

MIT Aquarium Puzzle Hunt 2025

Thank you for your patience, class of 2029!

We are the Aquarium Hunt Organizing Committee, and everything is almost ready for this year's grand orientation event. The exhibits are polished, the drinks are icy, and the penguins are excited to see you!

We're experiencing some **ahem** logistical issues—Tim, our mascot, is mysteriously absent, and nobody knows where he went. We're sure he'll be here any minute now, but in the meantime, our staff has been frantically putting together a collection of puzzles, spotify playlists, and physical trinkets as diversions to keep all of you occupied while we wait. They weren't meant to be the main event, but desperate times call for... puzzles!

So please, lend us your time and brainpower. Solve what you can, have some fun, and pass the time, and maybe these puzzles will lead you to the answer to the most pressing question right now—where on earth is that busy beaver?

Gratefully,
People United in Zealously Zany Logistical Excuses (P.U.Z.Z.L.E.)

Welcome to Aquarium Hunt 2025! This is an annual puzzle event written and run by the MIT Puzzle Club for you, the incoming freshmen. If you've never done a puzzlehunt before, don't worry! This is designed to be a hopefully-accessible introduction to the world of puzzles, and there are puzzle club volunteers available to give hints. (Asking for hints is a normal and encouraged part of solving a puzzlehunt!)

The process of solving is unique to each puzzle, and should be revealed by the puzzle itself; that said, we have also included a code sheet of common systems of encoding letters/numbers that frequently come up in puzzlehunting (note that not all of these methods will necessarily be used in this hunt). Using the internet beyond these resources should not be required for this hunt, but it is permitted! With each puzzle, your goal is to extract a word or phrase, which is the puzzle's answer. When you think you have found the answer to any puzzle, find a volunteer to confirm it for you!

Once you have solved at least 5 of the puzzles, we will give you the metapuzzle, which is a puzzle that requires the use of the answers to the previous puzzles in order to solve it. Solving the metapuzzle finishes the hunt!

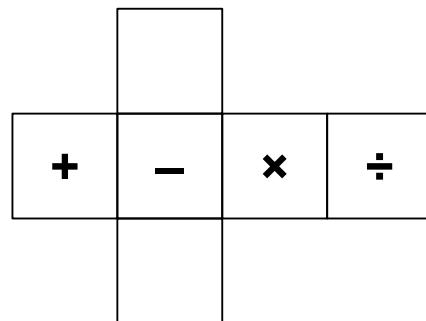
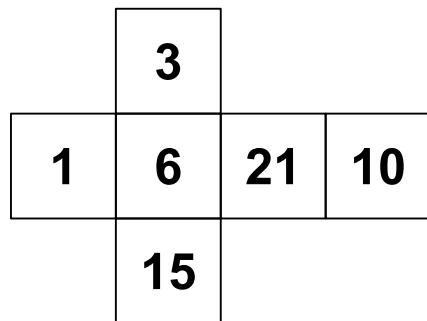
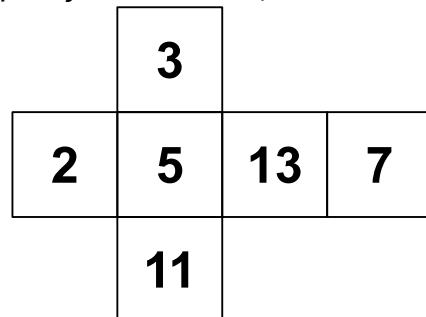
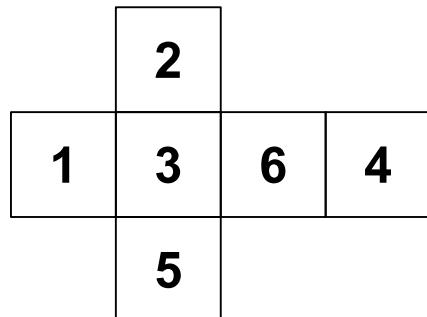
Good luck!

MIT Aquarium Puzzle Hunt 2025

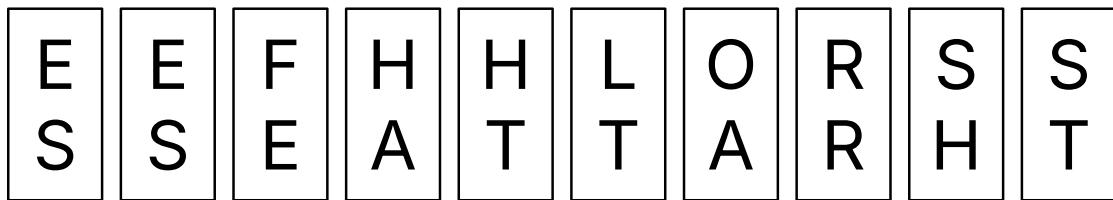
You should have in your bag or on your table a few tools to help you out, which you'll need for the puzzles ahead:

You should have a map of the aquarium.

