

Long Riddles and Story Riddles

From brainpuzzles.games

1.

A woman shoots her husband. Then she holds him underwater for five minutes. Finally she hangs him. Ten minutes later they go out together and enjoy a lovely dinner. How can this be?

3.

A man is found dead in the middle of a vast, empty field. There are no footprints anywhere around him, no vehicles in sight, and no signs of a struggle. Next to him lies an unopened package. What happened?

5.

You are driving a city bus. At the first stop, 6 people get on. At the second stop, 3 get off and 5 get on. At the third stop, 2 get off and 4 get on. The bus is yellow and it is raining. What color are the bus driver's eyes?

7.

A truck driver goes the wrong way down a one-way street. He passes directly in front of five police officers, and not one of them stops him or writes a ticket. Why not?

9.

A man who cannot speak walks into a shop and wants a toothbrush. He mimes brushing his teeth, and the shopkeeper understands right away. Next, a blind man walks into the same shop wanting sunglasses. How does he ask for them?

2.

Romeo and Juliet are found dead on the floor of a locked room. Around them lie broken glass and a puddle of water. There are no wounds on the bodies and no poison in the room. How did they die?

4.

A plane crashes exactly on the border between the United States and Canada. By international law, the survivors must be buried in the country where the biggest piece of the plane landed.

6.

A father and his son are in a car crash. The father dies at the scene, and the boy is rushed to the hospital. The surgeon walks in, looks at the patient, and says: 'I can't operate on him. He's my son.' How is this possible?

8.

A doctor hands you three pills and tells you to take one every half hour. How long do the pills last?

10.

A man pushes his car down the street until he stops in front of a hotel. The moment he arrives, he realizes he is bankrupt and groans. There is no crime, no accident, and nobody is hurt. What is going on?

11.

A window cleaner is working on the fortieth floor of a skyscraper. He steps away from the window, loses his balance, and falls, yet he walks away without a scratch. There is no rope, no net, and no ledge. How did he survive?

13.

A wealthy man is found dead in his study on a Sunday morning. The maid says she was collecting the mail. The cook says he was preparing breakfast. The butler says he was polishing the Monday silver. The gardener says he was watering the roses. The police arrest one of them immediately. Who, and why?

15.

A cowboy rides into a small town on Friday. He stays for three days, takes care of his business, and then rides out of town again on Friday. How is that possible?

17.

A gardener digs a hole in her yard that measures exactly two feet wide, two feet long, and two feet deep. How many cubic feet of dirt are inside the hole once it is finished?

19.

A beggar sitting on the street corner had a brother who was a wealthy merchant in the city. Yet that wealthy merchant insisted, truthfully, that he had no brother at all. How can both of these statements be true?

12.

Two girls were born to the same mother, on the same day, in the same month and year, at almost the same hour. Yet they are not twins. How can this be?

14.

Some months have 30 days and some have 31, so February is the only month that has 28 days.

16.

Two friends sat down one afternoon and each played five full games of chess. Every single game had a winner, with no draws at all, and yet each of the two friends won the same number of games. How can that be?

18.

A rooster climbs to the very top of a barn roof that slopes down evenly on both sides. It settles right on the peak and lays an egg. Which side of the roof does the egg roll down?

20.

According to the famous old story, when the great flood came and covered the earth, how many animals of each kind did Moses lead aboard the ark to keep them all safe?

21.

Your sock drawer holds twenty socks all jumbled together: ten identical brown socks and ten identical gray socks. The lights are out and the room is completely dark. What is the smallest number of socks you must grab to be certain you have a matching pair?

23.

You have exactly two United States coins in your pocket that together add up to thirty cents. One of the two coins is not a nickel. What are the two coins?

25.

How can you drop a raw egg straight down onto a solid concrete floor from waist height without cracking the concrete floor at all?

27.

A shepherd has seventeen sheep grazing peacefully in his field. One especially harsh winter arrives, and all but nine of the sheep do not survive it. How many sheep does the shepherd have left when spring comes?

29.

