

The Bridgian Herald

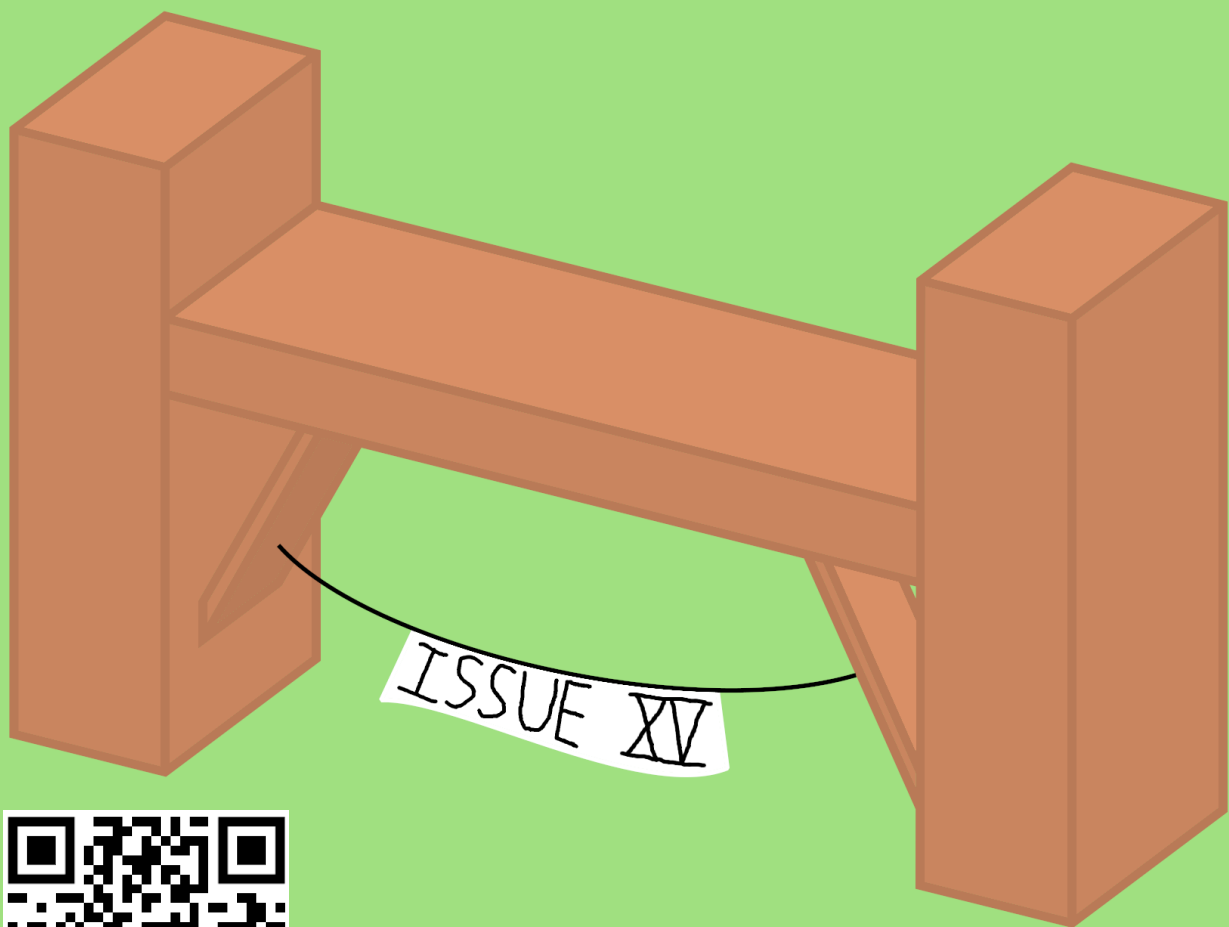
24th March–27th April 2026

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The Bridgian Herald

Initiated in November 2024 by the Bridge Base Foundation to 'improve social cohesion and understanding in the School through the collectivisation of information.' *Bíshbeis taná!*

Whilst measures have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the content, it is possible that errors or omissions have been made. Feedback would be greatly appreciated to enhance the *Herald* for all.

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Bridgian News

Division d'Opéra

A (somewhat) new venture for the Foundation

EASTSIDE, LINTAE

SO IT BEGAN, on the 28th of January, 2026. The First Member made a mistake at lunch: preaching the merits of classical music. For the Devious One, opposite him, hears all – and is prone to getting carried away with completely mad ideas. At least the Devious One recognises his ideas are mad; the First Member treats them as normal.

He was, in his usual monologue, describing various aspects of the opera *Carmen* (by Bizet) which he had listened to recently. “First you have Act 1, you know [hums the tune of “Habanera”] – very nice – then you have Act 2 – oh, everyone knows Act 2 – [hums the chorus of the “Toreador Song”, then largely trails off].” This sent a spark into the Devious One’s brain. In previous concerts at the School, he had played classical pieces on the piano, partly because that was all he learned, but mostly because he wanted his part to be unique. But, now, that seemed a little too boring for him.

Why don't we perform one of these songs at the next “Battle of the Bands”? It would still be old-fashioned – have to maintain that reputation, at least – but mark a clear change from my previous playing. That was the dream; now to make it happen. Over the following two days, the Devious One collected as much information as he could about *Carmen*. He decided they should, at least, perform a song that the audience might recognise – that, in effect, narrowed it down to those recalled earlier by the First Member. “Habanera” (*en français: L’amour est un oiseau rebelle*) would be unlikely to find a willing singer, so the decision was made by default.

Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre, it was. The First Member ardently agreed with the plan, and he was provisionally assigned the piano part. (His role in the final performance remains unknown.)

For any sane person, the next task would be finding players for all the parts in the song. But it was five months, and is still three months, before the next concert is likely to occur. Asking everyone then would, frankly, seem a little premature. Thus, the Devious One adopted the approach of making his part as good as possible – albeit not sufficiently so – before adding others’ later. Whether that will turn out to be a sensible tactic is another question.

Une nouvelle division

It was established from the start that this would be something different. Yes, Bridge Base has created plenty of music in its long history – *Planks A’ Crashing*, *Forever We Stand*, *Insain Bisbbeits-sa* – and many were performed at the Conventions of yore. But those were largely insular affairs, created by the Foundation, for the Foundation (or, rather, *For The Foundation*). They were considered part of the Bridgian “Media division”, like the School Maps, the Base’s website, or this very *Herald*.

This performance of the “Toreador Song” – which the Devious One insists upon calling *Votre toast* – was to be greater than all that came before, insisted the First Member. Outsiders would be cast to play parts, and the whole School would hear it. It was designed to have an impact; Bridgianiety for the masses. Through the new “Opera division”, it would show the School what the Base really is: a group of mad but clever people who do mad but clever things – like, for instance, deciding that two English people will sing Spanish words in French.

L’opération

The steps were easy, in principle: to acquire sheet-music, so we know what should be played; to work out which parts are necessary, so they can be apportioned efficiently; and then to try organising everyone for the performance. For the former, the Devious One consulted the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* who, via their website, kindly provided a scan of the original music to *Carmen*. Reading the hand-written manuscript was challenging, to say the least, but the Devious One is good at putting in way too much effort for simple tasks, so this was the perfect task for the upcoming weekend. He set about devising an arrangement that would better fit the minimal environment of the School. →

The First Member articulated a specific liking to the violin parts of the original *Votre toast*, so these were copied *verbatim* (despite the School having no violins or violinists, to our knowledge). The main vocal line, to be sung by the Devious One himself would also be kept the same. The others, however, were not so lucky. In the chorus, the clarinet, horn, and cello were shoehorned into an all-new piano part; meanwhile, the flute was omitted entirely. The guitar received the opposite treatment, being hugely expanded to provide the main harmonic backing, except in the piano's chorus.