You should have 4 cubes whose nets, up to face rotation, look like these:



You should have 10 tiles which look like this:



Answer Sheet for Team _____
(team name goes here)

After you solve a puzzle, write the answer here and show it to a Puzzle Club volunteer for confirmation.

Puzzle Answers		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dice Towers		
Dual		
One Fish, Two Fish		
Reanimation		
Ring Bearers		
Rotten Right to the Core		
Scrambled Legs		
The Recirculating Aquarium		
Tim's F1 Racecar		

Meta: Where's Tim?		
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After you solve any 5 of the puzzles above, we will give you the metapuzzle.

Code Sheet

NATO	Letter	Decimal (base 10)	Binary (base 2)	Ternary (base 3)	Hex (base 16)	Letter	Morse	Braille	Semaphore	Pigpen
Alfa	A	1	00001	001	01	A	--	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	└
Bravo	B	2	00010	002	02	B	-•••	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	□
Charlie	C	3	00011	010	03	C	-••-	•○ ○○ ○○	↘	└
Delta	D	4	00100	011	04	D	-••	•○ ○○ ○○	↓	□
Echo	E	5	00101	012	05	E	•	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	□
Foxtrot	F	6	00110	020	06	F	••--	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	□
Golf	G	7	00111	021	07	G	---.	•○ ○○ ○○	↑	└
Hotel	H	8	01000	022	08	H	•○ ○○ ○○	↗	□
India	I	9	01001	100	09	I	..	•○ ○○ ○○	>	□
Juliett	J	10	01010	101	0A	J	-----	•○ ○○ ○○	L	_.
Kilo	K	11	01011	102	0B	K	--	•○ ○○ ○○	↗	□.
Lima	L	12	01100	110	0C	L	•---	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	└.
Mike	M	13	01101	111	0D	M	--	•○ ○○ ○○	↗	□.
November	N	14	01110	112	0E	N	--.	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	□.
Oscar	O	15	01111	120	0F	O	----	•○ ○○ ○○	↗	□.
Papa	P	16	10000	121	10	P	•---.	•○ ○○ ○○	↓	└.
Quebec	Q	17	10001	122	11	Q	---.-	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	□.
Romeo	R	18	10010	200	12	R	-..•	•○ ○○ ○○	●	└.
Sierra	S	19	10011	201	13	S	...	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	▽
Tango	T	20	10100	202	14	T	-	•○ ○○ ○○	↓	>
Uniform	U	21	10101	210	15	U	..-	•○ ○○ ○○	↘	<
Victor	V	22	10110	211	16	V	••--	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	∧
Whiskey	W	23	10111	212	17	W	•---	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	▽
X-ray	X	24	11000	220	18	X	---..	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	>
Yankee	Y	25	11001	221	19	Y	---..-	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	<
Zulu	Z	26	11010	222	1A	Z	---..	•○ ○○ ○○	↖	Ⓐ

code sheet courtesy of Puzzled Pint, <https://puzzledpint.org/>

Dice Towers

by Aloysius '27

$$\begin{array}{c} 126 \\ 4 \quad ? \\ 2 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 0.2 \\ 27 \quad ? \\ 1 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 21 \\ 0.4 \quad ? \\ 9 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} -4 \\ 25 \quad ? \\ 13 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 28 \\ 0.2 \quad ? \\ 6 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 20 \\ -16 \quad ? \\ 19 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 165 \\ -7 \quad ? \\ 6 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 5 \\ 15 \quad ? \\ -7 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 3 \\ -1 \quad ? \\ 105 \end{array}$$

