Submission Guidelines for the *Los Angeles Times* Crossword

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We are looking for fun, fresh, well-constructed crosswords that will appeal to a wide variety of solvers. Submissions should be emailed to LATCrossword@pattivarol.com.

Monday through Friday, we publish 15x15 themed puzzles; difficulty increases from easy/beginner to moderately hard as the week progresses. Themes should be consistent and narrowly defined, with fresh vocabulary and witty wordplay. We do not have titles on our daily puzzles, so the themes must be self-evident or tied together with an in-grid entry that acts as a reveal to sum up the gimmick.

Puzzles should have at least 45 theme squares; four or more theme entries is ideal, but three 15s may be acceptable. Max word count is 78; under 43 black squares preferred.

For 15x15, a complete, clued puzzle is preferred. However, if a theme requires an unusual grid size (15x16, say) or another unusual feature, theme query encouraged.

Saturday, we publish 15x15 themeless puzzles. Each solve should be a gentle challenge, with contemporary vocabulary and imaginative clues that celebrate a broad range of culture and education. Max word count is 72 for themeless puzzles; black squares should be kept to a minimum.

Sunday, we publish 21x21 themed puzzles, medium/hard in difficulty. Like the daily puzzles, themes should be consistent and narrowly defined, but we're particularly looking for humorous and clever wordplay for Sundays. The puzzle title should be a hint to the puzzle's theme/gimmick, without repeating any part of the theme or completely giving it away.

Puzzles should have at least six theme entries, with no fewer than 84 theme squares (but most of our Sundays have seven or eight themers). Max word count is 144; well under 80 black squares preferred.

Theme queries for Sunday puzzles are strongly encouraged. Include puzzle title, theme answers, and theme clues with your query.

For all puzzles:

All answer words must interlock throughout the grid, and the grid pattern must be symmetrical.

Rotational symmetry, where the grid looks the same upside down as it does right side up, is preferred, but right/left symmetry is also acceptable if the theme requires it. A grid with no symmetry or unusual symmetry will only be considered if the pattern is theme-related.

All answer words should be three letters or more, and should contain only letters, not symbols or numbers. Only one letter per square, please.

Clues should match the difficulty level of the puzzle's theme, and should be as accurate as they are creative.

Acceptable formats and email etiquette

Crossword Compiler (ccw), CrossFire (cfp), and Across Lite (puz) are our preferred formats, but any file type that can be opened by either Compiler or CrossFire should be fine. Please do not send Word docs or PDFs.

Please send just one puzzle per email, and please limit submissions to three at a time. In other words, if you've sent us three puzzles, please wait to send us a fourth until you've heard back on the first.

Specific subject lines are a kindness: please let us know what type of puzzle you're sending (size, theme/themeless), the puzzle topic (title for Sundays, 1-Across or marquee entry for themeli), and if it's a revision, a new submission, or a query (for Sundays or revised themes). We also take it as a kindness when theme entries and their clues are listed in the body of a submission email.

If we pass on a puzzle, please do not send us a revised version unless specifically invited to do so.

Response time

Our goal is to reply to every submission within 45 days, but there will be times of the year when response times are longer. Please do not follow up before 60 days.

For time sensitive themes, we suggest submitting 4-6 months in advance with TIME SENSITIVE somewhere in the subject heading.

Payment

Payment is $150 for daily puzzles and $350 for Sunday puzzles, paid shortly after publication.

Crosswords submitted for publication must be original work, never published in any other venue, either in print or electronically. Farrar-Nichols Associates Inc. buys all rights to the puzzles, including first rights.

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