

Cleaning (solution)

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The first step is to solve the first set of 9 given text clues. Each clue has an answer in alphabetical order and matches the given word length in number of circles. As clued by the flavortext, detergent containing washing bleach, which is hydrogen peroxide, or H^2O^2 , need to be used. Hence a commonality of all these answers is that they contain the letters HHOO, which will help as confirmation and solving for these text clues. The table below summarizes the text clues and answers:

Text clue (first set)	Clue answer
Attained nirvana	BUDDHAHOOD
It tells time	CHRONOGRAPH
Specialized firefighters	HOTSHOTS
Medieval rank	KNIGHTHOOD
Deep thinker	PHILOSOPHER
Pictures	PHOTOGRAPHS
Units used for both residence and business	SHOPHOUSES
Composer for Leningrad	SHOSTAKOVICH
From start to finish	THROUGHOUT

The second set of text clues all contain a word that is the name of a detergent brand. These words can be replaced by the answers from the first set of text clues, which would need to be matched up to the correct text clue in the second set to form a meaningful clue. Solving each complete clue then yields an answer that contains a “messy” stain — a substring of the letters STAIN in some unique order, hinted by the anagram indicator in the flavortext. As clued in the flavortext, these “stains” should be removed after applying the “peroxide bleach”, leaving letters forming valid words in the same order. The lengths of these words match the given second number for each corresponding reference answer from the first set of text clues. Therefore, the given first number is an index into these words. The table below summarizes the hidden detergent brands, matching references to the second set of text clues, their answers, leftover words after removing the stains, and the extracted letters from the indices:

Text clue (second set)	Matching reference	Answer	STAIN removed	Given index	Extracted letter
Doing an action to show-off, like vanish	HOTSHOTS	BOASTING	BOG	(3/3)	G
Where you might like lots of breeze daily	PHOTOGRAPHS	INSTAGRAM	GRAM	(2/4)	R
Fab is also a this	SHOSTAKOVICH	PIANIST	PI	(2/2)	I
A tide is almost always as such to water	CHRONOGRAPH	RESISTANT	REST	(2/4)	E
Russian Volski who is a dynamo	PHILOSOPHER	STANISLAV	SLAV	(4/4)	V
A Spanish Order of method	KNIGHTHOOD	SANTIAGO	AGO	(1/3)	A
Perseveres attack	THROUGHOUT	MAINTAINS	MAIN	(4/4)	N
Leading such a life during the pursuit of comfort	BUDDHAHOOD	MONASTIC	MOC	(3/3)	C
Gives top a fresh look	SHOPHOUSES	REPAINTS	REP	(2/3)	E

Using the given indices to extract these letters in the order of the second set gives the puzzle answer **GRIEVANCE**, a likely cleaning complaint when there are messy stains to be removed.

Constructor's notes:

The starting point for the idea for this puzzle was also with the intent to make use of a thematic wordplay, which would therefore yield a shorter and more accessible puzzle. As the puzzle answer is possibly related to cleaning, the idea for letter/substring deletion as an analogy for cleaning was one angle which I pursued. Another idea related to cleaning I explored was using words containing common letters, which could be analogous to either bleach or stains. In the end, I managed to combine both of these ideas into the final puzzle, using a two-step solving process. It was fairly difficult in terms of construction finding suitable matching words that fit both criteria, and I also wanted the words to contain the STAIN substring in unique orderings, so as to be more elegant. Fortunately, the number of pairs of matching words was small, and it was still possible to have enough to implement this puzzle idea.