Everything needed printing out to show the First Member, and soon the Devious One's bag was flooded with sheets of paper, emblazoned with « *Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre* ». *Très bien!*

The Devious One and First Member entered the music room, in Eastside sector, Lintae, on the 2nd of February. The First Member said he had been “learning the song” on the piano, by which he meant the vocal line of the chorus (*Toréador, en garde!*). The new arrangement's piano part was, obviously, rather different, although still confined to the chorus. They spent about three weeks working together before the music teacher decided to become absent, preventing access to the room.

Thus, they reached a dilemma. They were unable to practice anymore, meaning that the First Member could not improve his playing. And he would need to if other members were to be added without causing complete chaos. Either the First Member had to be replaced, or the Bridgians had to lose plenty of valuable practice time. To ease his own practicing, the Devious One decided that he would play the piano as well as the baritone part in the chorus. (He also plays a form of the violin part, although on the piano, when practicing at home – this may end up being the solution to the missing violinist.) At present, the resolution is unknown; the performance of *Votre toast* may be impacted.

Embauche potentielle

“Hey, um, I have something to ask you.”

“What?”

“You see, [the First Member] and I plan to perform the “Toreador Song” at the next *Battle of the Bands*; would you like to sing in the chorus?”

“Um... yeah, if you want. Could you please show me what I need to sing?”

The Devious One begins scouring his bag. “My bag's a mess, sorry...” He then produces a sheet of music for *Votre toast*. “Okay, I have this.”

“Hmm... *Toréador, en garde, Toréador, Toréador, et songe bien, oui, songe en combattant, ...*” (pronounced in a rather English manner).

“Yeah, it's in French – I know.”

“You'd better help me with that: otherwise it'll come out as a bunch of gibberish.”

“I can teach you; it's fine.”

“Bye!”

“Goodbye!”

That was the singer of *Puck's Final Speech*, foolishly agreeing to play the alto part, at break on the 13th of March. It took another five days for a practice session to be arranged, due to the lack of availability in the music room. As this issue goes to print, they have still only practiced once, although they plan to continue every Wednesday at lunch.

The Devious One was trying to teach French pronunciation to somebody with absolutely no background in phonetics. He was, to all intents and purposes, speaking a completely different language to her – “the French ‘r’ sound, what's called a *uvular trill*, is made near the back of the mouth, like ‘g’ but without actually making contact.” He then mentioned all the difficult parts (nasal vowels, unaspirated plosives, rhoticity) whilst providing no solutions. Perhaps, next time, the Devious One could focus on one aspect of speech to improve. It is sometimes useful to know what the challenges might be, but it is often simply overwhelming.

To - ré - a - dor! Et son - ge bien, oui, songe en com - bat - tant, Qu' un œil noir te re -

to - ʁe - a - dɔʁ e sɔ̃ - ʒə bjɛ̃ wi sɔ̃ - ʒɑ̃ kɔ̃ - ba - tã kœ̃ - nœj nwaʁ tɛ ʁə -

The plan was not to start hiring this early. The Bridgians were going to wait until April, so they could better consolidate their plans. But, wishing to make some progress without a music room, the Devious One decided that the time was perfect for going out and asking people whether they want to join. Or, more accurately, person, singular; the alto was the only part created with anyone specifically in mind. The others either have a multitude of options (guitar) or seem impossible to fill (violin).

Saying that, your correspondent consulted the alto singer about the guitar part, and she suggested herself as an option. That would make the performance easier to organise, and thus easier for the Devious One, but may be challenging for her to achieve. Presently, the choice is moot: improving her French is of greater priority than adding a new part to the mix. Sticking to one is best, lest we end up muddled with teaching three parts at once.

This one-by-one strategy is an effective way of ensuring preparation, but does have its downsides. The first, and most obvious, is the cost in time. Practicing all at once, whilst it may be a nightmare to organise, is undoubtedly faster than the present cautious progression. Second is the psychology of order. Being selected earlier suggests importance (even though, say, the alto is a far smaller part than the central violins), and later implies a begrudging acceptance. Bridgians, consider yourselves warned.

Le grand plan

Although the date of the next concert is unknown, the Devious One's vision is clear. *Votre toast* will form his grand finale, and is thus the song that he is most focused on. The others are slightly less certain. He expects to commence practicing part of Debussy's *Petite Suite* as a piano duet by the end of April. This venture has also been fraught by a required party being absent (in this case, the other pianist) but this is a minor issue: after all, the *Suite* was designed to be "accessible to skilled amateurs".

Finally, if circumstances allow for it, Chopin's *Fantaisie-Improptu* has also been pencilled in; as this is a solo piano piece, it will require next to no planning (hence the flexibility on its inclusion). It would likely be played between the *Petite Suite* and *Votre toast*, as a sort of prelude to the latter, one may suppose, although it is largely self-contained.

Technically, the Foundation's Opera division is only responsible for *Votre toast*. The *Petite Suite* is a sixth-form project, initiated by *Group*-adjacent parties but not directly managed by them. It lies, therefore, firmly outside the remit of Bridge Base, whatever definition that has nowadays. The possibility of *Fantaisie-Improptu*, meanwhile, is pure Devious One, so it could feasibly be classed as the Media division – but, then again, not really. The running of all three endeavours by the same person complicates matters; he gets his name for a reason.

Yet each piece forms part of one grand plan. Notice how all the names – *Petite Suite*; *Fantaisie-Improptu*; *Votre toast*, *je peux vous le rendre* – are in one language. You would be mad to think this is incidental. The Devious One, as usual, is madder still. He is considering delivering his entire section *en français*, although he may see reason (or be too lazy to learn sufficient French) and cut that out.

Travailler ensemble

When the time comes, the Bridgians will have to get their agenda approved by the *Group*. Not the mad speaking-in-French stuff, but the songs in the concert. There are a limited number of slots, and Entékaí will want only the best-quality, original performances. Given its already advanced stage of development, *Votre toast* is clearly getting through, even if it is forced to use the label "Toreador Song" externally. That alone would satisfy Bridge Base.

Petite Suite is also a no-brainer: it is, in essence, an extension of the classical piano-piece format that defined the Bridgians' past performances. Its connections to the staff body (and a particularly reticent student) will doubtless help win favour in the *Group*, although that is probably not necessary. It is *Fantaisie-Improptu* that is less certain. The Devious One would be pushing his luck if he asked for two group performances, and then added one on his own. But, as stated earlier, that is flexible.

The audience will be in two minds about the Bridgian enterprise. Some will see it as a blatant disregard of expectations: why reject all "popular" songs in favour of classical music? However, many will value the uniqueness, compared to (if the last concert is anything to go by) the others' similarity. *Votre toast* will be particularly divisive. But such is to be expected of a Bridgian production. →

How hard can it be?

FOR MANY PEOPLE, the idea of speaking – let alone singing – in a foreign language can be daunting. So when the First Member proposed performing a song from the French opera *Carmen*, why did that not put the Devious One off? Simple answer: he ignored the issue. Nuanced answer: he realised it could only be so difficult.

