

Some Assembly Required

THE ANSWERS TO THE CLUES yield four four-letter words, four six-letter words, four seven-letter words, and one 16-letter word.

The diagram is a box made up of four cubes. Two of the four-letter words wrap around the perimeter of the box and are written in order. They will go counterclockwise starting from one of the white cube's faces. The top and bottom four-letter words will be scrambled for entry. The top and bottom specification gives the diagram a unique solution.

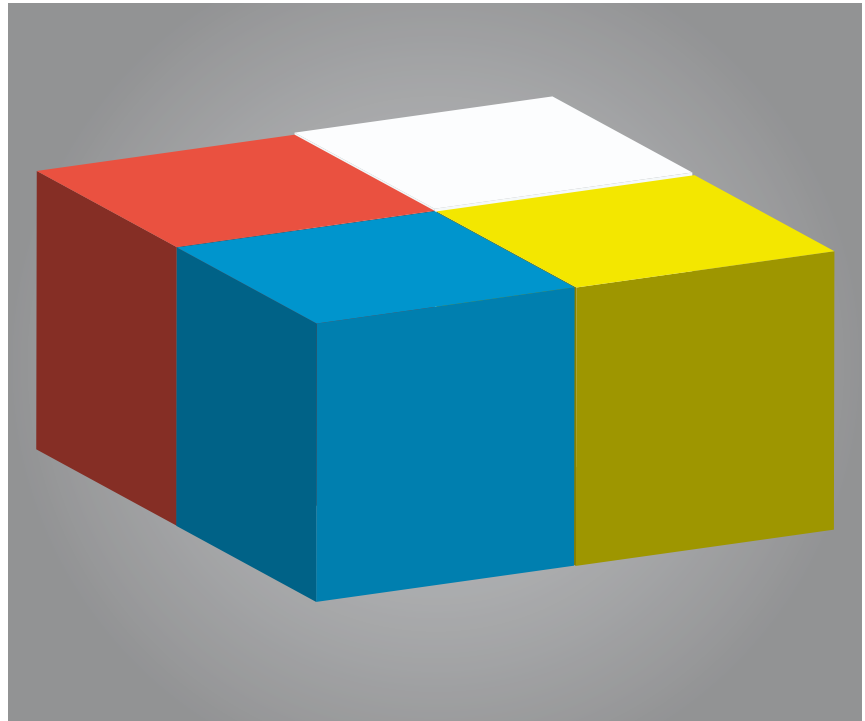
The six- and seven-letter words are paired. The seven-letter word contains all the letters of its six-letter partner (reordered). The common six letters will be entered on the faces of each cube. The extra seventh letter goes inside the pair's cube. Two of the six faces from each cube are interior; adjacent faces share a letter. The outer 16 faces yield the 16-letter word (scrambled) as well as the four four-letter words.

The four extra letters, reading clockwise from the red cube, will tell you what's in the box.

The six- and seven-letter words are in no particular order. The first level of hints below indicates the pairings; the second level identifies each pair's cube. Let me know what level of hints you used, if any.

All the clues lead to common words playable in Scrabble, except for one proper noun, one two-word answer, and the 16-letter word, which is too long for Scrabble. The 16-letter word is unusual and is most associated with 18th century chemistry.

Thanks to Eric Klis, Bob Fink, and Jerry Miccolis for test-solving and editorial suggestions.



Sixteen-Letter Word

Epithets add logic, silly, like a breath of fresh air

Six-Letter Words

1. Droids' encryption is contemptible
2. Carol, after seven Annabelle is available
3. Perfectly understood a great deal in general
4. Burdens taken over by macho researchers

Seven-Letter Words

- a. Wife-beater in a holding cell? Excellent
- b. The last of the joint's all over roadhouse wenches
- c. Cacophony of Bee Gees' music recorded with the midrange removed
- d. Refrains from tintinnabulations

Four-Letter Words

Top of the box:

Horse with second silver cup for second place

Bottom of the box:

Peter's mother admitting softly, "Rap's fantastic"

Around the box (see instructions):

Handle high-low Tic-Tac-Toe's lead Up and down, then all even, I hear

Final Answer

What's in the box?

