

HIEROGLYPHICS SOLUTION – WINDOW FASTENERS

In each grid, the words in each column can be sorted into one of four categories (after being modified via wordplay unique to that grid. Each modification indicates a single letter (see below). Reading the indicated letters left to right in each category, in order of the categories as presented in the first column (in the other columns, items are presented in alphabetical order), reveals a 16-letter clue for each grid. In puzzle order:

Added Letter

HERRING, GROUPER, GRUNT, COD (fish)	HUGO
SLOOP, CUTTER, CANOE, KETCH (boats)	STOK
ETHAN, OWEN, OSCAR, FRANK (boys' names)	ENOF
USHER, DIDO, PINK, SADE (one-named singers)	HOPE

(Victor) Hugo's "token of hope" = JOINED HANDS

Transaddition (add a letter and scramble)

APPLE, APRICOT, SOURSOP, PEACH (fruits)	PISC
ICELAND, FRANCE, CAMEROON, TIMOR-LESTE (countries)	IFOR
ARCHIMEDES, DESCARTES, BRAHE, COPERNICUS (scientists)	MCAN
SPADES, PRESIDENT, POKER, HEARTS (card games)	DIES

Pisciform candies = SWEDISH FISH

Anagrams (use the single "stuck" letter in each)

PORES, NOSE, GROIN, TOENAIL (body parts)	PORT
SLEEPER, ALIENS, STRIPTEASE, DEADPOOL (one-word movies)	ENTO
BALTIMORE, ESSEN, ADEN, MEDINA (cities)	REND
ECO, THOREAU, AUSTEN, VERNE (authors)	ORSE

"Portent" or "endorse" = SIGN

Transdeletion (delete a letter and scramble)

SHAR-PEI, SETTER, POINTER, SPANIEL (dogs)	MAUB
VERMEER, SEURAT, DEGAS, MONET (painters)	OYAL
OTHELLO, CRESSIDA, LEAR, PERICLES (Shakes. title characters)	BUMN
RENT, OLIVER!, FOLLIES, CABARET (one-word musicals)	OTWO

(Jessica) Mauboy (studio) album no. two = GET 'EM GIRLS

Deleted letter

ETA, SIGMA, GAMMA, LAMBDA (Greek letters)	STRA
POPLAR, PALM, OAK, FIR (trees)	USSM
DRESS, COAT, PANTS, SANDALS (clothing)	USIC
SLEIGH, BUS, MOPED, CART (vehicles)	TYPE

Strauss music type = WALTZ

Change a letter (using the new one)

SOAP, NUMBERS, BONES, WEEDS (one-word TV shows)

HERON, CHICKEN, STARLING, DUCK (birds)

AREA, POSTAL, HEALTH, DRESS (___ code)

CORNET, GONG, FLUTE, HARP (instruments)

ONED

ECAD

ESLE

NGHT

One decade's length = TEN YEARS

The hieroglyphics shown are those used as question indicators on the show Only Connect, on which they are referred to by specific names. Each of these is the same enumeration as one of the clue answers above, and, all together, the matched-up hieroglyphics and answers share 15 letters in common

TWO REEDS
TEN YEARS

LION
SIGN

TWISTED FLAX
SWEDISH FISH

HORNED VIPER
JOINED HANDS

WATER
WALTZ

EYE OF HORUS
GET EM GIRLS

Reordering these fifteen letters per the numerical string given spells the answer WINDOW FASTENERS (just the thing for locking screens).