

First Puzzle

Introduction to Puzzlehunts, Splash 2016

Brian Chen

So, this is a puzzle. Even though it just appears to be a bland and uninteresting paragraph. Every puzzle is different, though, and this text is just part of its disguise. Frequently, puzzles are more easily solved when you are in a group. It's helpful to have somebody to bounce ideas off of. Very big groups have the advantage of knowing a lot of different things. Enumerate as many different ways to interpret the puzzle as you can. Looking online for resources is sometimes useful; you never know what you will find. Even sleeping on it can help. Tiredness can make easy puzzles unsolvable. Try getting a good night of rest to get a refreshed perspective on things. Eventually, though, you may just run out of things to try. Remember that you can ask the author nicely for a hint or two — they probably want you to enjoy the puzzle, and you cannot do that if you are completely baffled. When you finally find a secret message in a puzzle, congratulations! Of course, reading a message usually suggests you are on the right path, but not necessarily that you are done. Repeating a step that produced the message is sometimes necessary to finish the puzzle. Don't give up! Since this puzzle is ending, though, have you discovered the nine-letter answer yet?

Numbers and Letters

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1. Number of Ds in this sentence?
2. How many occurrences of the first letter of the alphabet?
3. How many appearances of letters that come after W alphabetically, excluding W itself?
4. Number of consonants in this sentence?
5. How many times do vowels occur, counting Y as a vowel?
6. Number of uppercase letters?
7. Count lowercase letters?
8. Count letters that are Roman numerals too?

Counting 101

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O				
11		13	14	
	12			
			21	
9	10			
8	23	24	25	26
22				

F					
15		1	2	18	
16		17			
		3		19	20
				4	5
				6	7

Tea Leaves

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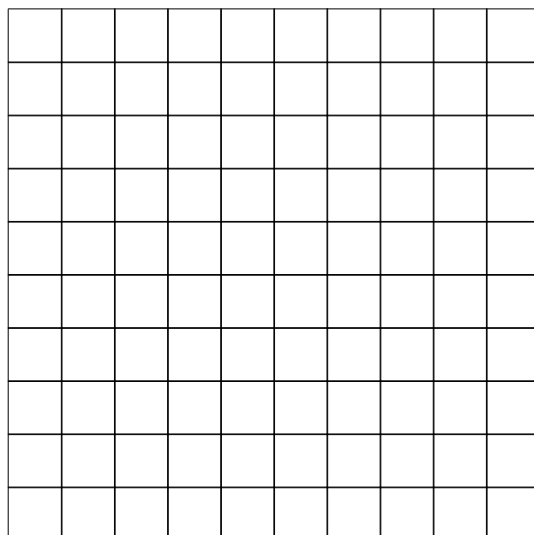
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1. Adhesive material → Skilled; knowing how to do something [2]
2. Sour → It can be acute, right, or obtuse [1]
3. One of two people born at the same time → Close relative of gorilla and chimpanzee [2]
4. Spasm, or popular video-game streaming site → Paintings, sculpture, music, or dance, e.g. [1]
5. To mix together or intertwine, esp. lines or ropes → Body part responsible for hearing [1]
6. To change slightly → Device for warming a room [2]
7. To rip → Bony growth on an animal's head, or musical instrument [4]
8. Mythological creature that lives under bridges → Sick [1]
9. Snare → Liquid precipitation [2]
10. Flat-topped furniture → Inclined surface [3]
11. Headdress of cloth wound around the head → Music genre with rhyming lyrics spoken to a rhythm [2]
12. To plow land in preparation for growing crops → Stop, drop, and _____ [1]
→ Oxidized metal [4]
13. Confidence in another person → In or of a city [3]
14. Sharp structure on e.g. a rose → Not strong [4]
15. Vehicle that travels on railroads → To be first at a game or contest [3]
16. Traveling homeless person → Salem _____ hunt [4]
17. Place for showing movies

Across the Road

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- There are ten buildings — a cabin, a cathedral, a chateau, a college, a condominium, a fraternity, a hotel, a policestation, a shelter, a theater — at the centers of squares of a 10×10 grid.
- There is exactly one building in each row and exactly one building in each column.
- The chateau is one square northwest of the cabin, which is one square northwest of the condominium.
- The college is exactly at the midpoint of the police station and the chateau, being distance $\sqrt{5}$ from both.
- The college is six squares northwest of the hotel.
- The five buildings whose names start with C are in five adjacent rows.
- The fraternity is in the leftmost column, and the closest building to the fraternity is the chateau, at distance $3\sqrt{2}$.
- The police station is orthogonally adjacent to the top-left square.
- The shelter is in the bottom row, and the closest building to the shelter is the hotel, at distance $\sqrt{5}$.
- The theater is two squares northwest of the cathedral.

After you've placed the bulidings in the grid, note that the buildings send many letters east to empty cells, even extending beyond the edge of the grid. But everything important occurs inside the grid...