

CS50x Puzzle Day – Tips and Timeline

1-2 weeks before

- Prepare and hang posters advertising the event.
 - Template background for poster available at: <http://cs50.harvard.edu/ap/events/puzzle>.
- If ordering custom shirts or gear for your event, contact the company/site you plan to use and ensure they can deliver to your specifications prior to the event.
- Request and keep track of RSVPs.

Day before

- Order food
 - We typically order pizza assuming 3 slices/person. Sometimes that overshoots it, sometimes it's just right. We typically order Domino's.
 - Definitely order the night before; the order is large and they will appreciate the lead time. Schedule delivery for at least 30 minutes before the doors are opened.
 - We usually order one large-sized veggie platter for every 20 or so pizzas. College kids are probably more health-conscious than high schoolers, though!
 - Bulk candy and beverages from Costco. Depending on what's best for your school, either canned soda at two cans/person or two-liter bottles at one bottle/four people is a good estimate.
 - Don't forget to talk to local businesses to see if they will help subsidize!

Day of

- Here is our timeline for the major portions of Puzzle Day:
 - 11:45, doors open.
 - 11:45-12:15, lunch.
 - 12:15-12:30, instructions.
 - 12:30-2:45, puzzle solving; solution packet in by 2:45 on the dot!
 - 2:45-3:00, solutions revealed.

- We have historically found that just over two hours to work on the puzzles is a good sweet spot for undergrads. Usually just a few teams are able to complete them all, but everyone is able to complete a few and so it's still lots of fun!
- Encourage that “winning” isn't the goal – problem solving and creative thinking is the goal. Having fun is the most important thing.
 - Facebook sponsors our event so we do have some raffle prizes and gift certificates for the winning team, but we minimally message that and most people don't attend expecting or looking for a prize.

Prepping

- Given that your event will (likely!) be smaller than ours, the amount of prep time you need shouldn't be overwhelming. We usually start setting up three hours before. You might be able to set up as late as two hours before.
- Make sure food is thirty minutes early. They're usually late with large orders!
- Our decorations are sparse. We lay out randomly large foam puzzles pieces, set up a few candy stations, and a central food and beverage station.

Other Logistics

- Please be sure to take lots of pictures and video if you can!
 - Please try to get signed authorizations from students/parents prior to the event, so that you can share the photos and we can share them as well!
 - Release form available at: <http://cs50.harvard.edu/ap/events/puzzle>.
- Try to enlist students to help clean up. Usually it's not too big of a mess but sometimes you get a messy group.
- If possible, supply extra paper, whiteboard stations, or easels with large format presentation paper, so groups have a large surface on which to experiment with solutions.
- Encourage students to create groups with folks they normally might not. At CS50 Puzzle Day 2015, we really tried to encourage groups that were a mixture of Harvard and Yale students.

Have fun and let us know if you have any additional questions!