

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL CROSSWORD SPECIFICATIONS.

The Wall Street Journal looks for crosswords with clever themes and lively words. A daily-sized (15-by-15) crossword appears every Monday through Friday while a weekend-sized (21-by-21) crossword appears every Saturday.

When creating crosswords for the Wall Street Journal, start with an entertaining theme, tightly defined and consistently executed.

Theme queries are permitted for weekend puzzles and for seasonal/timely daily puzzles.

In all puzzles, filler words should be common, familiar, and lively. You should avoid obscure words, crosswordese, and an excess of abbreviations or partial phrases (like OUT ON). Don't overdo the number of proper names, especially if they are all from a particular field (like sports or pop culture).

Note that rebus puzzles (in which symbols or multiple letters fill some of the squares) are used very sparingly.

The word count shouldn't exceed 78 for a 15-by-15 puzzle and 140 for a 21-by-21 puzzle (though as much as 144 may be allowed in special cases).

Clue difficulty level for daily puzzles ranges from moderately easy to difficult. If the theme is very straightforward, the clues should be on the easy side for use early in the week, while if the theme is tricky, the clues should be harder. Clue difficulty level for weekend crosswords should be medium to difficult.

All puzzles, both daily and weekend, have titles. You should suggest a title that doesn't conflict with any theme answers. Feel free to suggest multiple titles.

Puzzles should be submitted by email in one of the following two formats:

❶ text in the body of the email or a text file that contains both the answer grid and clues.

The answer grid should be typed line by line, with spaces (preferred) or some other character for black squares:

```
BEAST  AREA  TOES  SPUD  
ACTION  RUNT  HINT  TELE  
THEMOONANDTWELVEPENGE . . .
```

Clues should be in the format:

```
<tab>1<tab>Clue<tab>ANSWER
```

If your email program won't play nice with tab characters, you can use an easily replaced character, such as:

```
/1/Clue/ANSWER
```

❷ an Across Lite .puz file.

(For now we can't use the native files from any of the crossword creating programs, though Crossword Compiler should be able to export a puzzle to the Across Lite format.)

Whichever format you use, be sure to include your name, mailing address, email address, and phone number with all submissions.

Email puzzles to: wsjpuzzles@mikeshenk.com

Please be patient while waiting for replies to theme queries and submissions.

The Wall Street Journal buys all rights to the puzzles, including first rights. Payment is made on or shortly after publication. The payment for a daily crossword is \$200, and the payment for a weekend crossword is \$500.