

TappyPotato · Daily cryptic clues

1 October 2026 — 10 clues, easiest first. Answers overleaf.

1. Curve some of bending willow rods (4)

4 · Hidden word · difficulty 2/5

2. Grime after dirty is nearly finished (4)

4 · Deletion · difficulty 2/5

3. Playing-card three: tray after one letter change from A to E (4)

4 · Substitution · difficulty 2/5

4. Tort broken — time for a jog (4)

4 · Anagram · difficulty 2/5

5. Relief when support goes upward at once (6)

6 · Charade · difficulty 2/5

6. Spite with a change of heart from T to N — backbone (5)

5 · Substitution · difficulty 2/5

7. Parents usually nag idle schoolchildren hard, at first — discipline (6)

6 · Letter selection · difficulty 2/5

8. Slab menu dinner gulp, in conclusion — bubble (4)

4 · Letter selection · difficulty 3/5

9. Leisure you spend abroad (8)

8 · Double definition · difficulty 3/5

10. Musty mouldy for the ear (5)

5 · Homophone · difficulty 3/5

Answers & explanations

1. **BEND** (4)

Basket-maker's tip before the weave starts. Some of takes BEND from bending — curve, crook the green wood. Shavings, wet bark and a low stool sell the hide as craft talk, not a yoga instruction on a card.

2. **DIRT** (4)

Scullery sink when the brush still scrapes. Nearly trims the final Y from dirty, leaving DIRT. Grime is that dirt sense — soil, smear, filth. Soft steam and a lukewarm flannel cloak the dock as kitchen aside, letters shortening without fuss.

3. **TREY** (4)

Serving platter mistyped into a three. Playing-card three is a trey; tray after one letter change turns A into E, giving TREY.

4. **TROT** (4)

Chambers humour: smash the civil wrong, then take exercise. Broken anagrams tort into TROT; jog is the definition, shared with its cousin lope but here the four-beat pace. Lawyers who overthink the pleading miss the bridle path.

5. **BACKUP** (6)

IT cupboard when the drives still hum. Support yields BACK; upward UP — BACKUP, relief copy. Warm plastic and a sticky label wrap support-then-up as server-room weather.

6. **SPINE** (5)

Clinic pause when the chart still rustles. Backbone is the spine; spite with a change of heart replaces T with N — SPITE to SPINE. Soft antiseptic and a cold cuff sell the heart-swap as ward aside, not a labelled grudge.

7. **PUNISH** (6)

Discipline is the definition; the first letters of the listed words spell PUNISH.

8. **BURP** (4)

Canteen farce: slab menu, dinner gulp. Closing letters of slab menu dinner gulp, tipped by 'in conclusion', make BURP. Bubble is the air that escapes — a burp — so the blunt surface earns a grin.

9. **VACATION** (8)

Airport aside when the tickets still flutter. Leisure is vacation as holiday time; spend abroad nods to vacation as leaving a post or place. Double definition. Soft cases wrap break and departure as one American eight.

10. **MOLDY** (5)

Cellar step when the crates still sweat. Musty is that fusty, mildewed reading. For the ear cues a spoken mouldy, which yields the American-spelled MOLDY. Soft cobwebs and a bent torch cloak the spelling shift as storeroom mutter while the ear does the work.