A painter loses his footing and falls off a very tall ladder onto the hard ground below, yet he stands right back up without a single scratch or bruise. There was no cushion, no net, and no rope to catch him. How did he escape harm?

31.

A man lives on the tenth floor of an apartment building. Every morning he rides the elevator down to the ground floor. Every evening he rides it up to the seventh floor and walks the last three flights of stairs. On rainy days, though, he rides all the way to the tenth. Why?

22.

How can you throw a ball as hard as you possibly can and have it come right back to you, without it bouncing off anything, without any string attached to it, and without anyone else touching it?

24.

You need to divide a round birthday cake into eight equal pieces, but you are only allowed to make three straight cuts with the knife. How do you do it?

26.

Long before Mount Everest was ever discovered, mapped, or measured by explorers, which mountain was the tallest mountain standing anywhere on Earth?

28.

A man walks into a quiet diner and asks the waiter for a glass of water. Instead of pouring it, the waiter suddenly shouts to startle him. The man smiles, thanks the waiter warmly, and walks out without ever drinking any water. Why was he so grateful?

30.

You are locked in a room with two doors. One leads to freedom, the other to a dungeon. Each door has a guard. One guard always tells the truth, the other always lies, and you do not know which is which. You may ask one guard a single question. What do you ask to find the door to freedom?

32.

You stand in a hallway next to three light switches, all off. One of them controls a lamp in a closed room upstairs. You may flip switches as much as you like, but you can enter the room only once. How do you figure out which switch controls the lamp?

33.

A farmer must ferry a wolf, a goat, and a cabbage across a river. His boat holds only him and one passenger. Left alone together, the wolf eats the goat and the goat eats the cabbage. How does he get all three across safely?

35.

A creature walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening. The famous Sphinx of Thebes asked every traveler this riddle and destroyed those who failed. What is the creature?

37.

A remote town has exactly two barbers. The first barber has a clean shop and a flawless haircut. The second has a messy shop and a terrible, ragged haircut. Why do the locals in the town all choose the second barber?

39.

In the classic two-guards puzzle, simply asking one guard 'Does your door lead to freedom?' is enough to guarantee your escape.

41.

A snail sits at the bottom of a well 10 meters deep. Each day it climbs up 3 meters, and each night it slides back 2. On which day does the snail finally get out of the well?

43.

A man leaves his house and makes exactly three left turns. When he heads back toward his house, he finds two men wearing masks waiting there for him. Who are the two masked men?

34.

Two friends order identical iced drinks at a cafe on a hot day. One drinks hers quickly and orders four more, drinking them just as fast. The other sips his single drink slowly. The drinks were poisoned, yet only the slow sipper dies. Why?

36.

I am the beginning of the end, the end of every place. I am the beginning of eternity, the end of time and space. What am I?

38.

What is greater than any god and more evil than any demon? The poor have it, the rich need it, and if you eat it, you will die. What is it?

40.

A man is found dead, hanging from a rope in a locked room. The rope is tied to a beam three meters overhead. There is no furniture in the room at all, only a wide puddle of water on the floor beneath him. How did he do it?

42.

A snail sits at the bottom of a well twelve feet deep. Each day it climbs up three feet, and each night while it sleeps it slides back two feet. Starting on the morning of day one, on which day does the snail finally reach the top and crawl out of the well?

44.

A ship is anchored in a harbor with a rope ladder hanging over its side. The rungs are one foot apart, and right now the water just touches the bottom rung. The tide rises one foot every hour. After three hours, how many rungs are underwater?

45.

Two fathers and two sons went out fishing together one morning. Each person caught exactly one fish, yet when they got home there were only three fish in the bucket. Nobody lost a fish and nobody ate one. How?

47.

You have two lengths of rope and a box of matches. Each rope takes exactly one hour to burn from one end to the other, but they burn unevenly, so half a rope does not mean half an hour. Using only these, how do you measure out exactly forty five minutes?

49.

A grandfather clock takes exactly six seconds to strike six o'clock, counting from the very first chime to the very last. Keeping the same steady rhythm, how long does it take that clock to strike twelve o'clock?

