<b>e *</b>	bearing, direction, east, english, oriental, point, quarter
<b>ec</b>	city (=EC of London)
<b>ed</b>	editor, journalist,
<b>eg</b>	for instance, 'say'
<b>el</b>	the Spanish, wing, railway(elevated railroad)
<b>em</b>	space(=width of 'm')
<b>en</b>	space(=width of 'n')
<b>ep</b>	record
<b>er</b>	monarch, queen, hesitation
<b>et</b>	'and French', extra-terrestrial (alien)
<b>ex</b>	earlier, former, old flame, previous lover
<b>F</b>	
<b>f</b>	fahrenheit, fellow, loud
<b>fa</b>	football/soccer, me
<b>fc</b>	side, club, men
<b>fe</b>	iron(=element symbol)*
<b>ff</b>	very loud
<b>fr</b>	father, friar
<b>ft</b>	foot, little foot
<b>fx</b>	special effects

## Cryptic Crosswords : Section S — Symbols

**G**  
**g** George the First, gram, gravity/force, king  
**ga** Georgia (state)\*  
**gb** Britain  
**gc** George Cross, medal, decoration, honour  
**ge** germanium  
**gg** child's horse, horse  
**gi** American soldier, foreign soldier  
**go** game, leave, quit, turn  
**gp** doctor  
**gr** Greek

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**H**  
**h** hard, height, Henry, hospital, hot, hour, hydrant, bomb, the centre(='h')

**ha** hectare  
**hal** Henry  
**hb** pencil  
**hc** 'hot and cold'  
 high explosive  
**hg** mercury  
**hp** 'on the never never', sauce

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**I**  
**i** myself, one, subject  
**ic** in charge, ninety nine, 99

**id** 499, identity, alter ego, personality

**ie** for instance, that is  
**ii** eleven, side, team  
**il** forty-nine\*  
**im** I am short, I am, 999  
**in** at home, home, not out, batting, fashionable  
**io** ten (!)  
**iou** debts  
**iq** intelligence, sense,  
**is** exists  
**it** Italian, object, sex appeal  
**iv** four  
**ix** nine

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**J**  
**je** French first person  
**jo** Joel, Josephine  
**jp** magistrate  
**jr** Dallas man, junior

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**K**  
**k** king, Rex, ruler, potassium  
**kc** old lawyer (=King's Counsel)  
**kg** King George  
**kk** (also 'kkk') secret society  
**ko** kick off, knockout  
**kr** krypton (=element symbol)  
**kt** knight (*knight in chess is 'n'*)  
**ky** Kentucky

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**L**  
**l** amateur, apprentice, fifty, learner, left, liberal, many (=fifty), novice, number, port (=left of a ship, or =left on board), pound, (i.e. L.s.d.), pupil, quid, student, tyro

**la** Los Angeles (=city), note (also 'lah'), 'the French' (feminine)

**lb** pound(weight)  
**le** 'the French' (masculine)  
**les** 'the French'  
**lner** railway  
**lo** behold, look  
**lp** disc, record  
**lt** lieutenant, officer  
**lv** fifty-five

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**M**  
**m** Frenchman, large number, number, thousand, monsieur, motorway (also see **mi**)  
**ma** degree, graduate, mother, scholar  
**mb** doctor  
**mc** compere, Scotsman  
**md** doctor, medic  
**me** myself, yours truly, object  
**mg** milligram, weight  
**mi** main road  
 motorway(=M1)

**ml** millilitre, volume  
**mm** decoration, medal  
**mo** doctor  
**mp** legislator, parliamentarian member, politician, redcap(Military Police)  
**mps** chemist, pharmacist (old style, - it should now be MRPharmS)  
**mr** mister  
**ms** female, manuscript, writing,  
**mv** ship, vessel (as Motor Vessel)  
**my** Lord!, gosh!, heavens!

