

Are you done with the crossword already? How about the sudoku? Ready for more puzzles? Want to exercise more than just your vocabulary and logic skills? Then listen up: starting tomorrow in this space, we'll be introducing a new class of puzzles just for you.

There'll be a new puzzle each week right here in the puzzle section, each with a different set of clues and a different solving mechanic. But these aren't your typical puzzles -- they won't come with instructions. Don't know what to do without instructions? That's what we're here to teach.

Okay, so without instructions, how do you even start? That is the puzzle itself: the hardest step is often figuring out just what to do. This type of puzzle focuses on the "Aha!" moment, when you realize how to wrangle a bunch of information into a logical order.

Broadly speaking, these puzzles follow a few basic guidelines. They have three major components: a **TITLE**, some *flavortext*, and the content. The content is the bulk of the puzzle -- all your work will involve the information contained therein. The title and flavortext usually indicate the theme of the puzzle, and provide clues

about how to manipulate the information you've been given. The full meaning of these clues may only be evident once you've figured out what to do.

Solving the puzzle requires extracting an **ANSWER**, typically a common English word or short phrase, from the given information. It should become clear when you've found the answer -- everything will fit neatly into place. You may be relieved to note that when solving, if it's not expressly disallowed, it's not cheating. You can use computerized solvers, do web searches, call your Grandma... no resource is off limits.

Each puzzle has a right answer, and your job is to find it. There are a number of useful tricks that can help you get there. Each week we'll present a new such "rule" to consider while solving, followed by a puzzle that demonstrates that rule. The following week we'll go over its solution in detail. By the end of this term, you'll be puzzle solving masters.