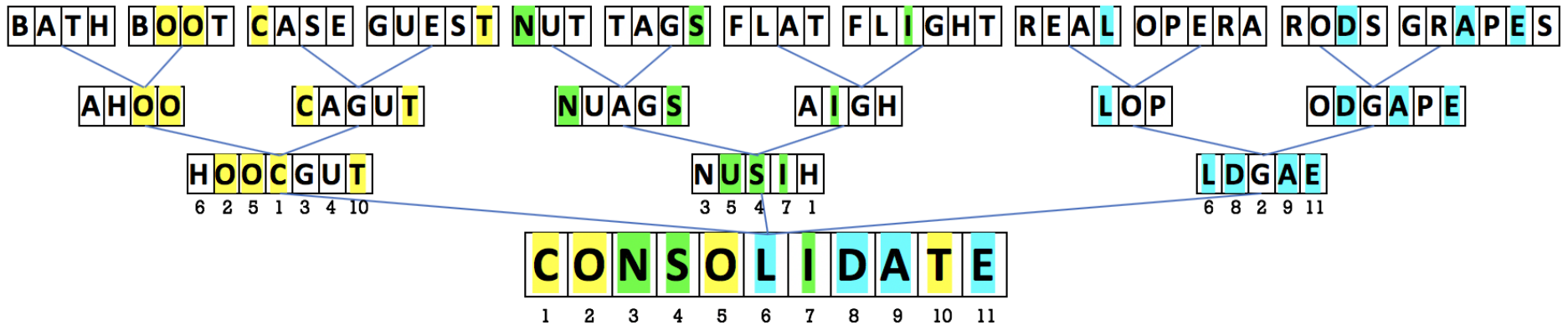


## DOWNIZING THE GANG

Solution: for each of the twelve clues, a word or phrase is given that usually proceeds the target word, and then one that usually follows. So for the first one BIRD \_\_\_\_\_ SALTS, BATH is the only (?) logical word. When these are written in their corresponding spaces at the top, they can be cancelled down by the process described – any letters they have in common get dropped. Here is the filled-out chart – the order of the letters in the intermediate “words” must be kept in the same order that they appeared in the two words that were used – as was done in both examples. If it is not, then the finals numbers won’t work. The chart eventually cancels all the words down to eleven letters: O, O, C, T, N, S, I, L, D, A and E. Now the little numbers beneath the letters come in to play. They give the order of those eleven letters: **CONSOLIDATE** – with the perhaps not so obvious word play on CON – because it is a bunch of CONS that are being CONSOLIDATED!



Though it is not entirely necessary, the grid at right should perhaps help solvers with some of the harder words, or at least assure them that they are on the right track.

