

Our Present Situation - Solutions

Blockbuster Video

Three of the titles from the left column (two tv series and a movie each) share a distinct actor or actress. Some of these have overlaps, but there's a way to organize these such that each actor has three titles. These actors are listed alphabetically by first name on the right.

- ALYSON HANNIGAN - American Pie, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, How I Met Your Mother
- ASHTON KUTCHER - Dude Where's My Car, That '70s Show, Two and a Half Men,
- BEA ARTHUR - The Golden Girls, Mame, Maude
- BETTY WHITE - Hot in Cleveland, The Lorax, The Mary Tyler Moore Show
- CLAIRE DANES - Homeland, My So-Called Life, Romeo + Juliet
- JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS - A Bug's Life, Seinfeld, Veep
- KRISTEN BELL - Frozen, The Good Place, Veronica Mars
- MICHAEL J FOX - Back to the Future, Family Ties, Spin City
- TED DANSON - Becker, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, Three Men and a Baby
- WILLIAM SHATNER - Boston Legal, Miss Congeniality, Star Trek

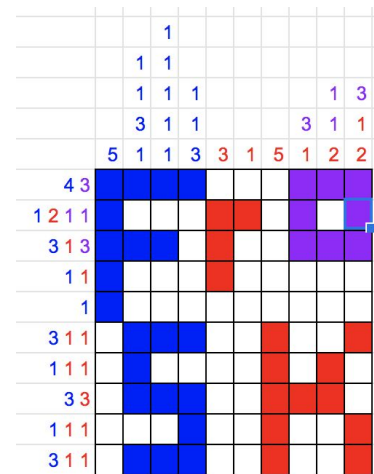
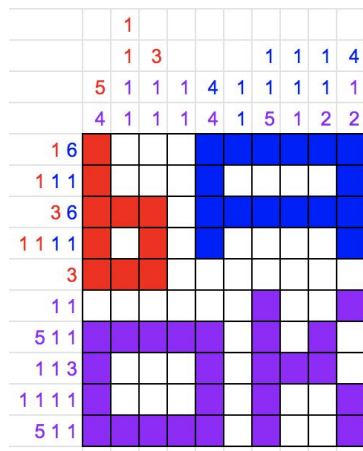
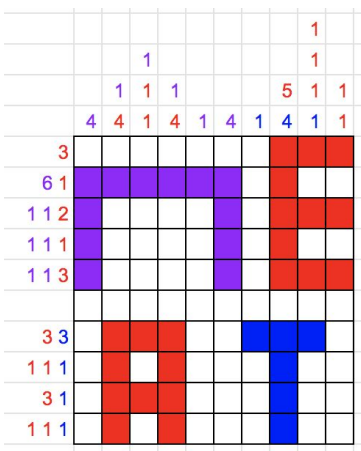
Taking the selected letters from each of these actors' names spells out the message

MR BEAN BLACKADDER JOHNNY ENGLISH

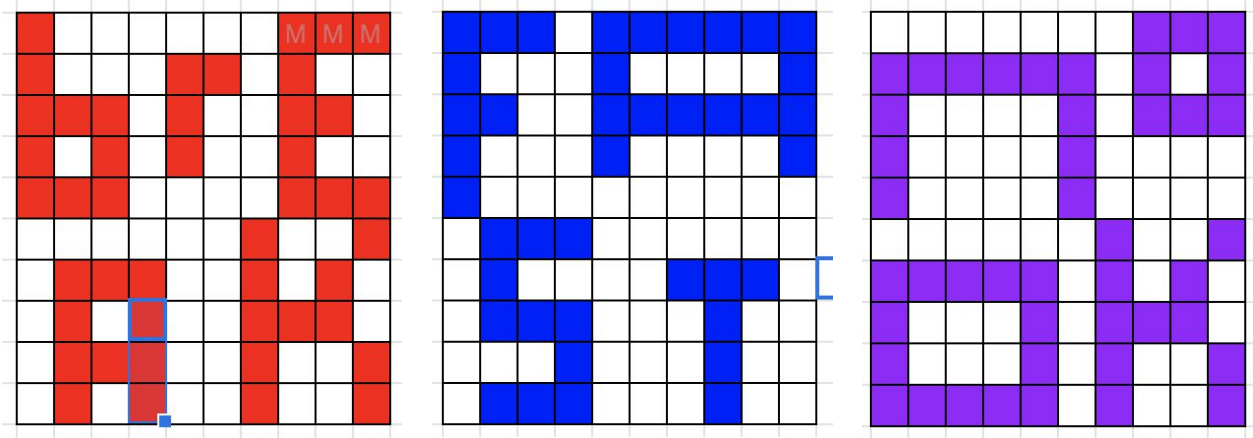
This is another list of two tv series and a movie, all of which star **ROWAN ATKINSON**, the answer to the puzzle.

Waffle House

The three nonograms resolve as shown, each of a series of letters:



Doing as the instructions suggest and “stacking” the grids, then reading the red letters, followed by the blue letter, then the purple letters, gives you:



Which spells out the final answer, **BREAKFAST NOOK**.

