

Solution: *X Marks the Spot*

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Each clue in the center clues a word with “X” in it. They are, in order:

- AXIOM
- BOXER
- CONTEXT
- ELIXIR
- EXERT
- FIXED
- HEXAGON
- LAXATIVE
- MEXICO
- NIXON

These can be matched to letters in the first and third column by appending the phrase to the back half of the word or the front, the break being the location of the X.

For example, AXIOM pairs with “ID” (ID[IOM]) and “BSORB” ([A]BSORB). Doing this for all word pairs, and drawing lines between the pairs, creates X shapes whose center crosses through letters. Reading the letters in order, you get the solution: GENUFLECT.

The full list of paired words is below:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------|-----------|
| • IDIOM | AXIOM | ABSORB |
| • POWER | BOXER | BOOK |
| • BOUGHT | CONTEXT | CONTENDER |
| • REPAIR | ELIXIR | ELITE |
| • DESSERT | EXERT | EMPTY |
| • FUDGED | FIXED | FIELD |
| • DRAGON | HEXAGON | HEALTH |
| • COOPERATIVE | LAXATIVE | LAMENT |
| • CALICO | MEXICO | MEADOW |
| • APRON | NIXON | NIECE |