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**N**  
**n** bearing, direction, north, northern, number, point, pole, quarter, knight (*in chess*)  
**nb** note (well)  
**ne** Tyne and Wear, (north east England)  
**ng** no good, useless  
**no** Japanese drama, (also 'noh'), number, refusal  
**nt** Bible, books, National Trust  
**nu** Greek letter/character\*  
**ny** NewYork (=city)

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## Cryptic Crosswords : Section S — Symbols

**O**  
**o** ball, circle, duck (*cricket*), love, nil, old, nothing, null, ring, round, oxygen, zero

**ob** old boy, alumnus, old pupil

**oc** officer commanding

**ok** all right, good

**om** decoration, honour

**on** above, over, running, working

**oo** spectacles

**op** operation, work

**or** gold

**ot** Bible , books

**os** large (outsize)

**oz** Australia, wizard home

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**P**  
**p** copper (£p), page, parking, penny, piano, president, prince, quiet, soft(ly)

**pa** Daddy, father, parent, public address

**pc** copper, correct(*politically*)

**pe** exercise

**ph** acidity/alkalinity

**pi** Greek character, ratio

**pm** afternoon, leader, Thatcher /Major / Blair (and previous and future PM incumbents)

**po** Italian flower(=river), post office

**pp** very quiet(ly)/soft(ly)

**ps** afterthought

**pt** exercise

**px** US Naafi

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**Q**  
**q** queen, question

**qc** lawman, lawyer

**qe** liner

**qs** sufficient (quantity)

**qt** quiet

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**R**  
**r** king, monarch, queen, rex, right, river, take(=recipe)

**ra** army, artist(s), gunner(s)

**rc** church, Red Cross, Roman Catholic

**re** about, again, concerning, engineers, sappers, regarding

**ri** religious instruction

**rh** Rhesus (factor, monkey)

**rm** marines (jolly=marines)

**rn** Navy

**rr** car, Rolls-Royce

**rt** radio-telephone, right

**rx** reception, take(recipe)

**ry** lines, railway

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**S**  
**s** bearing, bob(Lsd), direction, point, quarter, Sunday, second, shilling, society, south, sun, Sweden

**sa** South Africa, South America, sex appeal, 'it'

**se** Kent (south east)

**sf** science fiction, San Francisco (=city)

**sh** hush, quiet

**si** yes (Spanish)

**so** thus, then

**sp** odds, betting

**sr** Senor, Spanish man, railway

**ss** Nazis, ship, vessel

**st** Holy man, saint, good, street, way

**sw** point

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**T**  
**t** junction, shirt, square

**ta** army, reserve, terriers, thanks

**to** at, towards

**tt** abstainer, race, teetotal

**tv** set

**tx** transmission

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**U**  
**u** fashionable, in, proper, (type of) boat, turn, university

**ufo** (alien) craft

**uk** Britain

**un** 'a French', World Council, multinational company, old city

**ur** America, United States, you and me, unserviceable, useless

**ut** note(music,=doh)

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**V**  
**v** against, five, number, versus, victory

**va** museum, state, Virginia

**vc** award, decoration, honour, medal

**ve** day of victory

**vi** six

**vp** vice president

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**W**  
**w** bearing, direction, point, quarter, Welsh, west(ern) (west) area of London/city

**wc** you and I, us, West End cricketer, (Mr/Dr) Grace

**we** women's group, West End (post code of)

**wi** week

**wk** week

**wt** weight

# Cryptic Crosswords : Section S — Symbols

<b>X</b>	
<b>x</b>	by, cross, kiss, number, ten, unknown, vote
<b>xi</b>	eleven, side, team
<b>xl</b>	forty, extra large
<b>xv</b>	fifteen, rugby team
<b>xx</b>	twenty, top brew

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<b>Y</b>	
<b>y</b>	axis, unknown, yard, year, yen
<b>yc</b>	young conservative/Tory

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<b>Z</b>	
<b>z</b>	last, (last)letter, omega, zero
<b>zz</b>	asleep

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## Chemical Elements commonly used:

Note that some of the symbols reflect the (old) classical names of the elements and so seem to be at odds with the present names. Particularly common in cryptic clues are **iron, tin, copper, gold,** and **silver.**

arsenic	As
carbon	C
chromium	Cr

cobalt	Co
copper	Cu
fluorine	F
gold	Au
helium	He
hydrogen	H
iodine	I
iron	Fe
oxygen	O
phosphorus	P
potassium	K
silver	Ag
sodium	Na
tin	Sn

Quality dictionaries usually have a listing of all the elements and their symbols.