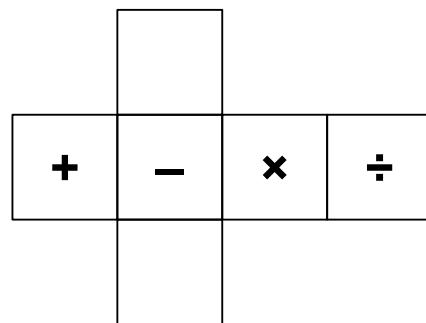
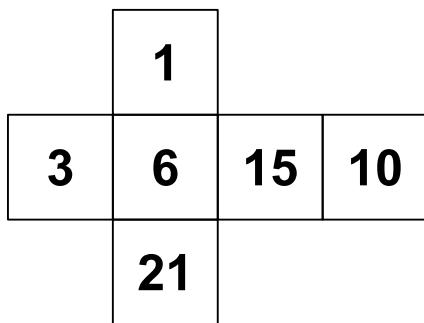
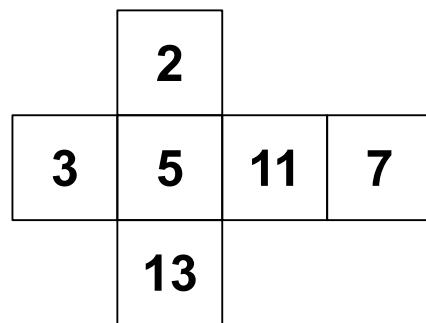
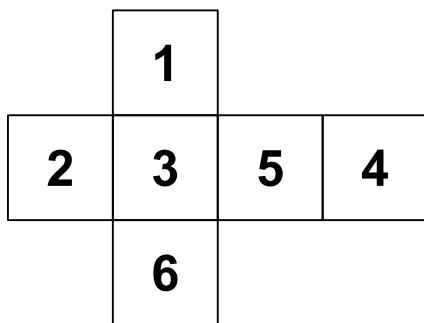
$$\begin{array}{c} 2 \\ 42 \quad ? \\ -1 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} 21 \\ 11 \quad ? \\ -5 \end{array}$$

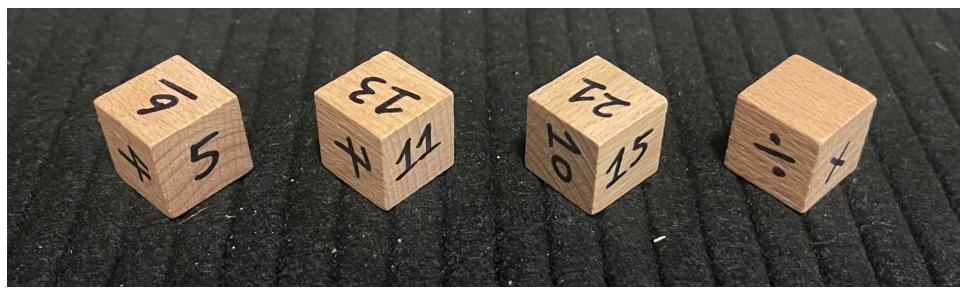
$$\begin{array}{c} 30 \\ 1/13 \quad ? \\ 17 \end{array}$$

MIT Aquarium Puzzle Hunt 2025

This puzzle came with four cubes, with cube nets as follows:



Photos of the cubes:



Dual

by Arul '27

Note: The names of the colors below are for improved accessibility only, and are not part of the puzzle.

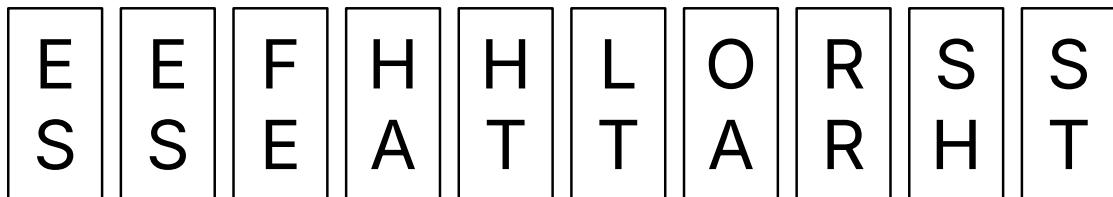


ANSWER



MIT Aquarium Puzzle Hunt 2025

This puzzle came with ten transparent tiles, like the following:



Photos of the tiles:



One Fish, Two Fish

by Aloysius '27, Becca '26

You see schools of fish in the Charles swimming side by side, but some of the fish look the same...