First-Level Hints—Pairings
1/c, 2/d, 3/a, 4/b
Second-Level Hints—Alterations
1/c = blue cube, 2/d = red cube, 3/a = yellow cube, 4/b = white cube

Previous Issue's Puzzle—The Puzzle Where Everything Goes Wrong

Across

- 1 PARITIES—Anagram of “I traipse”
 5 SUB—Double definition
 9 RHODES—Anagram of “hordes”
 10 ANTE—reversal of ETNA (“volcano”)
 11 INSIGHT—Edges of “Instant delight”
 12 JEWS—Reversal of WE (“our people”) inside SJ, the common abbreviation for (Society of) “Jesuits”
 14 SPRITZER—Z (“a bit of Zinfandel) inside “Sprite” + R (“red”) & literally
 15 ARABLE—ARAB (“Saudi”) + LE (“lake on the outskirts”)
 18 CADENCE—CA + DE + NC (“California, Delaware, North Carolina”) + E (“eastern tip of Tennessee”)
 19 KNOW—Homophone of NO (“disapproval”)
 21 STRAYS—Outside of “strange driveways”
 23 GUILD—GUIL(E) (“almost complete trickery”) + D (“duplicity from the start”)
 26 RIBALD—Inside “tribal display”
 27 MOST—Even letters in “I’m no use to”
 28 AVER—AVERAGE - AGE
 29 EXIT—Inside “complexities”

Down

- 1 STROP—STOP around R (“Russia’s leader”)
 2 LIST—Homophone of Liszt (“Hungarian composer”)
 3 INSPECT—Anagram of “pectins”
 4 STRAIGHTEN—Anagram of “night tears”
 5 TEAS—Homophone of TEAS (“afternoon socials”)
 6 CROQUETTE—CROQUET (“Game dominated by the queen of hearts”) + TE (“pieces of terrible”)
 7 AGUES—(PL)AGUES
 8 BEAK—Anagram of “Bake”
 13 PETIT—Double definition
 14 DESI—Anagram of “side”
 16 BRIDE—HEBRIDES—HE’S
 17 DORA—Reversal of A-ROD (“Former ballplayer”)
 20 CALUMNIES—Anagram of “masculine”
 22 INTERRACIAL—Anagram of “Clarinet air”
 24 TOTEM—Inside “Hottentot embattlement”
 25 SLEIGH—SLEIGH(T) (“Craft cut off”)

1	P	A	R	T	I	E	S		S	U	C	C	U	M	B				
	O		E		N		H		A		O		S		E				
9	R	O	A	D	S			10	A	N	T	I	Q	U	A	T	E		
	T		L		E		T		E		U		G		F				
	S			11	I	N	C	I	T	E		12	J	E	W	E	L	S	
			S		T		E			13	R		T					T	
14	R	I	T	Z			15	A	R	R	E	S	T	A		16	B	L	E
	E		I			17	A		I		P		E		R			A	
18	D	E	C	A	D	E	N	C	E	S			19	W	O	N	K		
	E				O		G		T		20	A		A					
21	S	A		22	T	Y	R	S		23	G	I	L	L	E	D		24	M
	I		E		A			25	S		T		U		S				O
26	G	A	R	I	B	A	L	D	I			27	M	O	I	S	T		
	N		R		L		A		V			N		D					E
28	S	L	A	V	E	R	Y			29	E	X	I	G	E	N	T		

Solvers

There was some early back-and-forth on this one with my test solvers Bob Fink, Eric Klis, and Jerry Miccolis. I can’t really put them in either category as far as using hints. I’d have to say “not applicable.”

Solvers using no hints

Jina and Mike Accardo, Steve Alpert, Lois Cappellano, Phil Gollance, Pete Hepokoski, Ruth Johnson, Dave McGarry and John Murray, Jon Turnes

Solvers using some hints (or not saying)

Dean Apps, Bob Campbell, Mick Diede, Dave Dougherty, Deb Edwards, Edgar

Goral, Joe Kilroy, Paul Kolell, Ken Kudrak, David Lovit and Christine O’Keefe, Ben Lynch, Jay Ripps, Bob Schriver, Bill Scott, Zig Swistunowicz, Doug Szper, James and Betsy Uzzell

TOM TOCE is a senior manager for actuarial services with Ernst & Young in New York and is a member of the Jeopardy Hall of Fame. Solutions may be emailed to thomas.toce@ey.com. In order to make the solver list, your solutions must be received by Jan. 31, 2018.