

About one third of the clues, marked “*”, relate to a specific quality and are clued only by wordplay. Another third are cryptic clues, which are italicised, and the remainder are definitions.

May 2026 Slot 1 by Bogeyman

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Across

- 1 Bang up (8)
- 5 Sensitive nurse (6)
- 8 Employ university heads for superior education (3)
- 9 Wrapping Liberal in strong cotton material is amusing (8)
- 12 Hint that end is missing? (3-3)
- 15 Ansaté cross (4)
- 16 Naperian base to exercise European weapon (4)
- 17 After all (2,3,4)
- 18 Comparative conjunction (4)
- 20 Goes down to the French, keeping well back (5)
- 22 Vehicle (4)
- 25 Church examination may be sung (6)
- 28 Apprehension (6)
- 29 Nest (4)
- 30 Recesses (5)
- 32 Fine structures (4)
- 34 Laboratory apparatus (5,4)
- 36 Note after note will weary (4)
- 38 Palms (4)
- 41 Use tin reels for music collection (6)
- 42 Sprite in cocktail untouched (8)
- 43 Poetically before (3)
- 44 Jabber incessantly (6)
- 45 W (8)

Down

- 1 *Expression of triumph, with thanks (4)
- 2 *Protestant Episcopal clothes designer (4)
- 3 *Isn't lilac fresh? (9)
- 4 *Boot caught in snares (7)
- 5 Describing four tropical fish (5)
- 6 *Medico at his work (4)
- 7 Lowering note at end of riff is common (4)
- 10 *Visiting Switzerland (4)
- 11 Construct 15-across for great leader (4)
- 13 *With feeling of resentment, compiler takes note (6)
- 14 Tripped on ends of A-frame's guys (6)
- 18 *Champion supports essential action (4)
- 19 *One cat perhaps (4)
- 21 Hint (9)
- 23 Uncommon way to serve roast beef (4)
- 24 Untidy state (4)
- 26 Tolkien creation (6)
- 27 Toss rope - space is clear again (6)
- 31 *Hurry to park in group (7)
- 32 *Wife's success (4)
- 33 Head no longer here reportedly (4)
- 35 "Cheers!" The first half of series is a stunner! (5)
- 36 *Take it back to the big city (4)
- 37 *Rush for first of tickets (4)
- 39 Shade (4)
- 40 Stitched all points together (4)