Some Assembly Required

1	P	O	D	R	A	C	E	R	C	O	N	M	A	N
2	I	L	I	F	E	H	A	L	L	S	T	A	N	D
3	E	R	N	E	S	T	I	N	E	S	E	G	U	E
4	R	I	Y	A	D	H	C	A	R	R	Y	A	L	L
5	A	D	F	R	E	E	D	A	M	E	E	D	N	A
6	R	A	R	E	E	P	E	D	I	G	R	E	E	D
7	E	R	I	T	R	E	A	C	O	I	N	A	G	E
8	K	L	A	T	S	C	H	S	K	I	D	R	O	W
9	E	L	D	R	I	T	C	H	H	A	Z	E	R	S
10	H	A	I	M	G	R	E	G	O	R	Y	X	I	V
11	W	A	R	R	A	N	T	I	E	S	N	E	S	T
12	O	H	S	U	R	E	H	E	L	S	I	N	K	I
13	L	I	T	C	H	I	G	O	T	H	G	I	R	L
14	T	R	I	L	L	I	O	N	T	H	E	A	S	T

The central piece spells out **THE PEACOCK THRONE**.

It Was the Best of Times, It Was the Worst of Times

Each list (YARNS and TECHNIQUES) is a cryptolist with the same key. Each letter is represented by a 3X3 square of knit stitches in a unique pattern, plus an extra stitch above the letter to be extracted (boldfaced below). The order is given by another letter (A-O) encoded in the rightmost column.

YARNS

ANGORA O
BAMBOO C
CASHMERE A
COTTON M
LINEN G
MERINO K
SILK E
YAK I

TECHNIQUES

ARGYLE N
BIND OFF J
CABLE STITCH D
CAST ON B
FAIR ISLE F
GARTER STITCH L
RIBBING H

Taking the extracted letters in the order indicated by the extra letters gives you the solution, STOCKING KNITTER.

Sweet-Heart Deal

Solvers need to realize that the guests at each table at the wedding are being served a different type of cake, as indicated in the table below. Each cake name is constructed from a selection of trigrams that appear in the same column and row as the cake. Once you transfer the trigrams (with the colored arrows) to the tables, you are then intended to draw a line, with an appropriately colored pencil, from the table with the arrow to neighboring table in the indicated direction.

After this has been done for all of the arrows, the yellow lines will show the letters "TIN", blue lines show the letters "KER", red lines show the letters "TOY", and green lines show the letters "SET" to get the answer **TINKER TOY SET**. These are ordered by shortest to longest segment colors in Tinker Toys but, since that kind of requires knowing the answer, solvers are expected to just figure out the ordering as they did with the cakes.

Bavarian Torte	Yule Log	Lady Baltimore	Blackout	Tres Leches	Napoleon	Angelfood
Princess	German Chocolate	Dacquoise	Victoria Sponge	Sachertorte	Red Velvet	Croquembouche
Swiss Roll	Black Forest	Baumkuchen	Financier	Upside-down	Boston Cream Pie	Molten Lava

Cake Toppers

One extra letter is required to complete each cake topper. These spell **LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN**.

P E T

T E M P O

P A L E T T E

A P P L E T R E E *two words*

P E R P E T U A T E D

L E T T E R P E R F E C T *two words*

R E D

E R O D E

R E N E W E D

D E T E R R E N T

F R E E Z E D R I E D *hyph.*

D E C E L E R O M E T E R

I R E

I N E R T

E E R I E S T

R E S E R V O I R

E M B R O I D E R E D

B O R D E R T E R R I E R

O D E

R O D E O

R E D W O O D

O K E Y D O K E Y

C O L D B L O O D E D

O V E R D E V E L O P E D

T E D

E D I C T

T I E D Y E D

D E S T I T U T E

S T E R E O T Y P E D

D E A D E N D S T R E E T

P R O

O P E R A

R A P P O R T

O P P O R T U N E

P A R A T R O O P E R

P O P C O R N P O P P E R

E R S

S E R V E

R E L E A S E

E S P R E S S O S

T R E S P A S S E R S

E N T R E P R E N E U R S

S I T

S A I N T

T I S S U E S

I N S T I T U T E

P E S S I M I S T I C

S T A T I S T I C I A N S

T A R

A L E R T

R E T R E A T

T R A T T O R I A

A R B I T R A T O R S

A R R E S T W A R R A N T

D E N

E N D O W

N E E D L E D

D E F E N D A N T

N E R V E E N D I N G

U N P R E C E D E N T E D

G R E

A R G U E

T R I G G E R

G I N G E R A L E

R E F R I G E R A T E

F R E E R A N G E E G S

M E N

G N O M E

M E M E N T O

V E H E M E N C E

E N H A N C E M E N T

C R E M E D E M E N T H E

T O E

O C T E T

T R E E T O P

T O O T H S O M E

H O T P O T A T O E S

T O B E O R N O T T O B E

S O T

L O T U S

O U T P O S T

S H O R T S T O P

P O S T I T N O T E S

O R T H O D O N T I S T S

I O C

V O I C E

C O D I C I L

P I N O C C H I O

C H O C O H O L I C S

S O C I O E C O N O M I C

Just Associate!