51.

A hunter leaves camp and walks one mile due south. He turns and walks one mile due east. He turns again, walks one mile due north, and finds himself back at camp, where a bear is eating his food. What color is the bear?

53.

In one large family, every girl has exactly as many brothers as she has sisters. Every boy in that same family, however, has twice as many sisters as he has brothers. How many boys and how many girls are in the family?

46.

A tall delivery truck drives under a low bridge and gets wedged so tightly it can move neither forward nor backward. Engineers and police stand around for an hour with no ideas. A young girl walking by offers one simple suggestion that frees the truck. What did she say?

48.

Standing at a fountain, you have just two containers: one holds exactly three liters and the other exactly five liters, and neither has any marks in between. How can you measure out exactly four liters of water?

50.

Four friends must cross a rickety bridge at night. It holds two people at a time, and they have one flashlight that must be carried on every crossing. They take 1, 2, 5, and 10 minutes to cross; a pair moves at the slower person's pace. What is the fastest total time?

52.

An old king wants to leave his fortune to one of his two sons. He declares a strange race: whichever son's horse reaches the distant city LAST inherits everything. The brothers wander aimlessly for days, until a wise woman whispers two words. The brothers then leap on the horses and gallop at full speed. What did she say?

54.

A monk leaves the base of a mountain at sunrise and walks a single narrow path to the temple at the top, arriving at sunset. The next morning at sunrise he starts back down the very same path and reaches the bottom by sunset. Must there be a spot on the path where he stood at exactly the same time of day on both days?

55.

An antique dealer is offered a beautiful old coin that is stamped clearly on one face with the date '48 BC.' He studies it for only a moment, then quietly phones the police to report a forgery. What told him at a glance that the coin was fake?

57.

Two trains sit on the same straight track exactly one hundred miles apart and begin steaming directly toward each other, each moving at fifty miles per hour. A tireless fly starts at the nose of one train and zips back and forth between the two at seventy five miles per hour until the trains meet. How far does the fly travel in total?

59.

Over the course of thirty years in one small town, a man stands up and marries more than two hundred different women. He has never been arrested, has broken no law, and is himself happily wed to just one wife. How is this possible?

61.

A prisoner is locked in the top room of a tall stone tower with a single high window. Coiled in the corner he finds a rope, but it is only half as long as the deadly drop to the ground below. After some thought he divides the rope, reties it, and climbs all the way down to safety. How did he manage it?

56.

A night watchman at a small airport rushes to his boss one morning, saying he dreamed that the first flight of the day would crash and begging him to ground it. The boss cancels the flight, and it later turns out the plane really did have a fatal fault. Even so, the boss fires the watchman on the spot. Why?

58.

A woman walks into a hardware store and asks the clerk how much a certain item will cost her. He tells her that one costs two dollars, that fifty costs four dollars, and that one hundred forty four costs six dollars. What is she shopping for?

60.

Two students sleep through the morning of a big exam, then tell the professor they were late because their car got a flat tire. The professor smiles, agrees to let them retake the test, and seats them in separate rooms. The very first question, worth almost all the points, simply reads: 'Which tire?' Why is that so clever?

62.

On a game show you face three closed doors, with a car behind one and a goat behind each of the other two. You pick door number one, and the host, who knows exactly what is behind every door, opens door number three to reveal a goat. He then offers to let you switch your choice to door number two. Should you switch, and does it matter?

63.

Three perfectly logical friends walk into a bar together, and the bartender asks, 'Does everyone here want a drink?' The first friend answers, 'I do not know.' The second friend also says, 'I do not know.' The third friend immediately says, 'Yes.' How could the third friend be so sure that all three wanted a drink?

65.

You need to time exactly fifteen minutes to boil a special egg, but the only tools you own are a seven minute hourglass and an eleven minute hourglass. Neither can be paused, and you may only flip them. Starting the moment you drop the egg into the water, how do you measure fifteen minutes precisely?

67.

