

Solution to **STEPS TOLD**:

The grid with the white and black circles (ignoring the letters for now) is the Nikoli logic puzzle “Masyu”. Solving that puzzle yields a path through the grid. Taking each letter along that path spells the instruction “MAKE A CRYPTIC CLUE BY USING THE REMAINING LETTERS IN ORDER”.

When read left to right, top to bottom, the unused letters in the grid spell the phrase “SILLY SEATS RING RED PEERS”. This is read as a cryptic crossword clue: the definition is “peers”, and the wordplay tells you to mix up the letters of “seats” and place them around the letter ‘R’ (for red). This results in the answer, **STARES**. The title is another wordplay clue to the same answer -- “told” indicates a homophone of “stairs”, a synonym of “steps”.

Congratulations to Jevon Heath and Melinda Fricke, who first submitted the correct answer to this puzzle.

This now brings us to the metapuzzle, a new puzzle consisting solely of the answers to all previous puzzles. As we mentioned in the first column, the eight puzzles we have presented over the past

weeks belong to a set, such that their answers form this meta. Those answers are reproduced below for your convenience.

Especially now, without a title or flavor-text to give outright hints, it is important to keep in mind **Rule 9: Always be on the lookout for themes and patterns**. Paragraph breaks in a block of text, repeated words or letters, apparent typos or non-standard word selections -- these all can point to clues. Keep your eyes open, and investigate anything that looks unusual.

Enjoy your last day of class, and as always, if you think you have the answer, submit it on our website below.

We’ll see some of you this Sunday at the Berkeley Mystery Hunt!

METAPUZZLE

DOTING
REDUB
COLORED
ONES
STARTING
REDSTAR
COSTARRED
STARES