

50 Brain Teasers and Lateral Thinking Puzzles

Compiled by David Koutsoukis

1. What starts with an E, ends with an E and usually contains only one letter? ENVELOPE.
2. Which word, if pronounced right, is wrong, but if pronounced wrong is right? Wrong!
3. What belongs to you but other people use it more than you? Your name!
4. What kind of cheese is made backwards? EDAM cheese (made backwards is edam)
5. Can you find a five letter word, which, when typed in upper-case, reads the same upside down? SWIMS.
6. What happens only in the middle of each month, in all of the seasons, except summer and happens only in the night, never in the day? The letter N.
7. If there are forty cups on the table and one cup breaks, how many tea cups are left?
3! We started with 4 tea cups (forty cups) and one broke.
8. "This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it? looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it! In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual though. Study it, and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out! Try to do so without any coaching!"
Answer: There is no letter E anywhere in it!
9. In which sport do winners move backwards and losers move forwards? Tug-of-war.
10. What common word has 4 vowels, one after the other? Queue!
11. Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday? Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow!
12. Why are 1998 dollar coins worth more than 1997 dollar coins? Because there are more of them!
13. Kevin's mother has three children. The first was called Alpha, the second was called Beta. What was the name of the third? Kevin, since it was Kevin's mother and Kevin's brothers were Alpha and Beta.
14. What word is the same backwards and upside down? NOON.
15. What can go up a chimney down, but can't go down a chimney up? An umbrella.
16. There's one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends. What is it? Boxing
17. What has roads but no cars, rivers but no water and hills but no trees? A map!
18. I have a large money box, 10 inches square and 12 inches tall. Roughly how many coins can I place in my empty money box? Just one, after which it will no longer be empty!

19. Why did the inventor of man-hole covers choose round ones, since square ones were easier to make? A circular cover is the only shape that cannot fall through its own hole and, therefore, cannot be accidentally dropped into the hole.
20. Only four words in Standard English begin with the letters "dw". Name two of them: dwarf dwell dweeb dwindle
21. In Aberland, you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not? You cannot take pictures with a wooden leg, you use a camera.
22. How far can a horse run into a forest? Half way - after which it would be running out!
23. What does this represent: mce, mce, mce? Three Blind Mice: they have no l's!
24. A man looks at a photograph and says, "Brothers and sisters have I none, but this man's father is my father's son." How is the man in the photograph related to him? "My father's son" is himself (since he has no siblings), so he's saying that he is "this man's father", which means that he is looking at a photograph of his son.
25. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in 3 years. Which room is safest for him? The third. Lions that haven't eaten in three years are dead.
26. There are two plastic jugs filled with water. How could you put all of this water into a barrel, without using the jugs or any dividers, and still tell which water came from which jug? Freeze them first. Take them out of the jugs and put the ice in the barrel. You will be able to tell which water came from which jug.
27. There is a mute who wants to buy a toothbrush. By imitating the action of brushing one's teeth he successfully expresses himself to the shopkeeper and the purchase is done. Now if there is a blind man who wishes to buy a pair of sunglasses, how should he express himself? He just has to open his mouth and ask!
28. You are running in a race. You overtake the second person. What position are you in? If your answer is first, then you are absolutely wrong! If you overtake the second person and you take his place, you are second!
29. If you overtake the last person, what position are you in? If you answered second last, then you are wrong again. How can you overtake the LAST person?!
30. Take 1000 and add 40 to it. Now add another 1000. Now add 30. Add another 1000. Now add 20. Now add another 1000. Now add 10. What is the total? Did you get 5000? The correct answer is actually 4100.
31. Mary's father has five daughters: 1. Nana, 2. Nene, 3. Nini, 4. Nono. What is the name of the fifth daughter? Nunu? NO! Of course not. Her name is Mary.
32. A man walks up to you and says - "everything I say to you is a lie." Is he telling you the truth or is he lying? He's lying. Even though he's lying when he says "everything" he says is a lie, some of the things he says can be a lie, and this is one of them.
33. A woman has 7 children, half of them are boys. How can this be possible? All the children are boys, so 1/2 half are boys and so is the other half.
34. A farmer and his hired help were carrying grain to the barn. The farmer carried one sack of grain and the hired help carried two sacks. Who carried the heavier load and why? The farmer's load was heavier. His hired help only carried two sacks, while the farmer carries one sack, but his sack is a sack of grain. The hired help only carried 2 sacks - both empty.
35. A boy was at a carnival and went to a booth where a man said to the boy, "If I write your exact weight on this piece of paper then you have to give me \$50, but if I cannot, I will pay you \$50." The boy looked around and saw no scale so he agrees, thinking no matter what the carny writes he'll just say he weighs more or less. In the end the boy ended up paying the man \$50. How did the man win the bet? The man did exactly as he said he would and wrote "your exact weight" on the paper.

36. The word CANDY can be spelled using just 2 letters. Can you figure out how? The answer: C and Y!
37. A man was born in 1955. He's alive and well today at age 33. How is this possible? He was born in the hospital with the room number 1955.
38. Bill bets Craig \$100 that he can predict the score of the hockey game before it starts. Craig agrees, but loses the bet. Why did Craig lose the bet? Bill said the score would be 0-0 and he was right. "Before" any hockey game starts, the score is always 0-0.
39. What are the next 3 letters in this riddle? o t t f f s s _ _ _ Answer: e n t. They represent the first letter when writing the numbers one thru ten.
40. Say "silk" five times. Now spell "silk." What do cows drink? Cows drink water!
41. What do you put in a toaster? Bread, not toast!
42. If a red house is made from red bricks, and a blue house is made from blue bricks, and a pink house is made from pink bricks and a black house is made from black bricks, what is a green house made from?? Greenhouses are made from glass!
43. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends. Boxing
44. At noon and midnight the hour and minute hands are exactly coincident with each other. How many other times between noon and midnight do the hour and minute hands cross? 10 times (not 11 as most people think.)
45. In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle? The pear grew inside the bottle.
46. There were an electrician and a plumber waiting in line for admission to the Home Show. One of them was the father of the other's son. How could this be possible? They were husband and wife.
47. In which sport are the shoes made entirely of metal? Horse racing.
48. What is so fragile that when you say its name you break it? Silence
49. Forward I am heavy, backwards I am not. What am I? A TON
50. How would you rearrange the letters in the words "new door" to make one word? There is only one correct answer. Rearranging the letters of "new door" makes "one word"?

For more resource sheets visit www.acropolisleadership.com

Why not have David Koutsoukis present at your next conference?