Four gamblers are playing cards late into the night in a mountain cabin. Suddenly the other three seize one man, drag him to the door, and throw him out into the snow. Spread across the table when the police arrive later are exactly fifty three Bicycles. Why did the three throw him out?

69.

You are stranded at one end of a long, narrow island that is completely covered in dry grass, and the surrounding sea is far too rough to swim. A wildfire has started at the far end and a steady wind is driving the flames straight toward you with no way around. Using only a box of matches, how do you survive?

64.

Three prisoners stand in a single line all facing the same way, so the back one can see the two ahead of him, the middle one can see only the front one, and the front one faces a blank wall. A fourth prisoner stands behind a wall and can see no one. Among the four hats, two are black and two are white, and the first to correctly name his own hat color frees them all. After a long silence, one of them speaks. Who, and how?

66.

A veteran tightrope walker crosses the same high wire between two rooftops every single week without a single mishap for over a decade. One morning her proud manager surprises her with a gift of expensive, brand new shoes, and she wears them for that afternoon's crossing. Partway across she loses her balance and falls into the safety net. Why did the new shoes doom a walk she had done a thousand times?

68.

A travel agent clearly remembers a man who came in and bought two plane tickets to a remote island resort: a round trip ticket for himself and a one way ticket for his wife. Weeks later the wife is reported missing while on that very trip. The agent immediately phones the police with her suspicion. What made her suspicious?

70.

A man wakes to find himself trapped in a bare sealed room with no windows and no doors, and the only two objects inside are a wooden table and a mirror on the wall. With just these, he calmly finds his way out. How does the old story say he escaped?

71.

Three friends check into a room that costs thirty dollars, so they each pay ten. Later the clerk realizes the room is only twenty five and sends the bellhop up with five dollars, but the bellhop quietly keeps two and hands back one dollar to each guest. Now each guest paid nine dollars, which is twenty seven, plus the bellhop's two makes twenty nine. Where did the missing dollar go?

73.

Imagine you are strapped into the seat of a car with all the windows rolled up, holding the string of a helium balloon that floats near the roof. The car suddenly accelerates hard forward from a stop. During that surge, does the balloon drift toward the front of the car or toward the back?

75.

You are given two identical glass spheres and stationed at a one hundred story building, and you must find the highest floor from which a sphere can be dropped without shattering. Each sphere breaks at the same unknown floor, and once one is broken you have fewer to test with. Dropping as few times as possible in the worst case, what is the smallest number of drops that always works?

77.

During a rough crossing a young sailor swears to the captain that he watched a sailing ship moving briskly in a direction almost straight into the oncoming wind, with no engine and no oars. Rather than call the sailor a liar, the captain nods and says it is perfectly possible. How can a ship driven only by sails travel toward the wind?

72.

A man sits in a small rowboat floating on a still pond, holding a heavy rock in his lap. He heaves the rock over the side and it sinks straight to the bottom of the pond. Once the ripples settle, is the water level of the pond higher, lower, or exactly the same as before?

74.

A tall glass is filled right up to the very brim with water, and several ice cubes float at the top, poking above the rim without spilling. Over the next hour the ice slowly melts completely. When the last of the ice has turned to water, does the glass overflow?

76.

A man buys a parrot from a pet shop after the owner swears, truthfully, that the bird will repeat every single word it hears. A week later the man storms back, complaining that the parrot has not said one word the whole time. The owner had not lied at all. So what was going on with the bird?

78.

A man stands gazing at a portrait hanging on the wall, and a curious visitor asks him whose face it shows. The man replies, 'Brothers and sisters I have none, but this man's father is my father's son.' Whose portrait is the man looking at?

79.

A hallway holds one hundred lockers all closed, and one hundred students walk past in turn. The first student opens every locker, the second student changes every second locker, the third changes every third locker, and so on until the hundredth. After all one hundred students have passed, which lockers are left standing open?

81.

You have one glass holding wine and another holding an equal amount of water. You take a single spoonful of wine and stir it thoroughly into the water, then take one spoonful of that mixture and stir it back into the wine. Afterward, is there more water in the wine glass or more wine in the water glass?