One of several classes everyone must take to graduate [acronym]
An older student in your dorm who's there to help! [acronym]
[6]

Game in which a 1:1 scale replica of MIT campus was constructed
Statue between Lobby 7 and Stud
[3]

Dorm with clubs for theater, acapella, baking, and more
The newest undergrad dorm
[9, 5]

Dorm that historically drops a piano from their roof every year
With Linguistics, Course 24
[8]

Where you can borrow business books (it's really close to where this event is!)
Course 4
[2]

The length of this is a Smoot-year number of Smoots
Where this event is taking place!
[1, 4]

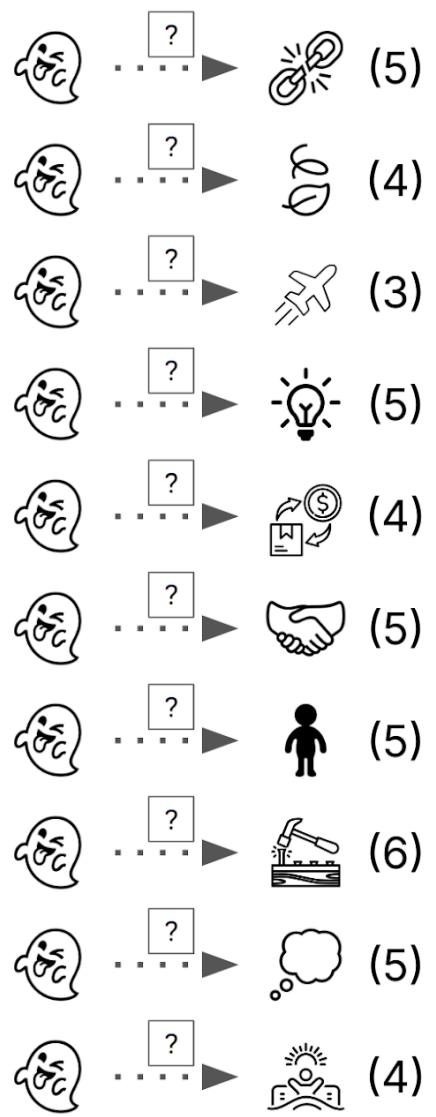
What you can get if you take PE classes in fencing, pistol, sailing, and archery
National security research center operated by MIT
[7]

Reanimation

Page 1 of 2
by Marvin '28

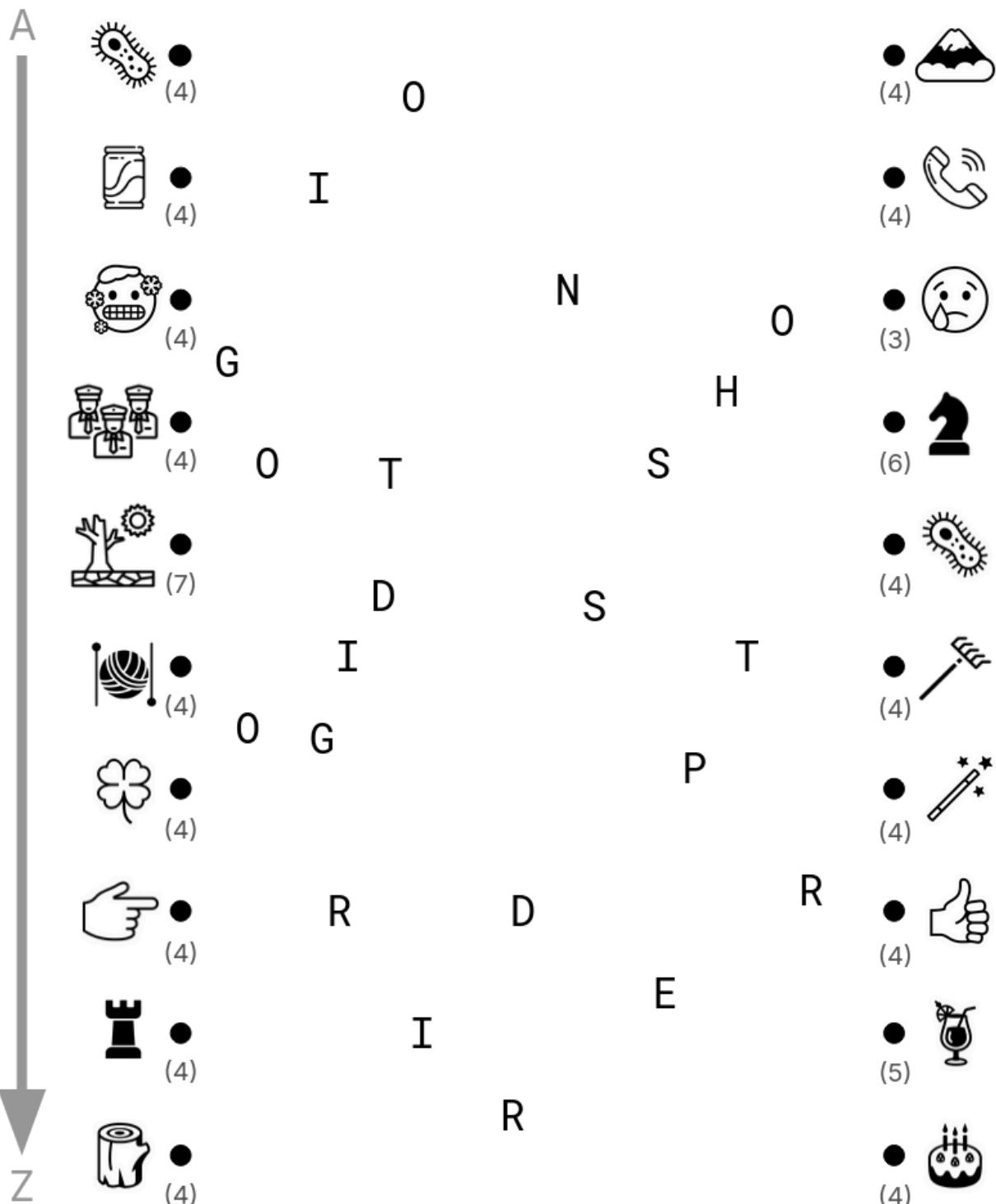
These ghosts from the long past seemed tense. What do you need to bring them back to life?

