

Sample Puzzle: *You Say Potato, I Say Potato*

“Fun?” Is that how it’s pronounced? Huh. I’ve only seen that word written.”

- *The Simpsons*, “The Burns and the Bees”

land on **3**
cookie bunch
crop plague
italy shape
euchre jack
glove ball
supply food
huddle nervously
mess around
dining person **5**
or partner **2**
plane trip
this way
owl sound
not now
not higher **6**
fire starter
not relevant
cabbage collective
tricky predicament
mighty strength
judging person
tree tendril
relatively inconspicuous
chimney gunk **4**
potato slang
rapunzel prison
spy on **1**
shrivel up
stringed instrument

Answer: _____

Sample Puzzle Solution: *You Say Potato, I Say Potato*

The types of puzzles you'll encounter during CS50x Puzzle Day are more akin to a puzzle hunt than more common types of puzzles like crosswords or word searches. They normally have multiple layers to them and sometimes require some outside the box thinking!

All of the information that you see in the puzzle might be relevant somehow. This includes the title as well as the pop culture quote we include at the beginning of each puzzle.

In this case, both the title and the quote give you a clue that this puzzle has something to do with the way words are pronounced. While we know this particular type of puzzle would be a bit more challenging for those who do not speak English as their primary language, we present it here as a means to explain *how* a puzzle like this is solved, more than being concerned with the actual solution.

In this case, we are looking for a 6-letter word (that's what the 'Answer' line tells us). Each of the 30 two-word definitions in the puzzle are clues. Each clue is for a word that looks exactly the same as four other words in the set, except for the first letter being different. Perhaps it's best to illustrate this by looking at the definitions again, this time matched to the words they represent.

Notice on the next page that all the words that are colored sky blue, for example, end in "ATCH," with only the first letters different. There are six such groups of words. (And, interesting, six *numbered* definitions... but we'll get to that!)

land on 3	ALIGHT
cookie bunch	BATCH
crop plague	BLIGHT
italy shape	BOOT
euchre jack	BOWER
glove ball	CATCH
supply food	CATER
huddle nervously	COWER
mess around	DITHER
dining person 5	EATER
or partner 2	EITHER
plane trip	FLIGHT
this way	HITHER
owl sound	HOOT
not now	LATER
not higher 6	LOWER
fire starter	MATCH
not relevant	MOOT
cabbage collective	PATCH
tricky predicament	PLIGHT
mighty strength	POWER
judging person	RATER
tree tendril	ROOT
relatively inconspicuous	SLIGHT
chimney gunk 4	SOOT
potato slang	TATER
rapunzel prison	TOWER
spy on 1	WATCH
shrivel up	WITHER
stringed instrument	ZITHER

Let's try grouping these in a more visually-friendly way, as on the next page.

ALIGHT, BLIGHT, FLIGHT, PLIGHT, SLIGHT
 BATCH, CATCH, MATCH, PATCH, WATCH
 BOWER, COWER, LOWER, POWER, TOWER
 BOOT, HOOT, MOOT, ROOT, SOOT
 CATER, EATER, LATER, RATER, TATER
 DITHER, EITHER, HITHER, WITHER, ZITHER

Have you tried pronouncing all the words in a group yet? Notice anything interesting when you do? Such as, for example, one word in each group (underlined below) is pronounced differently than the other four?

ALIGHT, BLIGHT, FLIGHT, PLIGHT, SLIGHT
 BATCH, CATCH, MATCH, PATCH, WATCH
 BOWER, COWER, LOWER, POWER, TOWER
 BOOT, HOOT, MOOT, ROOT, SOOT
 CATER, EATER, LATER, RATER, TATER
 DITHER, EITHER, HITHER, WITHER, ZITHER

Almost there! So we have words where only the first letter is different, one word in each group *sounds* different than the rest, and we have these 6 definitions that have numbers. Have you noticed too that those 6 numbered definitions correspond to our strangely-pronounced words?

Let's put it all together. Let's take the first letter of all the strangely-pronounced words, and order them based on the number that matches each one (e.g. "spy on **1**" was WATCH, so let's use the 'W' from WATCH first and "or partner **2**" was EITHER, so let's use the "E" from EITHER second, and so on.) What do we end up with?

WEASEL.

Hey, that's a six-letter word... we're looking for one of those!

To be sure, there's a lot of steps there. And your mind may not have jumped to this solution right away... and that's perfectly okay! In fact most of the puzzles in the packet aren't *quite* this layered (phew!), but there's normally a few hoops to jump through in order to solve one!