

Data Matrix

by NoBadWeather

This is an **especially difficult** version of my Sloggers & Betters submission - there called "Bad Postman", and here under its original name. Testers requested the difficulty be lowered, so while many of the clues are the same - the non-standard content is for the bravehearted. Research may be required! Good luck.

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Some clues have had one or more letters replaced with a number.

If the number N replaces letter X in a clue, then you must mark the Nth occurrence of X in that clue's answer cells with a *

For example, if a word in the clue was "compl2in" and the answer was "banana", mark the second "a" in "banana" with a * in the grid.

Once you have completed the entire grid, copy the star marks to a fresh, unfilled copy of the grid and fully fill in all cells marked * with a dark pen, leaving as little blank space as possible. This includes some individual cells previously marked for you!

A further process will thereafter yield another (extra-cryptic) clue. Some external tooling will be required for this process - and the tool required and something to do with it are hinted at very early on in the grid.

Once this process is completed, that will be your **final** clue to solve. Said final clue may well be better worked on in pairs.

Data Matrix - The Grid

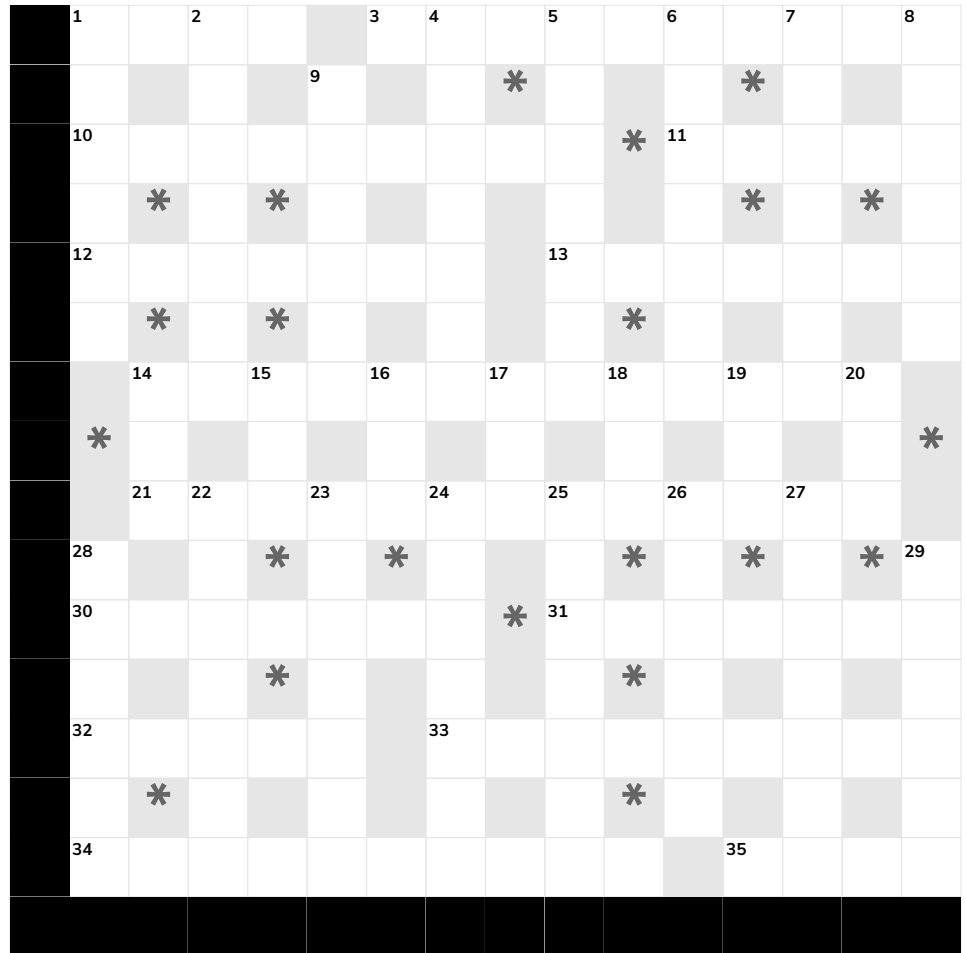
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ACROSS

- 1 Mostly just shy to examine contents (4)
- 3 March, perhaps losing leader record to Polish working dog and bone? (2,3,5)
- 10 Ode slippy, say? Auctioneer! (1,5,3)
- 11 Comparison in contents of speech (5)
- 12 Mattered monarch's hierarchy (7)
- 13 One saying no thanks after sculpting granite (7)
- 14 Grateful theologian in French, sparing in good double entendre (6,7)
- 21 Concealing of information hole, covering for example a notable chart (13)
- 30 Extremely lucrative taxes in essence connected to school campus (7)
- 31 Delicate packaging strewn regularly produces delay in receiving (7)
- 32 Prosecute alongside one's child(ren) (5)
- 33 One assumes those people love naked travelling (2,3,4)
- 34 Splattered in hot paste to offer recognition with a brawler, perhaps? (3,4,3)
- 35 Unfinished palaver (2-2)

DOWN

- 1 Those who carve heart-stricten captans (6)
- 2 Somewhat brash antics in Ghanaian region (7)
- 4 Bigger found in twelve or nine connected points? (7)
- 5 How to conceal time I essentially underreacted, delivering start off-key? (3-4)



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- 6 Perfect example once included in average number (7)
- 7 I require more than our welcoming brew, Newton! (7)
- 8 Opinionated article after the Spanish ran off (6)
- 9 Emitter covers state that is coveted (6)
- 14 Tricks poor actor to go down in size (3)
- 15 Peer to get high, perhaps? (3)
- 16 I've taken four steps back for some time (3)
- 17 Low anchor striking bottom (3)
- 18 Fine out, nice atmosphere (3)
- 19 Scamp's half ditty (3)
- 20 Alternatingly glary and lively (3)
- 22 Send back drink to make statement when stopwatch finishes (5,2)
- 23 Insincere extended while sailing vessel (7)
- 24 Enclosing unknown debts could be lethal if drawn in? (7)
- 25 Drink following party in woven material (7)
- 26 Occasional song to arise from worker tailor, perhaps? (6)
- 27 Fictional space-faring mugger is hot, and also no rival! (3,4)
- 28 Small tomb you initially turned into unrent plot (6)
- 29 Homer is behaving after introducing Odyssey's final character, giving description of saviour? (2,4)