Example:



Reanimation

Page 2 of 2
by Marvin '28



Ring Bearers

Page 1 of 2
by Alex (G)

As you're running errands, you stop to observe a wedding at the MIT Chapel. The happy couple thought they asked for the perfect wedding gifts, but after sealing the deal during the ceremony, all of the gifts transformed. Can they count on you to sort things out?

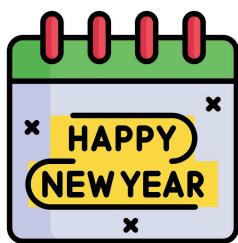
Wedding Registry:

1. Two museum tours guided by **a Ph.D. holder, for short**
2. Two nights on the town with no worries about the **running total at the bar**
3. Four tickets to see **the band behind "Dynamite" and "Butter"**
4. Three rage room passes, since the couple is easy to **tick off, with "up"**
5. Three holders for **a possibly scented light fixture**
6. Six months of Discord Nitro, because they love **privately chatting with each other, briefly**
7. Five months of phone plans, so they can text the **preceder to "Thx"**
8. Five day spa passes, in case either partner tends to **stick or hold tightly (to) the other**
9. Six tickets to TD Garden to see **a Boston NBA player, for short** play
10. Three days in Hawaii to see a **bird whose name sounds like a dance move paired with the "whip"**
11. Four tickets to see **the artist behind "Gangnam Style"**

Ring Bearers

Page 2 of 2
by Alex (G)

Gifts at the Reception:



Rotten Right to the Core

By Alex (G), Annie '28, Riley '25

Girl, this album is so confusing... what changed from last summer?

Next in queue		Clear queue
hindu creator god (6)	hindu creator god (6)	
not in time with the rhythm (7)	not in time with the rhythm (7)	
something run in boston on patriot's day (8)	something run in boston on patriot's day (8)	
atlanta baseball team (6)	atlanta baseball team (6)	
at least \$16, for a urop (6 4)	at least \$16, for a urop (6 4)	
singer of "that's so true" and "risk" (6 6)	singer of "that's so true" and "risk" (6 6)	
text or book for an opera (8)	text or book for an opera (8)	
skill used in chess and risk (8)	skill used in chess and risk (8)	
mongolia's capital (11)	mongolia's capital (11)	
brainy? (8)	brainy? (8)	

Scrambled Legs

Page 1 of 2
by Alex (G), Atul '27

You can't seem to remember the order of stops on your trip, so I guess it's back to square one. Once you've filled out your plans, it'd be wise to check where your paths overlap.

 = START

First Leg:

Across

Love, in Rome

Took a trip?

Winnie-the-Pooh's jarful

 T-shirts and vinyls, at a concert

Delectable Japanese rice cake

Animal that can form a "raft" by holding hands with groupmates

Like a clarinet... or an oboe, doubly

 Smooth or slippery

Tall circus prop

"Wanna join us?"

Down

Nation with a capital in Santiago

Wept

Show your feelings on stage

Actor Cavill of "The Tudors," or a Tudor king

Entrap during a winter storm

"Hello __," whose first product was a coin purse

Powerball, e.g.