It all boils down to one point: you do not need to understand the language you are speaking. Say I make up an English word: ‘menting’. I have given it no meaning, yet you can hopefully pronounce it anyway. This is highly revealing, because it shows that the meaning of a word is irrelevant, so long as you know what to say beforehand. If you were in conversation, obviously, you would need to know what the words meant to decide which ones to use. But, when singing *Votre toast*, what words we use has been pre-determined: the lyrics of the song.

So the only significant aspect of a word, in this context, is its pronunciation. Some may still be put off by this prospect. Especially since, for some odd reason, the French language is notorious amongst English-speakers for being (ostensibly) impossible to pronounce. If it were true, how come there are hundreds of millions of French-speakers across the globe? Do they have some exotic mouth structure that lets them make different sounds? *Sacrebleu!*

Then how come this reputation? It must stem from our English perception of sound. We hear something like the guttural ‘r’ in *rêve* and think of it as un-English. Since we do not use that sound in speech, it does not trigger a place in memory like, for instance, the English ‘r’-sound. Crucially, we can still physically make the sound of the ‘r’ in *rêve*. It just comes uneasily as we are not used to uttering that sound – something that can improve quickly.

In fact, once a speaker gets past that barrier to entry, it becomes relatively easy to pronounce foreign words (with the slight caveat that you must know how the word sounds beforehand). It turns out that French only uses 10 sounds that are not present in English, versus 26 that feature in both. Is it really that hard to learn two consonants and eight vowels? The Devious One said *non*. It helped that he had prior experience relating to how words are pronounced. His Bridgian language was based off a system of sounds. But that is not necessary.

Anaphony

“By the way, are you familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet?”

“I haven’t checked on it recently...”

“Yeah, that’s fine; it’s just that’s what I used to remember which sound was which.”

This dialogue with the alto singer expounded the key method that the Devious One used. The International Phonetic Alphabet, in case you are also unfamiliar (have you been living under a rock for 138 years?), is a system of writing in which each symbol represents a distinct spoken sound. This is best shown with an example. The word ‘phonetics’ may be represented as [fəˈnɛ.t̪ɪk(ɨ)], or, in a less detailed manner, /fəˈnetɪkz/. Thankfully, many of the letters are the same as in English, with the /ə/ (comma) and /ɪ/ (kit) vowels being unfamiliar.

Note that this is one possible transcription of the word ‘phonetics’, following a general (*i.e.* the Devious One’s) British accent. Typical American accents, for instance, might pronounce the word as [fəˈnɛ.t̪ɪks], with a voiced ‘t’ and no glottal stop ([ʔ]) before the final consonants. From now on, though, assume all English IPA transcriptions are from the Devious One’s strange accent, which will doubtless clear up much confusion when you realise that your accent is starkly different from his.

The tables opposite list the main sounds used in (Devious One’s) English, with their symbols in the IPA. This will be very useful to refer to when discussing pronunciation – particularly, any letters in square brackets. By the way, the square brackets show “phonetic” notation, the physical sounds that compose a word, whereas the slashes show “phonemic” content, illustrating a word’s sounds in a more abstract, but language-specific, manner, so /fəˈnetɪkz/ applies to both varieties of English.

Before we continue, let us provide an example using the IPA, in steadily increasing levels of detail.

/bəˈfɒ wi kənˈtɪnju let əs prəˈvaɪd ən rˈkzɑmpəl juːzɪŋ ði ˈaɪ pi ei ɪn ˈstedɪli ɪŋˈkrɪsɪŋ levəlz əv ˈdɪteɪəl/

[bəfo: wi: kʰəntʰɪnjə: letʰ əs pʰjəvəɪd ən ɪʔkzɑ:mpʰət̪ jʊ:zɪŋ ði äi pʰi: ei ɪn stɛdɪli: ɪŋkʰɪ:ɪsɪŋ lɛvət̪z əv dɪtʰɛɪəl]

[bəˈfo: wi: kʰənˈtʰɪn.jə: | .lɛ.t̪.ə.s pʰjəˈvə:ɪ.d. ə.n.ɪʔˈkzä:m.pʰət̪ jʊ:zɪŋ ði ˈäi pʰi: .ɛɪ | rɪn ˈstɛ.dr.li: rɪŋˈkʰɪ:s.rɪŋ .lɛ.v.t̪.z.əv ˈdɪ.t̪.ɛɪ.t̪]

Vowels

Symbol	Example	IPA
[a]	‘lad’	[ˈlɑːd]
[ɑː]	‘bad’	[ˈbɑːd]
[äː]	‘palm’	[ˈpʰäːm]
[ɛ]	‘dress’	[ˈdɹɛs]
[ɛː]	‘square’	[ˈskwɛː]
[ɪ]	‘kit’	[ˈkʰɪʔtʰ]
[ɪː]	‘near’	[ˈnɪː]
[iː]	‘fleece’	[ˈfliːs]
[ɔ]	‘cloth’	[ˈkʰɔθ]
[oː]	‘thought’	[ˈθoːʔtʰ]
[ʌ]	‘strut’	[ˈstɹʌʔtʰ]
[ə]	‘comma’	[ˈkʰɔː.mə]
[əː]	‘nurse’	[ˈnəːs]
[ʊː]	‘goose’	[ˈgʊːs]
[uː]	‘pool’	[ˈpuːl]
[øː]	‘cure’	[ˈkʰjøː]

Consonants

Symbol	Example	IPA
[b]	‘boo’	[ˈbʊː]
[d]	‘do’	[ˈdʊː]
[d͡ʒ]	‘Jew’	[ˈd͡ʒʊː]
[f]	‘phi’	[ˈfäi]
[g]	‘goo’	[ˈgʊː]
[h]	‘who’	[ˈhʊː]
[j]	‘you’	[ˈjʊː]
[k]	‘skew’	[ˈskjʊː]
[kʰ]	‘coo’	[ˈkʰʊː]
[l]	‘loo’	[ˈlʊː]
[t]	‘sill’	[ˈsɪl]
[m]	‘sim’	[ˈsɪːm]
[n]	‘sin’	[ˈsɪːn]
[ŋ]	‘sing’	[ˈsɪːŋ]
[p]	‘spew’	[ˈspjʊː]
[pʰ]	‘poo’	[ˈpʰʊː]
[ɹ]	‘rue’	[ˈɹʊː]
[ʃ]	‘fission’	[ˈfiːʃən]
[t]	‘stew’	[ˈstjʊː]
[tʰ]	‘too’	[ˈtʰʊː]
[t͡ʃ]	‘chew’	[ˈt͡ʃʊː]
[ð]	‘thy’	[ˈðäi]
[θ]	‘thigh’	[ˈθäi]
[v]	‘vie’	[ˈväi]
[w]	‘woo’	[ˈwʊː]
[z]	‘vision’	[ˈviː.zən]
[ʔ]	‘uh-oh’	[ˈʌʔ.əʊ]

Learning these symbols, and to express sound more generally, can yield surprising results, such as in English pronunciation. Most Brits, for instance, pronounce the vowel in ‘goal’ differently to that in ‘goat’: the former is articulated near the back of the mouth due to the subsequent ‘l’, whereas the latter occurs in the middle. Despite this, they are often considered to be the same “oh” sound, such as in the phonics system employed by schools. In many accents, the words ‘holy’ and ‘holey’ (/ˈhəʊli/ and /ˈhoʊli/) are solely distinguished by this change.

