

Q2.10 Harbinger

Harbinger comes from Old French and Old German words that meant “to provide shelter or lodging” and later had a sense of someone being sent ahead to arrange accommodations, and in that sense, *harbinger* is related to the word *harbor*, as in “to shelter.”

It is still used in English to describe someone who is sent ahead to arrange lodging or to announce an important person’s arrival, but more often it is used metaphorically to describe a sign that foretells the coming of some person or event.

Although this memory trick isn’t tied to the real roots of the words, you can think of a *harbinger* as a bringer of things.

The true harbinger of spring is not crocuses or swallows returning to Capistrano, but the sound of the bat on the ball.

—Bill Veeck, owner of multiple Major League Baseball teams