80.

A census taker asks a woman for the ages of her three daughters. She says the product of their three ages is thirty six, and their sum equals the number on the house next door. The census taker looks at that house, thinks, and says he still cannot tell. She adds, 'My oldest daughter is learning the piano.' Now he knows their ages. What are they?

Answer Key

Long Riddles and Story Riddles, from brainpuzzles.games

1. She is a photographer. She shot a photo of him, developed it in a tray of liquid, and hung the print up to dry.
2. Romeo and Juliet are goldfish. Their bowl fell off the shelf and shattered.
3. He fell from a plane. The unopened package is his parachute, which failed to open.
4. False. Read it again. You do not bury survivors anywhere.
5. Whatever color YOUR eyes are. The first sentence says you are driving the bus.
6. The surgeon is the boy's mother.
7. He is walking, not driving. A truck driver on foot can go down a one-way street in any direction he likes.
8. 60 minutes. You take the first pill immediately, the second after 30 minutes, and the third after 60. The clock starts at pill one.
9. He just asks. He is blind, not mute.
10. He is playing Monopoly. His token is the little car, it landed on a hotel, and he cannot pay the rent.
11. He was cleaning the inside of the window. He fell backward onto the floor of the fortieth-story office.
12. They are two of a set of triplets.
13. The maid. There is no mail delivery on Sunday, so her alibi is a lie.
14. False. Every one of the twelve months has at least 28 days. February just stops there.
15. His horse is named Friday. He rode in on the horse and left on the same horse.
16. They were not playing against each other. Each was playing separate games with other opponents.
17. None. A hole is empty, so there is no dirt inside it.
18. Neither side. Roosters are male and do not lay eggs.
19. The beggar was a woman. She was the merchant's sister, so he had no brother.
20. None. It was Noah who built the ark, not Moses.
21. Three socks. With only two colors, any three socks guarantee at least two the same.
22. Throw it straight up into the air. Gravity brings it right back down to you.
23. A quarter and a nickel. One of them, the quarter, is not a nickel.
24. Make two cuts across the top to divide the cake into four quarters, then one horizontal cut through the middle, turning four pieces into eight.
25. Very easily. A raw egg cannot crack a concrete floor no matter how you drop it.
26. Mount Everest. It was already the tallest even before anyone had discovered it.
27. Nine sheep. The phrase 'all but nine' means nine are the ones that remain.
28. He had the hiccups. The sudden scare cured them, so he no longer needed the water.
29. He fell off the bottom rung of the ladder, only a few inches above the ground.

30. Ask either guard: 'Which door would the OTHER guard say leads to freedom?' Then walk through the opposite door. The truth teller reports the liar's wrong answer, and the liar lies about the truth teller's right answer, so both point at the dungeon.
31. He is short. He can only reach the button for the seventh floor. On rainy days he carries an umbrella and uses it to press the button for the tenth.
32. Turn on the first switch and wait ten minutes. Turn it off, turn on the second, and go upstairs. If the lamp is on, it is the second switch. If it is off but the bulb is warm, it is the first. If it is off and cold, it is the third.
33. Take the goat over first. Go back, take the wolf over, and bring the goat back with you. Leave the goat, take the cabbage over. Finally return alone and fetch the goat. Nothing ever gets eaten.
34. The poison was frozen inside the ice cubes. The fast drinker finished before her ice melted. The slow sipper gave the ice time to melt into his drink.
35. A human. We crawl on all fours as babies, walk on two legs as adults, and lean on a cane in old age. The morning, noon and evening are the stages of a life.
36. The letter E. It starts 'end' and 'eternity' and finishes 'place', 'time' and 'space'.
37. With only two barbers, each must cut the other's hair. The second barber's terrible haircut was made by the first, and the first barber's flawless haircut was made by the second. Pick the one who produced the good haircut.
38. Nothing. Nothing is greater than a god, nothing is more evil than a demon, the poor have nothing, the rich need nothing, and if you eat nothing you starve.
39. False. You don't know if you asked the liar or the truth teller, so a plain yes or no tells you nothing for certain. You need the question that routes through both guards.
40. He stood on a large block of ice and waited. The ice melted, leaving only the puddle.
41. The 8th day. It gains 1 meter per full day. After 7 days and nights it is at 7 meters, and on day 8 it climbs 3 meters to reach 10 and escapes before the nightly slide.
42. Day 10. The snail nets one foot per full day, but the last climb counts differently. After day 9 it has reached nine feet. On day 10 it climbs three more to twelve and is out before it can slide back.
43. The catcher and the umpire. The man is a baseball player rounding the bases back to home plate.
44. None of them. The ship floats up with the tide, so the water stays level with the same rung.
45. There were only three people: a grandfather, his son, and his grandson. The middle man is both a father and a son.
46. Let some air out of the tires. Lowering the truck a few inches frees it from the bridge.
47. Light both ends of the first rope and one end of the second at the same time. The first burns out in 30 minutes, then light the second rope's other end and it finishes 15 minutes later, for 45 in all.
48. Fill the five liter jug, pour it into the three liter jug until full, leaving two liters. Empty the three, pour the two liters in, refill the five, and top off the three. Exactly four liters stay in the big jug.
49. About thirteen and a fifth seconds. Six chimes have five gaps, so each gap is 1.2 seconds, and twelve chimes have eleven gaps.
50. 17 minutes. 1 and 2 cross (2), 1 returns (1), 5 and 10 cross together (10), 2 returns (2), then