The Devious One originally applied his own phonetical writing system to the pronunciations of his invented place-names. At first glance, it is not obvious how ‘Trodae’ should be said; writing it as /ˈtrəʊdeɪ/, or [ˈtʰɹəʊ.ɛ.ɛ.ɪ], helps to clarify this. (In his version, it was notated as *chrô-dê*, as he was “too lazy” to learn the IPA at that time. He also had a subtly different accent back then, so wrote ‘ch’ instead of ‘t’ initially.) He went on to invent his own language which used that system. And then he decided that he was going to sing in French.

His first step, naturally, was to translate the lyrics of *Votre toast* into IPA. Or, because he was feeling lazy and it was 2026, he asked an AI model to do so for him. It worked surprisingly well. *Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre*, the opening line, became [vɔʔkə tɔʔt, zə pœ vu lə ʁɑ̃dʁə]. There were three symbols that he did not recognise: [ʁ], [œ], and [ɑ̃]. [ʁ] turned out to be a ‘voiced uvular fricative’, a phrase that may mean nothing to you, but it told the Devious One everything he needed.

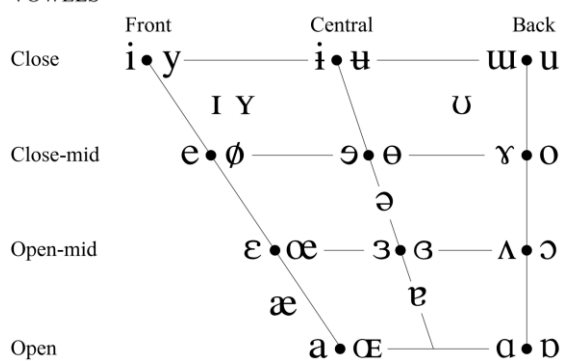
Going back-to-front helps here. A fricative is a sound made by placing two parts of the mouth against each other, producing a ‘hiss’ as air escapes between them. In English, the letters ‘f’, ‘v’, ‘s’, and ‘z’ represent fricatives. For ‘f’ and ‘v’, the lower lip contacts the upper teeth, known as “labiodental”. Conversely, ‘s’ and ‘z’ have the tongue tip touching the front of the roof of the mouth: “alveolar”. “Uvular” relates to a part of the roof of the mouth near the back, slightly behind where ‘g’ is articulated (“velar”). So, to form a “uvular fricative”, you move the back of the tongue up to the roof, which generates a sort of trilled ‘h’ sound. This is where the “voiced” part comes in. Consider the contrast between ‘s’ and ‘z’, or ‘f’ and ‘v’. Make the same change to that ‘h’ sound and you end up with... →

...a trilled ‘r’ sound! Perfectly French. This is what the Devious One was attempting to teach the alto singer in their practice session, admittedly with limited success. He found it difficult to make, too, when he first tried – and he still does after vowels. (The line *Pour plaisirs, pour plaisirs* often comes out like ‘poo ples-ear-er, poo ples-ear’. Delightful.) But that is nothing compared to the vowel-sounds.

French uses twelve distinct vowels, one of the greatest inventories in the world. (English also uses twelve, but that is besides the point.) Producing all of them distinctly is challenging as they contrast in less aspects than in English. Compare the vowels in ‘cot’ and ‘caught’. You may think that one is simply longer than the other, and that is true. But the ‘cot’ vowel is also slightly lower than that in ‘caught’. To bring it back, French uses these vowels without the length distinction – e.g., *pomme* versus *paume*.

The symbol [œ], found frequently in the IPA for *Votre toast*, is one of these unusual vowels. The Devious One originally approximated the sound as [ə], and he will initially teach it as such to the alto singer. To get it absolutely correct, though, he needed to work “rounding” out. Each place and height of the tongue has two symbols in the IPA. One corresponds to wide, spread lips, such as the vowel in ‘cuff’ ([kʰʌf]). The other has the ends of the lips much closer together, and hence more of an o-shape, like that in ‘cough’ ([kʰɔf]). In fact, the lips’ shape is the only difference between them.

VOWELS



Vowel diagram from the official IPA chart.

[œ] is the “rounded” version of [ɛ], the vowel in ‘dress’. To make it, you essentially “pretend” to say [ɛ], but keep your lips narrowed like in ‘goose’. Likewise, [y] is the rounded form of [i] – pretend to say ‘fleece’, with the lips again shaped like in the word ‘goose’ (which has the rounded vowel [ʉ]).

One vowel, though, is a bit harder (although not the worst – that is to come). The French words *est* and *et* are written in the IPA as [ɛ] and [e], and are contrasted in vowel height alone. English does not contain a vowel in the place of [e]. The closest approximations are [ɛ], [ɪ], and [i], all of which are already used in French. The tongue is higher than in [ɛ], but not so high as in [i]. You must make a sound that is in the middle, whilst avoiding overly stressing the sound, or sounding too similar to [ɪ].

I have deliberately left the worst to last. Nasal vowels. Trying to explain this feature to the alto singer was a nightmare. “It’s like – you know the sound in ‘ing’ – like that, but without making full contact. And you have to make the ‘ah’ vowel at the same time. Honestly, I found this really difficult too; I still do, a little bit, after two months of trying.” That was what the [ɑ̃] symbol was earlier. A tilde (~) represents nasalisation, where the back of the mouth – more specifically, the velum, where the ‘ing’ sound is made – is lowered to force some air through the nose. This concept is completely non-existent in English, except, for some speakers, in French loanwords such as ‘croissant’ [kʰɹ̥wɑ̃sɑ̃].

There are four nasal vowels in French: [ɛ̃], [ɔ̃], [ɑ̃], and – doubly evil – [œ̃]. The chorus contains all of them: *Et songe bien, oui, songe en combattant / Qu’un œil ...* (in the order listed above). Uh-oh. The alto singer has work cut out for her. No, but, really, this is the most difficult part of French – for an English speaker, at least. That also means, once you master nasal vowels, everything else must be easier than it. As the Devious One implied earlier, there is a limit to how hard pronunciation can be. We have fundamentally the same mouths, after all.

The Devious One has, in fact, written some notes for teaching the alto singer, which shall be summarised here. The main challenges for her will be the uvular fricative, the nasal vowels, and the lack of aspiration for unvoiced plosives (i.e., [p t k] rather than [pʰ tʰ kʰ]). Smaller points are rhoticity (pronouncing [ʀ] even after vowels), the rounding of [œ], and the lack of vowel changes before ‘r’.

He may end up teaching her IPA, too. It would make it somewhat easier to remember sounds, but is also a waste of time learning for only four lines. The Devious One loves his wastes of time, though, and this is looking to be no exception. *Au revoir!* ■

Linguistic focus

The Head Guard's plans fail to materialise

BRIDGIANS are not known for being reliable. The applause was muted when the Head Guard announced plans to “restart Bridge Base” two months ago. The fact that he requested a pause in *Herald*-production only added to his woes. (This was not adhered to: issues 13 and 14 released as per usual.) Nobody, in truth, expected the years-old promise to magically come true this time. Their concerns, it turned out, were valid.

Perhaps the Head Guard forgot. Maybe it was a form of procrastination. Or, more likely, he realised that his plan would never work. Most of the Bridgians – at least, the formerly active ones – have left the School, leaving a skeleton crew of the Head Guard, the Devious One, and the First Member behind, along with their semi-Bridgian associates.

