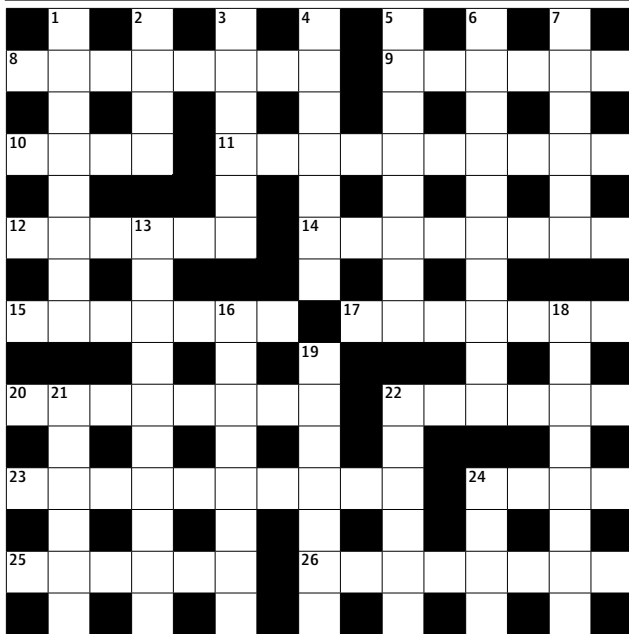


# Guardian cryptic crossword



No 24,980 set by Audreus

## Across

- 8 Playing around is a thing of the past (8)
- 9 First man in right key (6)
- 10 Reportedly tipped the scales for Virginia (4)
- 11 Flower show out of place, shortage of air about (10)
- 12 Reach a time for volunteers at home (6)
- 14 Aunt Sally clips rough-spoken student smartly (8)
- 15 Danger lies in live model being cut near ribs (7)
- 17 Don't care for real nut spread (7)
- 20 Party worker to behave during lively visit? On the contrary (8)
- 22 Bidding with early start, he comes in on time an hour ahead (6)
- 23 Planned debate (10)
- 24 Custom is for beginners to work on new tasks (4)
- 25 Expecting young one to have nightmares (6)
- 26 Oarsman following managed to return thinner (8)

## Down

- 1 Strides a path to ruin (8)
- 2 Took to horse as daughter tucked into a bit of fish (4)
- 3 This time around, first pull into pieces then throw cold water on (6)

- 4 Lift consumes power – time to start a tedious walk (7)
- 5 Old lag will do in a jam (8)
- 6 Vigil kept for a beetle (10)
- 7 Measure adopted in face of rejection (6)
- 13 Mistrustful head needs a replacement to be promising (10)
- 16 Catching great narrative, incorporating the same in Latin (8)
- 18 Awfully tense in Lincoln? One wasn't there (8)
- 19 Gentle music or some big orchestra instead? (7)
- 21 Beheading, as regards improving future stock, could be giving the go-ahead (6)
- 22 Blurred by embracing Shakespeare's very foolish, fond old man (6)
- 24 Fleece left on court (4)

Solution No. 24,979