 Michelle Wu, in Boston

Way to go!

 Break into pieces

Scrambled Legs

Page 2 of 2
by Alex (G), Atul '27

Second Leg:

Across

Made a scene?

📍 Shade of yellow, or a female name

Preceder of "3000" or "the Giant" (a male name)

Steak ____, or a female name

📍 "See ya!"

Rafael with 14 French Open wins

Trims

Word after jigsaw or mouth

Ad

Theater awards, or multiple male names

Down

📍 Modify to fit, like a movie from a book

Relay stick

One to keep not close, but closer

Mockery

Runs

📍 Like some mobile purchases

It's all the rage

Prefix with economics or phone

More peculiar

Second tries

The Recirculating Aquarium

Page 1 of 2

by Becca '26, Benson '27

You wanted to go to the aquarium, but it's not quite ready. Instead, the designer gave you a map with both a flat sheet and a physical model.

He wants you to understand the aquarium from various perspectives and see how depth plays a big role partitioning the aquarium. Maybe taking a loop around the aquarium's twists and turns might lead you to what this hunt needs.

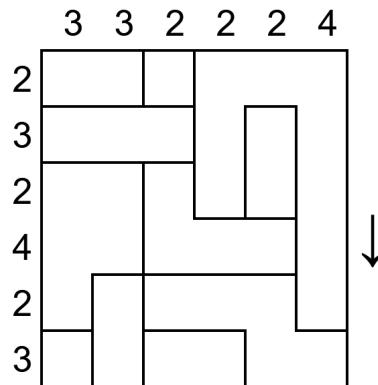
Aquarium

Shade some of the cells in each 6×6 grid such that the number in each row and column outside the grids correspond to the number of shaded cells in the respective rows and columns in the grid.

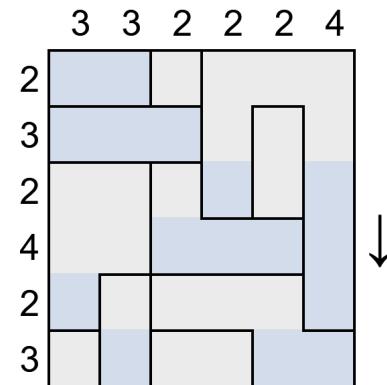
Additionally, each grid is partitioned into regions containing orthogonally adjacent cells, and each grid has an axis-aligned direction of gravity. Within each region, either the region is empty or all cells at or below a certain height in the region are shaded. An example is given.

You are to identify the regions in every grid using the map of the aquarium.