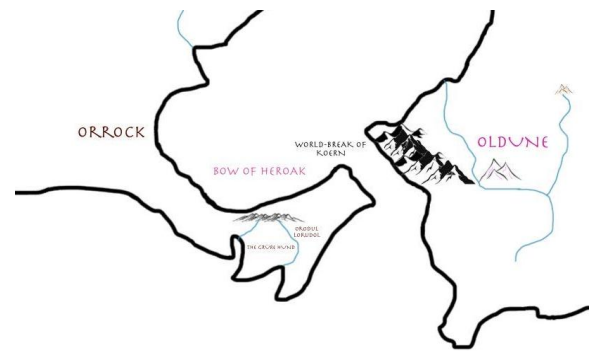
The Domebush Era (that is, any of them) was primarily fuelled by the infamous Griddler strategically transferring resources from Seldeth to Base κ. Without the necessary materials, the Bridgians would have been unable to construct anything on the site, as the Head Guard no doubt figured out. He would have to either venture out by himself or convince other members to do so for him. Other members divide into two groups: those who will refuse and those who will be utterly incompetent.

In the previous *Herald*, we wrote that, ‘The triumph of the Domebush Era (Late-κ) elucidated this ability of the Guard [to motivate the Base].’ This is true, but if he has nothing to motivate, his principal skill is nullified. The Devious One would want to help, but his effect is now throttled by the responsibilities of the Opera division, which will consume many a lunch-break over the coming months. Unless he deeply commits to the cause – and we believe *Minecraft* says otherwise – the Base would become a one-man mission. How inspiring.

Speaking of *Minecraft*, there is one hope for these plans’ revival. The *Group* has announced, in Senkaí-type fashion, that electronic (or “internet-enabled”) devices are to be banned from sixth form at some point in the next term. This may push the Head Guard to extreme tactics like Bridge Base.

Angel-kai

The Head Guard has instead pivoted to develop a fictional world, centred on the opposing lands of “Orrock” and “Olddune”. These are separated by a vast sea which narrows dramatically to form the “World-Break of Kœrn”. He is still fleshing out the lore for these nations (as indicated by the present dearth of features on the map), but one expects it will be inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth.



Now with 10× more unpronounceable names!

The interest of your correspondent is piqued by the vernacular that the Head Guard has been conniving for this world. The “Olddune language” has some highly interesting features. Chiefly, vowels shift depending on the standing of the subject. The example given by the Guard is Olddune being pronounced as “Auldine” by its own residents. (To bring in some real phonology, this turns [ˈɔ̃.ɫ.duːn] into [ˈɔ̃.ʰɫ.däːɪn], diphthongising and fronting the vowels.) In the reverse case, the negative standing has clear labialisation and vowel backing: Kœrn, or [kʰœ̃.ɪn], becomes “Kuorn”, [kʰoːɹ̥w̃n]. Whether these shifts are typically written down, rather than purely reflected in speech, remains yet to be seen.

However, the Head Guard recently consulted the Devious One to “work on the language instead since you know more about that stuff”, so he could focus solely on the story behind his land. Expect it to turn very complicated very quickly (and gain a few features of French in the process). Orrock and Olddune live on still. That is, unlike Bridge Base. ▀

Tilise's bane

A few weeks ago, we received reports of obscurant emanations from a small shed in Nēathûsa. The Bridge Base Foundation denies any involvement.

School News

Unsted *v* Queues

The latest instalment of Student Council

NORTHSIDE, LINTAE

THE NOTICEBOARD said it clearly. “Monday 3rd March 2026, 9:00 *a.m.*” The Devious One was nonetheless bemused. Why? The 3rd of March 2026 is a Tuesday. Council meetings typically take place on Tuesdays to avoid conflict with the assembly on Monday, so he assumed that the third was correct. But ‘Monday’ kept nagging at him, pressuring him to doubt his conclusion.

Worse still, on said Monday, his taxi became afflicted with a bout of traffic; he reached Whitegate at nine o’clock, so nobody could inform him either way. At 9:10, a staff-member kindly stated that the Council was going on. With much haste, he went to join the meeting. The Devious One sat down by the First Member, as is ideal. There were seven in attendance that day, not including the *Group* envoy. Of note were the Third Beryllian and *Onbeim*, as well as the two Bridgians above.

They were discussing the queue that forms around the beginning of lunch-breaks, as a horde of (variably) hungry students descends from their lessons. How, in essence, could this be mitigated? Three primary ideas were given: staggering lunches by year-group, adding another member of staff to serve students, and “letting the year 7s in early”.

These were rejected, one by one. Staggered lunches could work, in theory, and is how most normal schools would deal with the issue. The chairperson suggested 12:45 for ks3, 13:00 for ks4 and ks5, in particular. However, a certain pair of attendees expressed concern around Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) club, which essentially requires all members to be present. Perhaps do a ks4 group, followed by a ks3 group. D&D is unusual in this requirement; other lunch clubs are a turn-up-and-go affair, making this a rather specific complaint.

The second proposal was dead before it was said. Besides the obvious *Group*-downsides of cost, and additional workload for staff, the idea of having two queues is logistically impractical. Where would the second serving station be located? How would we fit enough chairs for students alongside? More importantly, imagine what mayhem could ensure if one queue moved faster than the other: some students would go mad if another entered later and obtained their food earlier than them!

Letting year 7 in early sounds decent – most are banging on the door five minutes early anyway. But it also sounds like giving in to their demands, and sets a poor precedent for behaviour. Also, as much as “getting them out of the way” appeals in theory, it would never work in practice. May your correspondent suggest making them wait instead? Perhaps they could get their early-lunch privileges back if they worked hard enough – this might also encourage them to be marginally less “toxic”.

Interlude

Leaving the issue of queues to rest, a slew of lesser problems was reported. The surface in Lintae’s playground – largely mud – is utterly inadequate, and ends up rapidly soiling equipment during use. Reminded of the logs from the erstwhile *Æternus Tree*, one attendee suggested wood-chips. Slightly reducing its appeal is the need for fire-retardant treatment; the *Group* commented that a rubbery material would be ideal, but that wood-chips were a reasonable compromise, given their availability.

The Bridgians’ turn came next. “Can we have more instruments in the music room?” Emphasis was given to violins, with no explanation of why, although the *Group* quickly attempted to pivot to flutes. (The “Toreador Song” requires two violins, almost non-negotiably, so the acquisition thereof is a principal goal of the Opera division. The song also has a flute part, but it is less important.) One suspects that they will soon balk at the price-tag.

Bridgia’s Tennis Courts also entered the scene, as certain sport-focused individuals cited having to play basketball on the artificial grass surface, which is more suitable for football than anything else. A reversal is in the offing, as the surface was added a year ago to supply an alternative to Inbepan during muddy weather. Will the *Group* accept its error?

Last, but not least, students running in the corridors caught the attention of a few attendees, with a particular focus on year 7 pupils (their bias, not mine). Their hazardous manoeuvres, which they perform with little regard for other users, are a frequent interruption when walking. Said pupils also tend to have weak attendance, which could be both a cause and effect of the above behaviour.

The Council-members allege that staff are overly reticent with telling those concerned off, and that this only encourages their heedless behaviour. In return, the *Group* agreed to remind staff to better curb disruptive deeds; they also mentioned that the topics discussed in Student Council are to be displayed on Rintae’s electronic noticeboard – hopefully, the perpetrators will see the message!

Reprise

Now we return to the queue at hand. It begins with the re-evaluation of staggered lunches, sans D&D reservations. *Onheim* clarifies that the issue is not generally a shortage of seats, so the primary bottleneck is the rate at which students and staff are served. This is likely not to change significantly (although there are ways to speed it up somewhat). The easiest way to reduce the queue is to give each group of students a pre-arranged time to arrive at lunch, inhibiting the horde that arrives, essentially at once, around 12:45. Spreading this throughout, say, just the first 15 minutes should be sufficient.

