

(I) A Cornish Conundrum (1/2) [Solution]

1. Answers:

| Singular | Definite Singular | Plural | Definite Plural | Meaning |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| dama | an dhama | damyow | a. an damyow | 'mother' |
| b. kasek | an gasek | c. kasegi | an kasegi | 'mare' (female horse) |
| kulyek | an kulyek | kulyoges | d. an kulyoges | 'cockerel' (young male chicken) |
| myghtern | e. an myghtern | myghternedh | an vyghternedh | 'king' |
| myghernes | f. an vyghernes | myghernesow | g. an myghernesow | 'queen' |
| tas | h. an tas | tasow | i. an dasow | 'father' |
| bogh | j. an bogh | boghes | k. an boghes | 'billy-goat' (male goat) |
| banow | l. an vanow | banowes | m. an banowes | 'sow' (female pig) |
| badh | an badh | n. badhes | an badhes | 'boar' (male pig) |
| tevesik | o. an tevesik | p. tevesigyon | an devesigyon | 'adult man' |
| pons | an pons | ponsyow | q. an ponsyow | 'bridge' |
| maw | an maw | r. mebyon | an vebyon | 'boy' |
| s. tesen | an desen | tesennow | an tesennow | 'cake' |
| t. tarow | an tarow | terewi | an terewi | 'bull' (male cow) |

12. Answers:

| Cornish | English |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| u. an bys | 'the finger' |
| v. war desen deg | 'on a beautiful cake' |
| w. war dharas | 'on a door' |
| an bal berfydh | x. the perfect spade |
| das | y. stack (or a stack) |
| war das | z. on a father |



(I) A Cornish Conundrum (2/2) [Solution]

I3. Animal: penguin

Answering I3: If you gather all of the color terms in the problem you get *glas* = blue, *glasrudh* = purple, *rudhvelyn* = orange, *melyn* = yellow, *gwynnruadh* = pink. From this, you can infer that *rudh* = red and that *gwynn* = white. Thus, “white head” would be *penn gwynn*, giving the answer *penguin*.

Notes on Cornish:

Like in all Celtic languages, Cornish nouns undergo mutations, which is the change in the initial consonant depending on how the noun is used or what form it appears in.

This problem is about the so-called second mutation, or soft mutation, which means that in certain occurrences these consonants change as follows:

B → V

D → Dh

Gw → W

K → G

M → V

P → B

T → D

Rules for soft mutations:

- feminine nouns in the definite singular are mutated
- masculine nouns in the definite plural are mutated only when they refer to people
- all nouns are mutated following *war* (“on”), regardless of gender or whether they are singular/plural
- adjectives are mutated following feminine singular nouns or plural masculine human nouns

References:

Chubb, R. (2013) *Skeul an Tavas. A Coursebook in Standard Cornish*. 2nd Ed. Cathair na Mart, Eire: Everttype.

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Page, J. (2002) *Cornish Grammar for Beginners and the Auxiliary Verbs*. Hayle: Cornish Language Board.

