







QUIZ ANSWERS FOR LAST WEEK'S QUIZ

1. This means to make a decisive move. The expression arose from the legend that when Civil War broke out with Pompey, Caesar took his army across a stream known as The Rubicon and called out, "The Die is Cast". For better or for worse he had made a great decision and acted upon it. This Rubicon was one of three streams running into the Adriatic Sea, and was part of the boundary on the north of Italy proper. Roman Generals were therefore not allowed to pass it with an armed force, and when Caesar did this, it was really a declaration of war.
2. Little pigs used to be taken to market in bags, and the Celtic and Irish word for this bag was a "poc". So this expression means to finish off a bargain without knowing exactly what will be the result.
3. This means something that is plain or direct. The French called the white spot in the centre of a target "point blanc", and so point-blank is really aiming straight at the bull's-eye." We sometimes make a point-blank reply, giving the exact answer without quibbling or evading the issue.
4. A huge family cooking pot, hanging on a pot hook or chain over a cauldron or fire, was in constant use in the olden days. Anything that was able to be eaten was thrown in, to "keep the pot boiling", (giving rise to another expression today). The fire was seldom let out, and in many cases not at all. There was no letting-up of effort, and at meal-time, the family just fished food out for themselves from the pot. What they had to eat was "pot-luck". Today, when friends are invited to take "pot-luck" with a meal, they no longer have to fish out of a pot, but often have a hastily prepared meal, sometimes out of a tin.
5. This ceremony originated in Elizabethan Times. Every night, the "Colour" or Captain's Flag that every soldier recognised was placed for safety in the Ensign's quarters or elsewhere, being lodged like the men in quarters. It was hung from a window, where the men could easily see it, and they recognised that house as the point at which they rallied when an alarm was given. Gradually, this simple ceremony became more dignified and finally was incorporated into the Guard Mounting Parade of the Foot Guards. "A Troop" was the name given to the music played during this ceremony of "Lodging the Colour" gave place to the words "Trooping the Colour" and the ceremony of "Lodging" was 200 years old when it was added to Guard Mounting.
6. This is an old naval exclamation from the Boatswain's Mate, or the Master-at-Arms... This call was given to see that the men were awake after they were called. There was no such thing in the navy (or in any of the services in fact), as two minutes extra in bed.
7. This means to owe money or to be in financial difficulty. In days gone by, a special "query" sign was marked by tradesmen against the names of those customers about whose credit they had any doubt.
8. This comes from the days of gold-digging when there was an old custom of shaking the earth that was containing gold in a pan of water. Gold being the heavier part would quickly sink and when the pan was twirled round, the lighter part (the earth) would soon fly off. So it was easy to see which was which, and to get the gold. Today, we still use this expression about everyday things, when we say that any undertaking may not "pan out" well, meaning that it may not be very successful or remunerative.
9. This is an old term used about a midshipman. The quaint expression came from the time when handkerchiefs were not very common, and lads often used their sleeves instead. It is said that the three buttons on their uniform coats' cuffs were kept on for this very reason even after they had been removed from other officers' uniforms. The name "snotty" was used by the middle of the 18th century. Today, we should dislike such a term applied to us, but these lads were quite used to it.