“I’m just wondering... how long does it take to get through [*i.e.*, serve] a class? We need some real-life data on that.” Data-collection? That sounds like a job for the Devious One. Indeed, it was: he volunteered immediately, albeit not entirely sure of what to do. The *Group* continues. “Also, what’s the furthest classroom [from the lunch hall]?” The end of the Science Quarter, one would presume. “What I want to know is: how long does it take to walk to lunch? And, if you left at 12:45 exactly, when would you end up getting lunch, given the queue? Because that tells us how bad it really is.”

The final judgement on lunch, though, would have to wait until the requisite data was collected. Therefore, it was decided that another Council meeting would be held on the following Monday, where the reality could be investigated in greater detail. All were dismissed from the Assembly Hall.

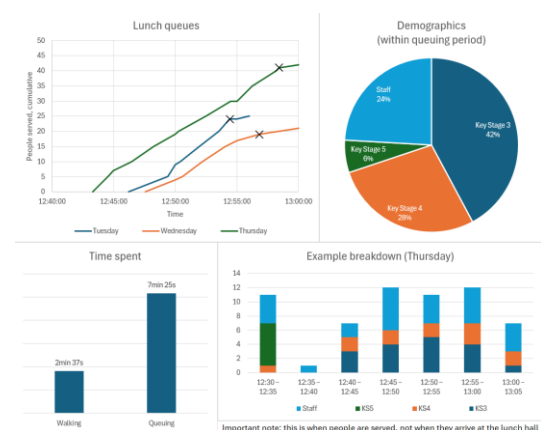
On the ground

The task was not without its difficulties. Foolishly, on Monday, the Devious One had forgotten his watch, foiling his data-collective plans. So he had to wait until Tuesday for the plan to be executed.

As a sixth-form student, the Devious One was permitted to eat lunch at 12:30, meaning he could spend the critical time focused solely on the queue at the other end of the hall. On his slip of paper, he recorded: (a) times when every five people were served; (b) the number of people served, split by demographic, in each five-minute interval; and (c) the time at which the queue was fully exhausted. (Note that the queue’s length was not measured.)

He repeated the procedure on Wednesday and Thursday to get a sense of how volatile the serving rate was. Surprisingly little, it appeared, varying from 2.1 to 2.9 people per minute. Assuming the lower value, this meant it would take not even 20 minutes to serve everyone. The longest queue, meanwhile, lasted a whole 15 minutes – although this differs from how long one would spend in it.

On Friday, he walked slowly from the Science Quarter (where, conveniently, his lesson was) to the lunch hall, taking two-and-a-half minutes. The queue, in comparison, took seven-and-a-half: not terrible, but still a sixth of lunch down the drain. A spreadsheet was compiled over the weekend, as shown below, to better visualise these points.



Too many analyses; too few data.

And it turned out that there was no meeting on Monday, anyway – or, else, the Devious One was not informed of it. He emailed his analysis to the chairperson of the previous meeting, anyway, who replied cheerily. The scourge of queuing lingered still, and it is likely to remain for a while. ■

Guides

The primary source

The Bridge Base Log, now in its sixth volume

ON THE DAY before this *Herald* went to print, the Petitioner entered the School with a floppy disc. His purpose? To give everyone around him a sense of nostalgia? No. He was there to exhibit his grand plan for a Bridgian time-capsule. Every “ex-Bridge Base” will contain a floppy disc with a piece of Bridgian history in it. But what piece? The *Bridge Base Log*, of course.

The *Log* started about a month after the Base’s founding, recording the various goings-on at the Logs of Bridge Base (confusing name, we know). The Devious One realised that maintaining a clear record would be important for the future success of Bridge Base. Past failures can turn into lessons learned; members can be given due credit; history can transcend into Bridgian culture. Its rigid, non-nonsense structure allows it to convey information unambiguously, cementing its position as a source.

And every article on Bridgian history draws from that source. You would be mad not to: even the *Log*’s writer cannot remember every day for the past four-and-a-half years, let alone anyone else. Simply put, it remembers the events for you, often with some parts missing, but enough to make out the trends running through the Base at the time.

The first entry, as you open the *Log*, runs thus: ‘Friday 1st October 2021.’

‘Yesterday, the base got ‘shut down’, because of a ‘risk’, which I feel is a bit silly, because you can say that about anywhere.

‘We added a rain shelter block on the hole next to the Deep Chasm, and added a bridge over the Deep Chasm.’

The second entry started the habit of dividing each page into a “break” and a “lunch” section. Meanwhile, listing membership at the start of each section only arose six months after the *Log*’s start.

The *Bridge Base Log* dedicates one page to each day of the school year (or, more specifically, days when the Devious One is in attendance). This issue’s release date will be page 820 of the *Log*; it is expected to surpass the 1,000-mark in about a year.

Due to the nature of a finite notebook, the *Log* had to be split across multiple books. Book 1 begins with the Devious One’s ordinary, mundane notes, with the *Log* beginning after page 22. The fact that he merely used his existing book shows how little he thought of it. If you time-travelled to the eleven-year-old Devious One and told him his *Log* would still be going even a year later, he would have been shocked. At the very least, he did restart the page-numbers from 1, but that was principally because he had not used the book for a while. He simply wanted to start writing afresh on that day.

It has been claimed that the history of Bridge Base follows a “logarithmic” scale – *i.e.*, the first year is far more important than the second year, which is itself as important as the third and fourth combined. Book 1, therefore, contains the richest trove of records there is, from the first ever collapse of the Base (entry 8) to the construction of the gargantuan Bridgehaven Treehouse (entry 113).

Book 2 likewise covers the Foundation’s time in Base β , whilst Book 3 shows its downfall and the subsequent surge of the Domebush. Book 4 continues with the final throes of said Domebush, whilst Book 5 enters the more socially minded eras leading up to the modern Base. (And *Onheim*, of course. That was a strange time...) And now, as we speak, the Book is done. Book 6 will begin on page 820, where we left off. But there is one problem.

Where do you think the old books are kept? If you guessed the Devious One’s wardrobe at home, you would be correct. This makes it extremely convenient for him to access past accounts, but what if someone else wants to read the *Log*? Easy answer: they cannot. Work was started on digitising the *Log*, but it only got as far as page 320 – which, now that I think of it, is decent, but still a small fraction.

Some would say that only the Devious One should have access to his own documents. Whilst that is true, he would prefer if people knew more about his mad constructs – it gives him a feeling of importance, one assumes. And writing about the history in the *Herald* can only give so much detail.

This is where the Petitioner’s floppy discs come in. Realising that the annals of Bridge Base may soon be lost from the public conscience, he has resolved to save the knowledge by storing it on ancient media, the idea being that “treasure under Bridge Base” would become a sort of legend at the School. Then, when a disc is eventually dug up, the people of that epoch will learn of the madness that was “Bridge Base”; hopefully, the legend and the time will amplify interest in the subject. Certainly better than the current disillusioned generation.

Each floppy disc, he says, will store one book of the *Bridge Base Log*, digitised into a text file. Your correspondent imagines one of those word-processing typewriters with the *Log* loaded up on its screen – unfortunately, this will probably not be what the eventual finders see. Each book would contain a clue to the next book (and the previous one in case they are unearthed in the wrong order).

