

Solution to A Crossword – Take One

(Puzzle by Vinjai Vale and Matt Hambacher)

Answer: HICCUP

The first step is to realize that all of the given clues are one letter too short to fit in the crossword grid. Then one notices that the unlabeled clues at the end correspond to the labeled ones, except with the missing letter added back in (e.g. “Not really” and “Big boat builder”, which clue NAH and NOAH respectively – thus the “Take One” in the puzzle title). Filling in all the clues and ordering them according to the unlabeled ones yields:

Down:

Unlabeled Clue	Labeled Clue	Unlabeled Answer	Labeled Answer	Letter
Plus the sound of a clock, it's crazy	15. PUC-Rio's language	LUNA	LUA	N
Marcus Tullius	27. Chickpea genus	CICERO	CICER	O
Given a hand	33. ___ or no ___?	DEALT	DEAL	T
Whatever	4. One of mathematics' most famous transcendental constants	EH	E	H
What you don't have after an all-nighter	9. Button console siren company	ENERGY	NERGY	E
___ like the wind, Bullseye!	37. Eclipse, NetBeans, Cloud9 are examples	RIDE	IDE	R
Use Chicago, Turabian, APA, MLA, etc.	35. New postseason college basketball 32-team tournament	CIT	CIT	E
Foxhound member with six-language mastery	1. Pete's favorite alcohol	SNAKE	SAKE	N
When opening ceremony was (abbr.)	14. Haute couture country (abbr.)	FRI	FR	I
A city square	22. Auburn, CA vineyard and winery	PLAZA	PAZA	L
Basic data type	32. A kind of put	INT	IN	T
Your lion card	43. Me, myself	ID	I	D
Smart, but not in a good way	34. Ginger, sounds like suffering	ALEC	ALE	C
January 1st, 1970	17. Same thing as afterburn (abbr.)	EPOCH	EPOC	H
Struck by a moon	3. 1924 was year of the ___	RAPT	RAT	P
Even more lively	8. Flaky content of abused D-hall grinders	PEPPIER	PEPPER	I
Not the Texas Atlantic Land Trust	40. An NBA star's debut album, circa 2007	TPL	TP	L
Connects a vessel to its anchor	10. Written to joy	RODE	ODE	R

Longing	23. Full of intellect	WISTFUL	WITFUL	S
The ninth letter	2. Adult Swim series, with pilot episode "Animals" (abbr.)	IOTA	OTA	I
Not even one left out	21. The first state (in alphabetical order) (abbr.)	ALL	AL	L
A young canid	7. I could help you cross the street? No. Your yard? No. Your porch? No!	PUP	UP	P
To attain zero velocity	38. Most isolated lane in the league	STOP	TOP	S
In squash, when someone's in the way	25. Phones home	LET	ET	L
Ranges from Bb3 to A6	6. Feeling of floating out of one's body (abbr.)	OBOE	OBE	O
AAMC residency program	28. Paleozoic, Cenozoic, Mesozoic are examples of one of these	ERAS	ERA	S

The down clues spell NOT HERE NILTDCHPILRSILPSLOS, which suggests looking at the across clues instead. This is further motivated by “A Crossword” in the title being reinterpreted as “Across Word”.

Unlabeled Clue	Labeled Clue	Unlabeled Answer	Labeled Answer	Letter
The boot country (abbr.)	41. Novel featuring all of the Losers' Club	ITA	IT	A
Holds soda and tuna	35. Pizza kitchen (abbr.)	CAN	CA	N
Person who says social hierarchy isn't right	39. Where's my water bottle? I just had it at D-hall...	LEFTIST	LEFTIT	S
The first part of the SC2 Trilogy	23. Short for old	WOL	OL	W
Not malo	12. A form of wrestling where a lubid is used	BUENO	BUNO	E
Holds a concert every term	29. <i>The</i> centuries-old rivalry	EAR	EA	R
American singing show	43. US department headed by US Secretary of Labor (abbr.)	IDOL	DOL	I
Passageways	24. Place to go bowling	ALLEYS	ALLEY	S
"Get to the _____! Now!"	5. See you	CHOPPER	COPPER	H
Animal leader of Manor Farm	22. Not technically a senior	PIG	PG	I
Expensive crackers	31. Mohd Idris bin Mohd Zaizizi	RITZ	RIZ	T
What do you call a bike made out of ice?	26. Last five letters of a word meaning legal residence	ICICLE	ICILE	C
Mick Pennisi did this	14. When a bunny's ears aren't upright they are _____	FLOPPED	LOPPED	F
When you pass GO	44. Comes in R8, 4C, and 5C	COLLECT	COLLET	C
D-F-E-G	18. 1996 survival horror game (abbr.)	RUE	RE	U
Big boat builder	11. Not really	NOAH	NAH	O
You need permission from this to take Math 590 (abbr.)	45. A matrix operation	DEPT	DET	P
Graded from 1 to 36	34. Not a straightforward current	ACT	AC	T

To gain, one must experience this	20. It was silent until the drop	PAIN	PIN	A
Cassandra July actress	16. What your dog did to your homework	KATE	ATE	K
Animal daddy	1. Honorable male	SIRE	SIR	E
Molecular money	13. May exam	ATP	AP	T
Kinda-sorta maybe. Approximately perhaps.	30. 23rd book of the bible (abbr.)	ISH	IS	H
Before fix	19. What an elementary schooler would call spaz	PRE	PE	R
When a volcano can't handle the pressure	42. Latin root meaning break or burst	ERUPT	RUPT	E
Brit butt	36. Bodyboarding trick, el rollo into a 360	ARSE	ARS	E

The across clues spell ANSWER IS HITCFUOP TAKE. Following the TAKE ONE idea from the title, we remove three letters from HITCFUOP and obtain the word HICCUP, which is the final answer – and which also happens to be a term for a “take” gone badly, once more circling back to the title.