

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

I1. 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'
myghternes	f. an vyghternes	myghternesow	g. an myghternesow	'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 ponyow	'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)

I2. 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, *gwynnrudh* = 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: Evertime.

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