The final locations of the discs will, of course, be top secret, and speculating would be futile. But we should expect either seven or eight discs – there is going to be a Book 7 of the *Log*, and we may have another disc filled with assorted Bridgianity (likely including the *Herald*) depending on whether the other discs have sufficient space. The Devious One has agreed to port the *Log* onto the discs, assuming he has spare time to work on such projects in.

This does, nonetheless, share the drawbacks of ordinary digitisation. The Devious One still has to type the Logs up slowly but surely – it took over a week the last time – which he will quickly become tired of doing. But a promise is a promise, so if the Petitioner persists, it should be finished eventually. The history of Bridge Base should not be hidden behind locked doors. Doing so helps nobody: not those who want to know, nor the Base’s members, nor the people to whom it makes no difference.

For now, the *Bridge Base Log* is still growing. Its more recent entries have been humdrum, but they still show the truth – a walk around the Road, an investigation of a hornet, progress towards an “Opera division” (see page 2). To those who deny its utility, one should ask: “Then why did we spend our time writing this?” There is a straightforward answer: because knowledge is valuable. The floppy discs under the School really will be treasure. It is now time to make the Petitioner’s plan a reality. ■

Out of date

A guide to the Bridge Base Website

NEARLY THREE YEARS ago, the Bridge Base Foundation went online for the first time. It was a time of positivity: Base β was in its prime, tyre-wall–building age; the Media division had recently started outputting music for the first time; and the Beryllians, the Foundation’s arch-rivals, looked to be on the brink of collapse.

Creating a website at this time was a show of triumph, indicative of the success of the time. Its green and yellow colours were intended to reflect the natural palette of the Base. The Devious One, however, has come to dislike his old creation, describing it as “a mess that always needs fixing up, but that I can never work out how to fix. It needs a total rebuild, to be honest.” He could never find words to put on the site. The “membership” page looks practically the same as it did at the outset, a bunch of vague writings that gives about as much information as the Devious One’s portrait below.

Bridge Base Foundation

About Us

The Bridge Base Foundation is a collaborative construction- and activity-group based out of the Forest of Gilnar – a.k.a. Base β – in western Ephkai. We support a flourishing and welcoming environment in which we teach people “practical mechanics” and “Bridgiamity-skills”, in both our [Construction](#) and [Media](#) divisions.

We are led by the Devious One (a.k.a. *Anheym* for unknown reasons), Griddler, and Head Guard, who organise activities around the Bridgeland for our various [members](#). Usage of the phrase **Bridge Base forever** – or, more Bridgiamity, *Bycbeys dhano* – is frequent, symbolising our members’ resilience and optimistic spirit.


Activities

Many activities are available for those who join the Bridge Base Foundation, run by our leading members. Common ones include:

- **Construction** – Build things out of wood-planks and spars in our Base with expert help from fellow Bridgians.
- **Gathering** – Collect new items for our Base in distant lands. Very fun. Lots of adrenaline.
- **Media Production** – Create new works for the Foundation’s [Gladia](#) division. See this website.
- **Just chill** – hang out in the Base with your new Bridgiamity friends! (This is the most popular activity, to the dislike of some more “subjectively minded” members.)

Make your mark on the Foundation’s legacy. [Join](#) now.

Right: A portrait of the Devious One in his natural habitat – not to scale. (This was drawn by one of our EVILEST members as a gift to the Foundation.)



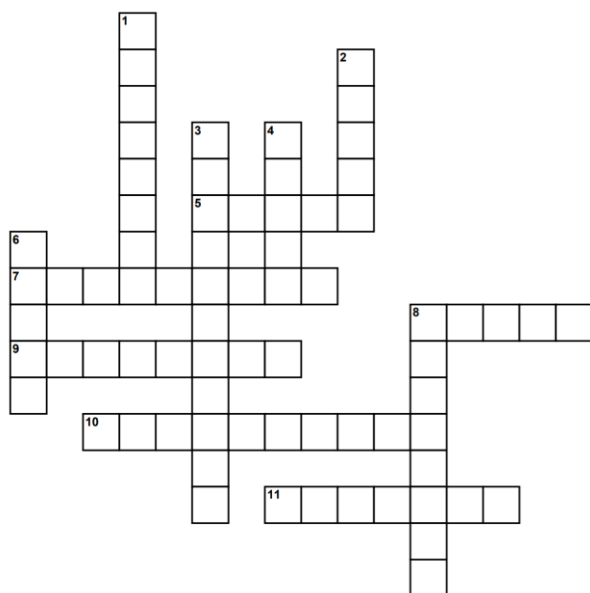
The Website still retains its gaudy colour-scheme.

As time has passed, rather than concentrating on improving the existing content on the Website, the trend has been for it to expand outwards, adding new pages as and when they are required. It currently boasts lengthy descriptions of (a few of) the Bridgians’ various construction projects, the Bridge Base Songs, and crazy, “Deviousised” inventions like Bridgiamity Phonetics. Meanwhile, when areas do need updating, such as the “history” page, they are often done so in a lazy manner – in that case, merely copying an article from the *Herald*.

A QR-code linking to the Bridge Base Website is provided on the front cover of this *Herald*. He really ought to work on that thing more, but, as he says, it always gets left on the back burner. Sad. ■

Activities

Crossword



Across

5. Newest division of Bridge Base (5)
7. “Equal legs”, type of triangle (9)
8. “Monday ___ March 2026” (5)
9. Sector containing music room (8)
10. Nickname of *de facto* leader (7-3)
11. Month of Head Guard’s plans (7)

Down

1. Bridgian for “Bridge Base”, ang. (8)
2. Greek letter of cut-down base (5)
3. Someone who studies sounds (11)
4. Bane of the Council, at lunch (5)
6. Composer of « *Votre toast* » (5)
8. Bridgian boundary structure (4-4)

Instructions

Identify each word above by filling each square in the grid with a letter. Words are spelled either left-to-right or top-to-bottom. The clue-number for each row or column is found in the square of its first letter.

Maths Challenge

Consider the areas of the regular polygons with side-length 1. Let $A(n)$ be the area of an n -sided polygon, where n is an integer ≥ 3 .

Level 1 (easy)

Show geometrically that $A(n + 1) > A(n)$.

Level 2 (medium)

Work out the exact values of $A(3)$, $A(4)$, and $A(6)$.

Level 3 (hard)

Using the centre of a circle enclosing the polygon, or otherwise, write an exact formula for $A(n)$.

Level 4 (extreme)

Using the Taylor series for $\tan \theta$ (around $\theta = 0$) up to and including θ^2 , deduce an estimate for the value of $A(n)$. Assess this estimate by comparing with $A(6)$.

Solutions to all previous Maths Challenges can be read on the Foundation’s website, accessible via the QR-code opposite.



