

LATERAL THINKING PROBLEMS

Preconceptions - Fact - Fanciful - Semantics

Lateral thinking puzzles that challenge your preconceptions.

1. You are driving down the road in your car on a wild, stormy night, when you pass by a bus stop and you see three people waiting for the bus

- An old lady who looks as if she is about to die.
- An old friend who once saved your life.
- The perfect partner you have been dreaming about.

Knowing that there can only be one passenger in your car, whom would you choose?

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Hint: You can make everyone happy.

Your car can only contain one passenger, so whom should it be?

Answer: The old lady of course! After helping the old lady into the car, you can give your keys to your friend, and wait with your perfect partner for the bus

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2. Acting on an anonymous phone call, the police raid a house to arrest a suspected murderer. They don't know what he looks like but they know his name is John and that he is inside the house. The police bust in on a carpenter, a lorry driver, a mechanic and a fireman all playing poker. Without hesitation or communication of any kind, they immediately arrest the fireman. How do they know they've got their man?

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Hint: The police only know two things, that the criminal's name is John and that he is in a particular house.

Answer: The fireman is the only man in the room. The rest of the poker players are women.

3. A man lives in the penthouse of an apartment building. Every morning he takes the elevator down to the lobby and leaves the building. Upon his return, however, he can only travel halfway up in the lift and has to walk the rest of the way - unless it's raining. What is the explanation for this?

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Hint: He is very proud, so refuses to ever ask for help.

Answer: The man is a dwarf. He can't reach the upper elevator buttons, but he can ask people to push them for him. He can also push them with his umbrella.

4. How could a baby fall out of a twenty-story building onto the ground and live?

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Hint: It does not matter what the baby lands on, and it has nothing to do with luck.

Answer: The baby fell out of a ground floor window.

5. A little girl was warned by her guardian never to open the cellar door or she would see things that she was not meant to see. One day while her guardian was out she did open the cellar door. What did she see?

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Hint: Her guardian did not like her very much.

Answer: When the girl opened the cellar door she saw the living room and, through its windows, the garden. She had never seen these before because her parents had kept her all her life in the cellar.

6. A man and his son are in a car crash. The father is killed and the child is taken to hospital gravely injured. When he gets there, the surgeon says, 'I can't operate on this boy - for he is my son!!!' How can this possibly be?

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Hint: This has nothing to do with adoption or time travel.

Answer: The surgeon can not operate on her own son; she is his mother.

7. There are six eggs in the basket. Six people each take one of the eggs. How can it be that one egg is left in the basket?

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Hint: A alternate version of the problem is... Saradhi, Nick & Ted win a raffle contest. The prize is three hard boiled eggs in a basket. After discussing how to divide the prize, each take one egg. Nick & Ted get hungry and so eat their eggs. One of the original eggs is still left in original basket.

Answer: The last person took the basket with the last egg still inside.



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