Example 6×6 grid

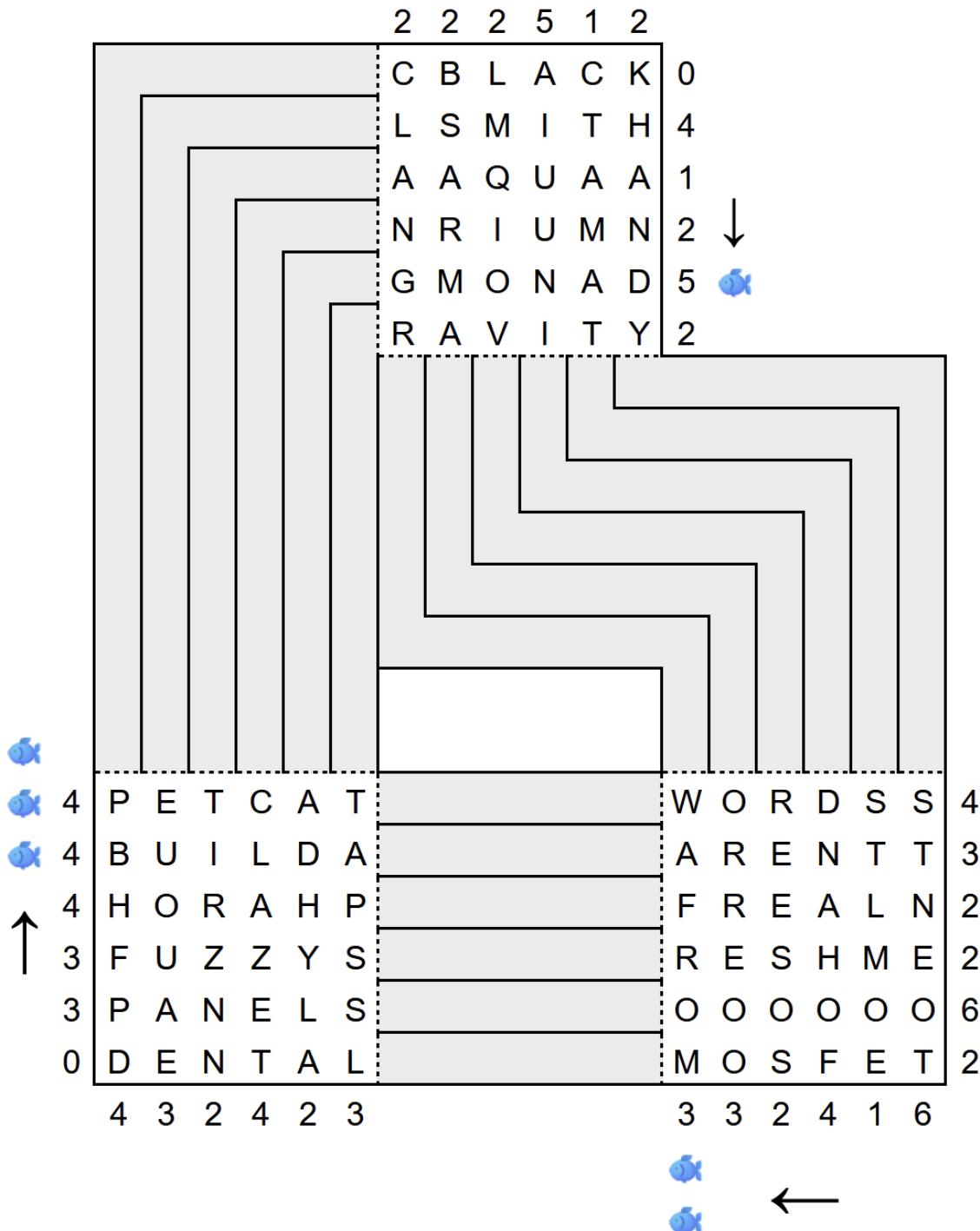


Solved 6×6 grid



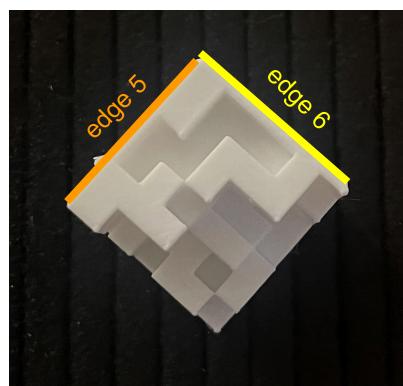
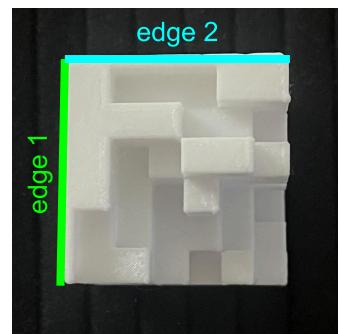
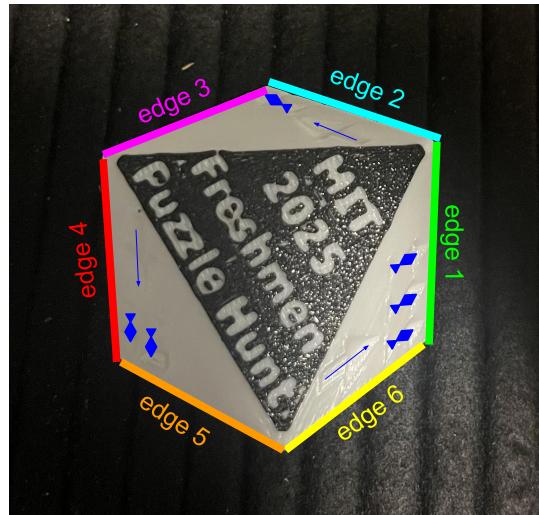
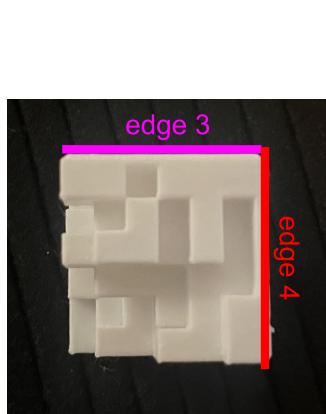
The Recirculating Aquarium

