

TappyPotato · Daily cryptic clues

24 September 2026 — 10 clues, easiest first. Answers overleaf.

1. Rock within freely swinging garden gate (4)

4 · Hidden word · difficulty 2/5

2. Mood lurking in spirited team talk (6)

6 · Hidden word · difficulty 2/5

3. Average, last of all, when robin too never him (4)

4 · Letter selection · difficulty 2/5

4. Picture shape from flame when one becomes another from L to R (5)

5 · Substitution · difficulty 2/5

5. Old cent from jenny after a letter swap from J to P (5)

5 · Substitution · difficulty 2/5

6. Tutor always urges gentle homework tasks, first of all — educated (6)

6 · Letter selection · difficulty 2/5

7. Covert — at first, seed century retired edge error newly (6)

6 · Letter selection · difficulty 2/5

8. Negligent escape after Ra (6)

6 · Charade · difficulty 3/5

9. Scroll, we hear the whirl (5)

5 · Homophone · difficulty 3/5

10. Diminution in size (8)

8 · Double definition · difficulty 3/5

Answers & explanations

1. **REEL** (4)

Allotment path when the wind gets up. Within freely sits REEL between f- and -y. Rock is the reel/stagger sense; wet soil and a leaning shed cloak the short hide as garden grit.

2. **SPIRIT** (6)

Dressing-room roar before the second half. Lurking in spirited sits SPIRIT before -ed. Mood is the feel — the spirit — while tape, studs and a slammed door sell the hide as match-day noise, not a dictionary gloss.

3. **NORM** (4)

Garden-census humour. 'Last of all' ends robin too never him, giving N, O, R and M, which spell NORM. Average is the statistical norm. Birdwatchers argue counts; the finals settle the mean.

4. **FRAME** (5)

Gallery mount. Shape is a frame; flame when one becomes another turns L into R, giving FRAME.

5. **PENNY** (5)

Coin jar, donkey nameplate. Cent is the penny; jenny after a letter swap turns J into P, giving PENNY.

6. **TAUGHT** (6)

Educated is the definition; the first letters of the listed words spell TAUGHT.

7. **SCREEN** (6)

Covert is the definition; the first letters of seed, century, retired, edge, error and newly give SCREEN.

8. **REMISS** (6)

Station office after the last train. RE is Ra; MISS the escape that got away. Remiss is negligent. Cold tea and a bent timetable sell the join as desk mutter, sun-god still before the miss.

9. **WHORL** (5)

Scroll is the whorl sense — a spiral roll. We hear marks whirl as a homophone for WHORL, the spin spoken as the coil.

10. **DECREASE** (8)

DECREASE is a double definition. The diminution sense is the change downward, and decrease is also a matter of magnitude or size. Decrease names both the shift and the drop.