

CryptoQuad by Anthony Stuchel

CryptoQuad is a brain-teasing word puzzle game. You are presented with a group of "tiles." Each tile contains two letters. The tiles combine together to form four words. You could always just try to figure out what the words are by trial and error. However, the real fun comes from trying to figure out the words based on their cryptic clues!

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How do I start CryptoQuad?

The very first thing you need to do to start CryptoQuad is to load a puzzle file. You can load a puzzle by selecting File-Open from the menu. An open file dialog will appear so that you may open a puzzle file to play. CryptoQuad puzzle files have a *.CQP extension. Once you select a puzzle file and press the **OK** button, the game will begin.

How do I play CryptoQuad?

On each of CryptoQuad's four levels, you are looking to identify four words. Cryptic clues to the words are given in the four areas at the bottom of the screen, but you can solve the puzzles even if you ignore the clues. The words have been divided into two-letter tiles which are shuffled and displayed on the left side of the window. You may pick up the letter boxes with the mouse by positioning the mouse cursor over the box and holding down the left mouse button. With a keyboard, you can pick up the boxes by moving the box selector (the red square that starts on the top left box) with the arrow keys and pressing the Spacebar key. Move the letter boxes into the quadrangle grid found on the right side of the window to form words. You can drop the box in the square by letting go of the left mouse button or by pressing the Spacebar key again. Just get the right letters IN THE RIGHT ORDER and the level is solved.

The words on the first level are four letters long; on the second level they are six letters long; on the third, eight; and on the fourth, ten. Yes, the higher levels are pretty tough. Level One is easy.

It's possible to solve the puzzle by looking at the shuffled tiles on the left and figuring out how they can possibly fit on the grid, but the cryptic clues can really help -- if you can figure them out. Once you've figured out a couple of the words the possibilities for the other two are narrowed down quite a bit. Once you've entered the third word, the fourth is almost trivial.

If you need it, there is a HINT feature. Click on the clue using the left mouse button (or if using the keyboard press 1-4) and a message box will ask you if you wish to receive a hint. The hint for that word will be displayed in the message box. Of course getting a hint is not free, verifying that you want a hint results in a penalty that will be applied to your time. You may cancel the hint if you wish by choosing No when asked. If you solve all four levels, and you complete the puzzle in good time, you may enter your name in the Hall of Fame for that puzzle. If you complete a puzzle fast enough, you will be rewarded with the secret word which is a good ego booster and fun to brag about.

I don't understand how the clues work. What do they mean?

In cryptic puzzles, part of the clue is a definition of the word; the rest of the clue is a wordplay on the word. You never know whether the wordplay comes at the beginning or the end of the clue. The charm of this kind of crossword is that you will feel great every time you figure a word out.

There are several different types of wordplay that are used. There is usually one type per clue, but occasionally two of them may be used in a single definition.

ANAGRAMS: A word (or words) in the clue need to be rearranged. There will be a word like "crazy" or "shifted" next to the anagrammed word(s) that tip you off to look for an anagram.

ROCK SCRIBBLED NOTES = STONE

Anagram notes to get stone.

CHARADES: The answer has been broken into two or more consecutive parts, and clues for each are given.

SKINNY RULER IS PONDERING = THINKING

thin + king

CONTAINERS: Similar to Charades, this type of clue indicates that a word can be found inside another word.

STICKS TO INSIDE PROHIBITIONS = BATONS

to inside bans

HIDDEN WORDS: Sometimes the answer is given directly in the clue, but is disguised. A phrase like "found", "in" or "held in" will often indicate a hidden word.

JAMES CAPE HELD IN GETAWAY = ESCAPE

escape

HOMOPHONES: The answer sounds like the word defined by the clue. There will be a word like "sounds" or "hears" to tip you off.

CASH HEARD BY A FEMALE DEER = DOUGH

dough and doe

REVERSALS: The answer will spell something else backward. An across word will have a tipoff phrase such as "to the left." A down word will have something like "rising."

MEDIUM LEFT LATE FOR MINERAL = METAL

m (medium) + etal (late backwards)

DELETIONS: A letter may be deleted from a word to make another.

GREATEST OGRE LOST ARTICLE = BEST
beast (ogre) minus a (article)

DOUBLE DEFINITIONS: This will be a short clue that defines the word twice.

COACH LOCOMOTIVE = TRAIN

In general, try to determine which part of the clue is the definition of the word, then look for clues to the type of word play involved.

What menu options do I have?

There are only a few menu options in CryptoQuad, and they are very easy to understand. Here is a description of the options you have in the menu bar.

File:

Open Puzzle:

A dialog will appear allowing you to load the puzzle filename.

Reset Puzzle:

You may Reset the current puzzle and begin again at level one.

Hall of Fame:

You may look at the current list of players in the loaded puzzle's Hall of Fame. The best players can finish a puzzle in the least amount of time. If you like, you can reset the Hall of Fame to the worst player, Anonymous, who always seems to complete the puzzle in 99 minutes and 99 seconds (he should give up). If you get the chance to enter your name in the Hall of Fame (and I'm positive you will), you may type in your name. Anonymous has already put his name, so you will need to type over it. Of course you are expected to do MUCH better than him anyway, so you only have an hour to finish the puzzle.

Exit:

If you are done playing CryptoQuad for a while, selecting Exit will allow you to leave.

Help:

Help on CryptoQuad:

Selecting this menu option gives you help. More precisely it lets you read the text you are reading now.

About CryptoQuad:

Selecting this button will allow you to read various info about CryptoQuad. If it looks familiar, it is because this is what you see when you first start CryptoQuad.