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## Tonic Sol-Fa scale

Often clued as 'note'. All are common.

do, doh, ut,ray, re,me,fa, fah  
so,soh, la,lah, te

## Greek alphabet

Often clued as 'Greek character'

Common are 'eta', 'iota', 'mu', 'nu', 'pi', 'rho', 'tau', 'phi', 'chi'.

alpha	beta	gamma
delta	epsilon	zeta
eta	theta	iota
kappa	lambda	mu
nu	xi	omicron
pi	rho	sigma
tau	upsilon	phi
chi	psi	omega

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## Roman numerals

*Commonly met*

V	five
X	ten
L	fifty
C	hundred
D	five hundred
M	thousand

also Greek K = thousand  
and 'American' G = thousand (grand)

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## Here is a *short* list of symbols that are commonly encountered:

- **musical notes, scales, keys**

a, b, c, d, e, f, g

do (ut), re, me, fa(h), so(h), la(h), te

- **symbols of elements from the periodic table.**

ag, au, al, be, fe, h, he, i, o, sn, w

- **directions, points (of compass)**

n,s,e,w also combinations: se, sw, etc.

- **All the letters spelled out;**

eg 'ess', 'see', 'eff', 'gee'

- **general :**

<b>b</b>	soft(pencil)
<b>c</b>	about,around (from 'circa' Latin)
<b>ca</b>	about,around (ditto)
<b>f</b>	loud(music, also 'ff')
<b>h</b>	hard(pencil)
<b>k</b>	king
<b>l</b>	learner, left, pound
<b>n</b>	knight (in chess)
<b>ny</b>	New York, other cities and states treated similarly; 'va' for Virginia,

## Cryptic Crosswords : Section S — Symbols

	'ca' for Carolina, 'cal' for California etc.
<b>o</b>	round, egg, duck(cricket)
<b>op</b>	work ('opus')
<b>p</b>	quiet (music) also ' <b>pp</b> ' for <i>very quiet</i>
<b>q</b>	queen
<b>r</b>	king, queen, ruler, also specifics: 'er' for Elizabeth, gr' or 'g' for George, etc
<b>sh</b>	quiet
<b>st</b>	saint, good man; street
<b>t</b>	square (T square)
<b>v</b>	against ('versus')
<b>x</b>	ten, 10 (as roman numeral, also 'l' for 50, v' for 5, 'c' for 100, ' d' for 500, ' 'm' , 'k', and 'g' for 1000)
<b>z</b>	'final character' (think also of 'second character' =b etc)

### Useful THREE-LETTER words either as letter fodder or as an answer :

<b>aire</b>	river
<b>ala</b>	in the style of . .
<b>ave</b>	way (avenue)
<b>ay, aye</b>	forever (Scots)
<b>chi</b>	Greek character
<b>cia</b>	intelligence, agents, spies
<b>col</b>	officer, pass (mountain)
<b>con</b>	study. Know
<b>dee</b>	river
<b>den</b>	study
<b>der</b>	the German . .
<b>dis</b>	hell, underworld
<b>diss</b>	Norfolk town
<b>don</b>	river
<b>emu</b>	bird
<b>elia(n)</b>	writer (Charles Lamb =Elia)
<b>eta</b>	arrival(time), nationalists
<b>gat</b>	gun, arm
<b>hal</b>	Henry, good king
<b>hic</b>	here (Latin)
<b>iou</b>	debts
<b>ken</b>	know
<b>lea</b>	meadow, field
<b>lee</b>	shelter
<b>low</b>	cow noise
<b>moo</b>	low (cow noise!)
<b>mps</b>	chemist
<b>nur</b>	railway men (union)
<b>obe</b>	honour
<b>ohm</b>	resistance, scientist
<b>ore</b>	metal/mineral source, Danish money

<b>per</b>	through
<b>phi</b>	Greek character
<b>plo</b>	nationalists
<b>pro</b>	for, in support
<b>rho</b>	Greek character
<b>ret</b>	soften, rot
<b>sat</b>	weekend
<b>sed</b>	but (Latin)
<b>soc</b>	society
<b>sol</b>	sun
<b>sot</b>	drunkard
<b>spa</b>	well, spring
<b>spy</b>	agent
<b>sum</b>	tot, add, I am
<b>sun</b>	weekend
<b>ted</b>	dry
<b>tnt</b>	explosive
<b>tor</b>	hill, rock
<b>ugh</b>	expression, distaste
<b>ure</b>	river
<b>vat</b>	tax

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### and, a few FOUR-LETTER words :

<b>aden</b>	port
<b>eric</b>	fine (penalty)
<b>etui</b>	needlecase
<b>inch</b>	island
<b>ling</b>	fish(cod), heather
<b>neat</b>	animal, cow/bull/steer
<b>ness</b>	head, cape
<b>olio</b>	Italian(food) dish
<b>scot</b>	tax
<b>tent</b>	wine (red, Spanish)