

## Using Brainteasers and Word Puzzles

When the teacher's lesson plan is finished and you have time to spare, brainteasers and word puzzles are fun and easy-to-use activities in the classroom. They can be copied onto worksheets, written on the board, or given orally. They can be completed individually, in groups, or as a whole class. Whether you use brainteasers to fill time at the end of class or as a reward for completing an assignment, they are sure to engage the minds of students in some serious critical thinking. Here are a few from DiscoverySchool.com to wrap your mind around.

Once a dog named Nelly lived on a farm. There were three other dogs on the farm. Their names were Blackie, Whitey, and Brownie. What do you think the fourth dog's name was?

*Nelly. (If there are only four dogs on the farm, the fourth one must be Nelly)*

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Imagine a world in which the colors of things have changed from what we consider normal. Assume the following changes:

Snow is now red.

Grass is now black.

The sky is now brown.

Blood is now white.

Soot is now green.

In such a world, what is the color of dirt?

*Dirt is now blue. The puzzle consists of pairs that exchange colors. Since the sky is now brown, brown things become blue.*

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Two babies were born on the same day in the same year with the same mother and father. They are not twins. Can you explain how this can be?

*They are part of a set of triplets*

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For each of the following clues, what is a synonym that contains the letters CAT?

Questions

Answers

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|--|----------------|
| 1. Baseball position                         | 1. Catcher     |
| 2. Copy                                      | 2. Duplicate   |
| 3. What you get with a doctor's prescription | 3. Medication  |
| 4. Underground cemetery                      | 4. Catacomb    |
| 5. Time off from school or work              | 5. Vacation    |
| 6. Ten-event contest                         | 6. Decathlon   |
| 7. Disaster                                  | 7. Catastrophe |
| 8. Mimic                                     | 8. Copycat     |
| 9. Cows                                      | 9. Cattle      |
| 10. Teacher                                  | 10. Educator   |

*Based on a puzzle in "The Best of Brainteasers." Westminster, CA: Teacher Created Materials, Inc., 1999.*

A great resource for brainteasers is [www.internet4classrooms.com](http://www.internet4classrooms.com). At this site click on "Daily Dose of the Web" and then "Brainteasers" for links to 23 different sites that feature critical thinking activities designed for use in the classroom.

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