Page 2 of 2
by Becca '26, Benson '27



MIT Aquarium Puzzle Hunt 2025

This puzzle came with a cube-like object, photographed below (annotations are added in color to make the shape and structure more apparent):



Tim's F1 Racecar

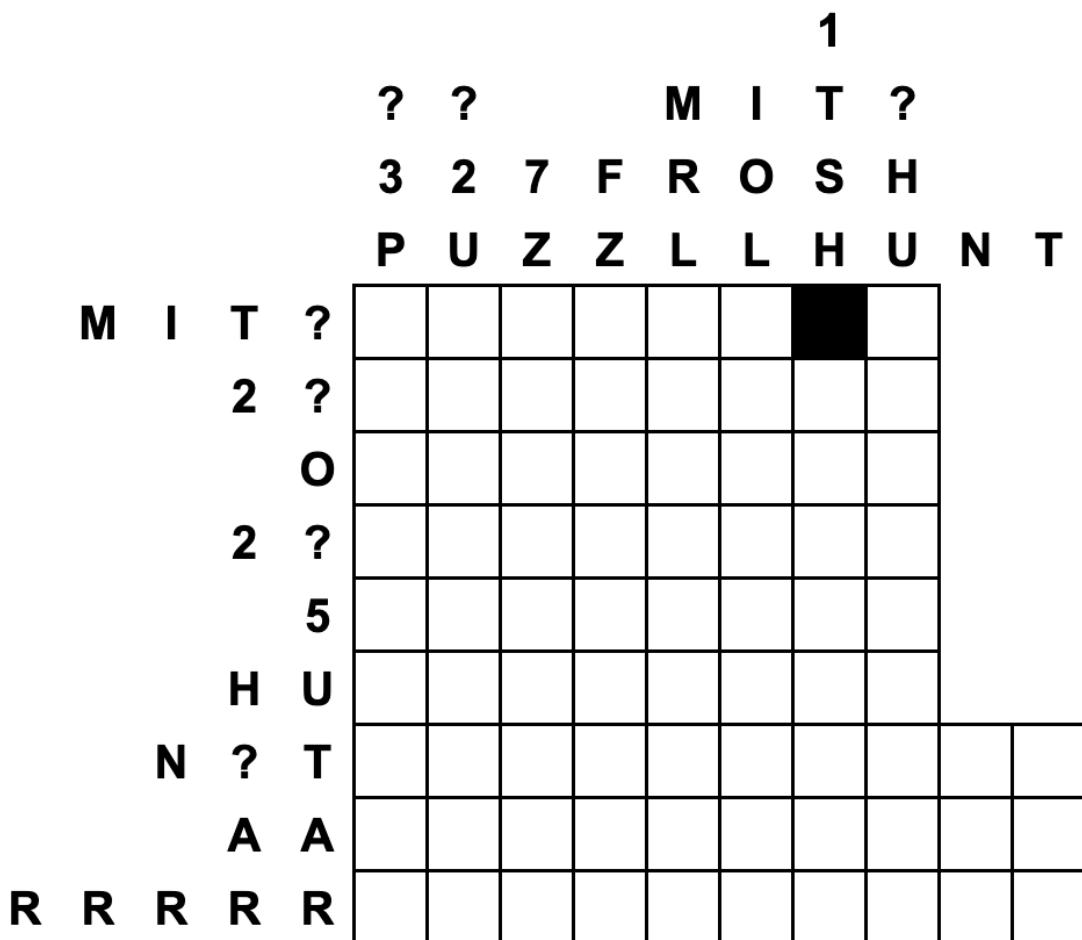
by Benson '27

Tim recently got into F1 racing, and wanted to show off his new car to the incoming frosh! The car is almost done and waiting outside, but you're struggling to feel for what it is missing.

Cipher Nonogram

Shade the empty cells within the grid. Numbers on the rows and columns indicate the number of shaded squares in each contiguous block on that row / column from left to right / top to bottom.

Letters represent (not necessarily distinct) positive integers. The same letter will represent the same number. ? indicates an unknown positive integer.



Meta: Where's Tim?

by Atul '27

Note: This is a *metapuzzle*, which means it will use your answers to all of the other puzzles in the hunt.

Everything is almost ready, but MIT's mascot, TIM, is nowhere to be found! Here is a list of other missing items, search for them as you look back on your adventures. When will Tim arrive at the event?

Missing Items

Headwear articles

What Tim is, for the event

An African country

Snitches

A hotel unit

Complete collections

Somewhere to relax

Someone who shouted "Chicken Jockey!"

Vacations