The five combinations replaced by stars are Y, F, RW, MW, and H; the categories and entries are:

Category 1: MEDIOCRE TURNS OF PHRASE

(MW)WN (F)(RW)W PWT(H) = MEAN FREE PATH

(MW)WT (H)WL(F)WW(Y) = MEET HALFWAY

(MW)DDLW (F)(RW)NC(H) = MIDDLE FRENCH

T(H)E LWW W(F) WVV(RW)GWS = THE LAW OF AVERAGES

Category 2: BEINGS AND TRANSPORT METHODS

CWW(H)WND WND (MW)SW(Y) = COWHAND AND MOSEY

(F)WLL(Y) WND GWLLWP = FILLY AND GALLOP

(F)(RW)G WND (H)WP = FROG AND HOP

(MW)T(H) WND (F)L(Y) = MOTH AND FLY

Category 3: ITEMS EMITTING ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES

BWN(F)W(RW) = BONFIRE

CW(MW)(RW) (F)LWS(H) = CAMERA FLASH

PLWS(MW) DWSPLW(Y) = PLASMA DISPLAY

X-(RW)(Y) TWBW = X-RAY TUBE

Category 4: EXHIBITS IN AN ARBORETUM

WWCWL(Y)PTWS = EUCALYPTUS

(H)WNW(Y) LWCWST = HONEY LOCUST

(MW)(H)WGWN(Y) = MAHOGANY

S(Y)CW(MW)(RW) = SYCAMORE

Each hieroglyph on the 2x3 Just Associate board (a flipped-around version of the standard 3x2 Only Connect board), other than the Eye of Horus, is used in ancient Egyptian writing to represent one of the 5 substituted combinations: double reed = Y, horned viper = F, lion = RW, water = MW, and twisted flax = H. The set of combinations occurring in a category member thus indicates a subset of the boxes in the 2x3 board, forming a Braille letter:

MEDIOCRE TURNS OF PHRASE

MW F RW H -> T; MW H F Y -> N; MW F RW H -> T; H F RW -> S.

BEINGS AND TRANSPORT METHODS

H MW Y -> O; F Y -> C; F RW H -> S; MW H F Y -> N.

ITEMS EMITTING ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES

F RW -> I; MW RW F H -> T; MW Y -> E; RW Y -> B.

EXHIBITS IN AN ARBORETUM

Y -> A; H Y -> K; MW H Y -> O; Y MW RW -> H.

Matching these letters one-to-one with the words in the category names and putting them in the corresponding boxes in the 4x4 grid yields:

SCOT
TISH
BANK
NOTE

So the answer is **SCOTTISH BANKNOTE**.

What Do You See?

1	S	K	I	L	L	E	T	B	R	I	T	O	N
2	U	N	L	O	A	D	R	A	N	G	I	N	G
3	D	I	F	F	E	R	S	H	I	N	T	A	T
4	A	L	L	E	G	E	P	I	O	N	E	E	R
5	T	R	E	N	D	S	L	E	T	O	N	T	O
6	M	O	L	T	I	N	G	S	L	A	N	T	S
7	C	O	O	L	I	N	G	D	E	R	M	A	L
8	D	E	F	E	R	S	H	O	U	S	I	N	G
9	N	A	V	I	D	A	D	L	E	E	R	E	D
10	M	E	S	S	I	E	S	T	S	H	O	O	K
11	S	T	O	M	P	C	A	R	O	L	I	N	E
12	N	E	W	L	E	V	E	L	L	A	N	D	S
13	A	L	L	S	T	A	R	T	I	N	K	E	R

The answer to each of the BOXES entries can be found in a rectangular area of the solved grid, reading left-to-right and top-to-bottom. The answer to each of the ??? entries can be found in a not-quite-rectangular area, consisting of a rectangle plus one letter sticking off of it somewhere. Those letters are highlighted in blue above.

Taken in clue order, those answers are:

HOOK LINE AND SINKER
SLANDEROUS
KILL OFF
BRING IN
LEGENDS
TREMLO
TATER TOTS
CAVE ART
MALINGERED
SUNDIAL
TRASH PILE
CODENAMES

The highlighted letters read **INK BLOT TESTS**, which is the answer to the puzzle.

Our Present Situation

Answers can be matched to the ribbons such that letters that fall into the square spaces spell out the word **KNOT** (always with the **K** in the gray space and the other letters in pink spaces). Done correctly, the letters that fall onto the pink hearts explain that the letters in the squares exemplify **TYING THE KNOT**.

As for the letters on the gray stars, they explain why the **K** in each case stands out more than the others at this wedding party: **IT ISN'T PAST EL**.