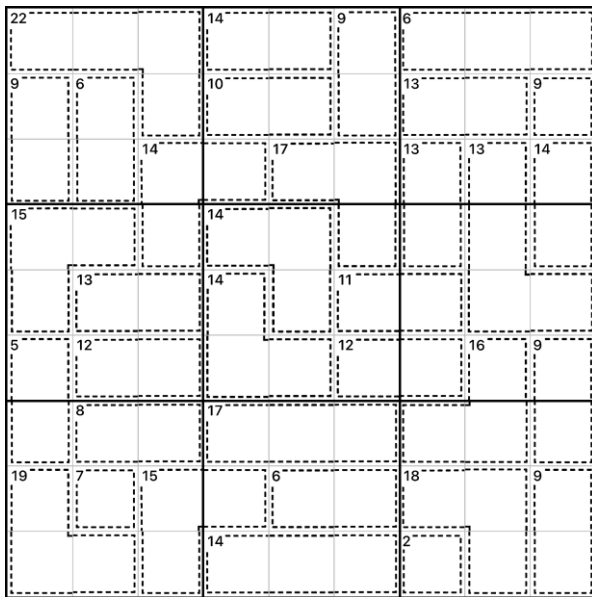
Hypogram



Last issue's answers

Or, os, so, to, cor, cos, cot, orc, ore, ort, ret, roc, roe, rot, cero, core, cose, cost, cote, erst, rest, coset, crest, recto, roset, score, store, torcs, corset, escort, scoter, sector.

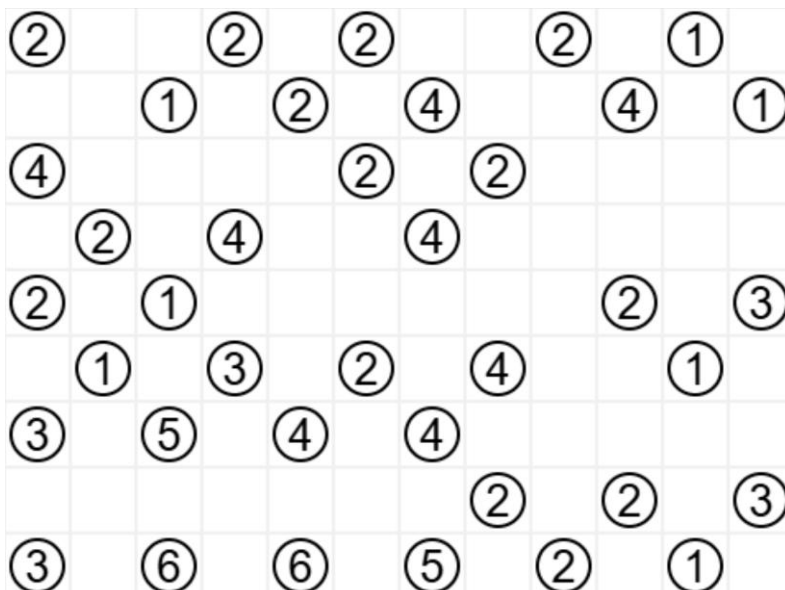
Killer Sudoku



Instructions

Fill each square with a digit from 1–9, such that the numerals within each dashed cage sum to their respective total in the top-left. No digit may be repeated in a row, column, cage, or 3×3 box. The puzzle is considered complete when there is a digit in all cells. There is only one solution given the initial clues.

Hashiwokakero



Instructions

Connect the ringed cells by bridges such that each cell is connected to the indicated number of bridges. Bridges may only be horizontal or vertical, and cannot bend, cross another bridge, or pass over ringed cells. Cells can also be linked by double bridges (drawn as parallel lines), which count as 2 for the cells they connect.

The puzzle is considered complete when all cells have the requisite bridges (but no more), and the network of bridges is contiguous – *i.e.*, there cannot be any islands.

Codeword

BTF 2024-12-06 11:55:26

BTPLENTR: sloesxr Lraloosr

[Fxnhhbsx] Egle'o ne, psxelnrby.
[Cnxoe Dsdmsx] Ysz.
[F] Ytv artk kgle ks glqs et ht.
[CD] Mvxr ne! Mvxr ne!
[F] Klne klne, btta - no egsxs dslre
et ms odtas ptdnrf tve bnas egle?
[Msxybbnlro lxs onfgesh xvrrnrf tcc et
Hegsrhsr]
[CD] N oss 'sd... egno no mlh...
[F] Vg tg...

Instructions

Decipher the text opposite. Each letter has been exchanged with another letter (or possibly the same letter), which must be reversed to yield meaningful English text.

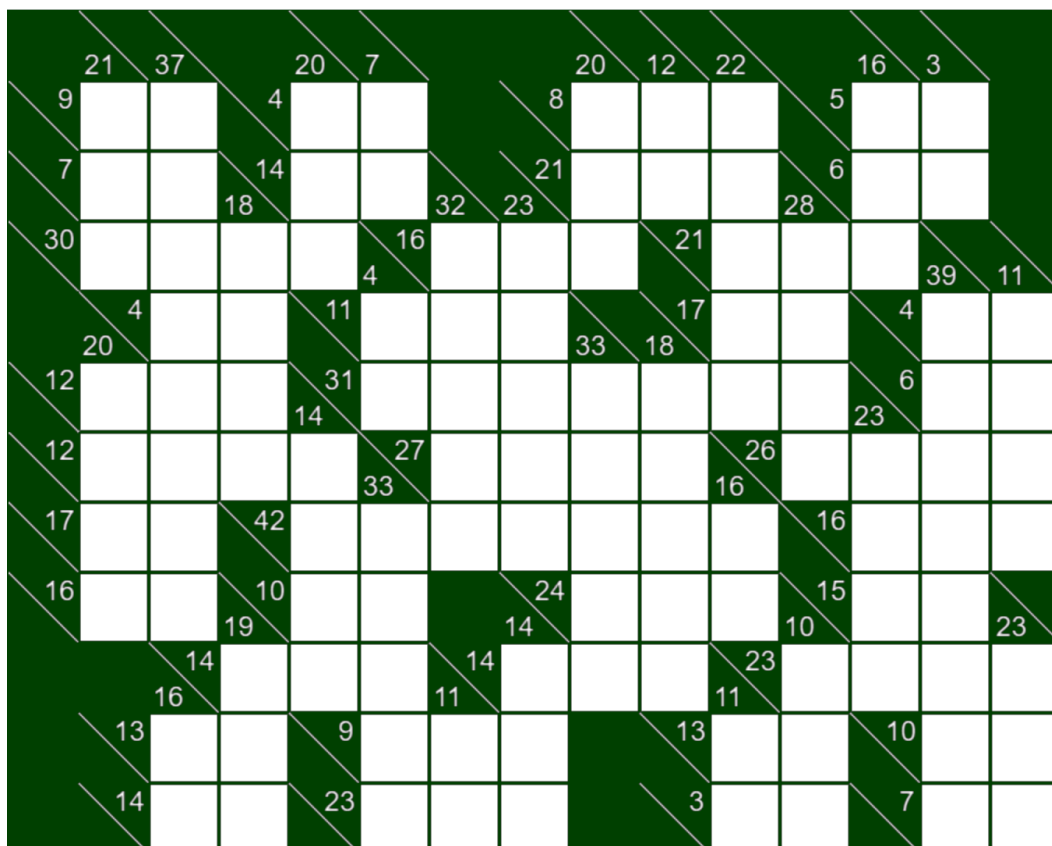
Word Ladder

H	E	A	D
P	L	A	N

Instructions

Place English words in the blank rows such that only one letter changes between adjacent rows.

Kakuro



Sudoku

2				8	7	1		3
	5	3		2	4			7
8	9		5					
		1	3	5			8	
5			8			4	2	
7		9	2					6
		8		3	2		4	
	1	2			5	9		
					8	3		2

Instructions

Fill all squares in the grid with the digits 1–9, such that horizontal and vertical runs add up to their respective totals in the top or left. No digit may be repeated in an unbroken column or row.

Instructions

Fill all squares in the grid with the digits 1–9, such that each row, column, and 3×3 box has exactly one copy of each digit.