

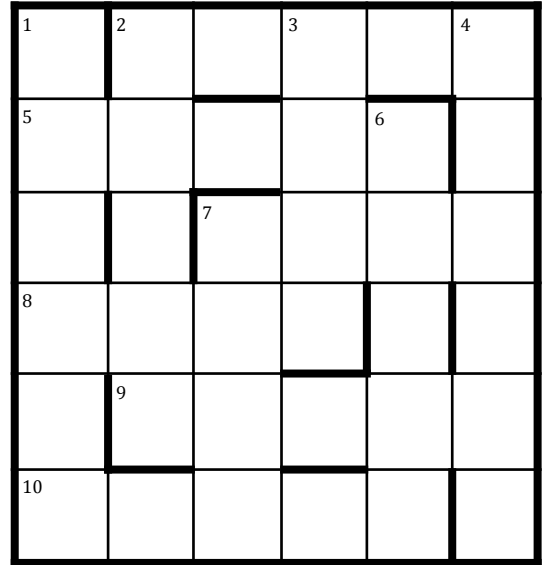
# Battle by Binder

It's time for battle!

In this puzzle, half of the clues feature a superfluous word to be removed before solving - in clue order, they reveal your battle cry.

You can choose your fighter first, but then I'll have the advantage - the entries for two other clues are based on your selection, and are (in clue order) one of my fighter's options, and my ideal result for your fighter.

Another four clues (whose entries are placed symmetrically in the grid) are wordplay only (they share a loose definition): three undergo a transformation upon entry (resulting in valid words), and the fourth (which copies the others in its own way) is also my response to your battle cry. In clue order, the final letters of these clues spell: what this battle is (really), what those symmetric entries are (effectively), and what I am (given my response).



## Across

2. Kinda baffling?
5. Nothing I held in earnest is put aside
7. What spaghetti might do in your starter's first cooking fat
8. Mostly sleek characters that wanna swim around!
9. Smokes with young lady keeping close to be honest
10. Just passing around the last line of seats in Alphabet Arena?

## Down

1. Expression of disbelief interrupts the banshee shrieking
2. US tourist changes top for the 'Gram?
3. Medals at the Barcelona Olympics - oddly, our very worst
4. Stubborn best man's leading yours truly in lush arrangement
6. Some called it "tolerable"
7. Kind of blunder one competitor's opening line around a trophy