1 and 2 cross again (2). Total 17. The trick is sending the two slowest together.

51. White. That walk only returns you to the start at the North Pole. The only bears there are polar bears, so it is white.

52. 'Swap horses.' The prize goes to the owner of the slower horse, so each brother races the OTHER one's horse to the city as fast as he can.

53. Four girls and three boys.

54. Yes. Imagine both walks happening on the same day. The two monks would have to meet somewhere, and that meeting place is the same time on both trips.

55. No coin made in 48 BC could be labeled 'BC,' since that dating counts backward from an event that had not happened yet.

56. The watchman was supposed to be awake and on duty all night, so admitting he dreamed proved he had been asleep at work.

57. Seventy five miles. The trains close the gap in exactly one hour, and in that hour the fly covers seventy five miles.

58. House numbers. The price is two dollars for each digit, so the cost depends only on how many digits the number has.

59. He is a minister who performs wedding ceremonies, so he marries couples rather than becoming the husband.

60. If they truly had a flat, both would name the same tire, but liars in separate rooms will almost certainly pick different ones.

61. He split the rope lengthwise into two thinner strands and knotted them end to end, roughly doubling its length.

62. You should switch. Staying wins only one time in three, but switching wins two times in three, so it doubles your odds.

63. Each of them did want a drink. The first two could not answer for the others, so they said 'I do not know,' which told the third that neither of them was a no, letting the third confirm all three.

64. The middle prisoner. The back prisoner stays silent, which means he does not see two hats of the same color ahead, so the front and middle hats must differ. The middle prisoner sees the front hat and names the opposite color.

65. Start both glasses with the egg. When the seven empties at minute seven, flip it. When the eleven empties at minute eleven, the flipped seven has four minutes of sand down, so flip it again and it runs out at minute fifteen.

66. Her old shoes had thin, worn soles that let her feel the wire beneath her feet, while the thick new soles dulled that feel and destroyed her balance.

67. The Bicycles are Bicycle brand playing cards, and a full deck in play holds only fifty two. The extra fifty third card proved he had sneaked in a card to cheat.

68. The husband bought his wife a one way ticket, meaning he never expected her to come back from the island.

69. Light a new fire on the grass just ahead of you and let the wind carry it forward, clearing a burned patch. Then stand on that scorched ground, where the main fire arrives but finds nothing left to burn.

70. He looks in the mirror and sees what he saw, uses the saw to cut the table in half, puts the

two halves together to make a whole, and climbs out through the hole.

71. Nowhere, because the sum is put together wrongly. The guests paid twenty seven in all, and that already contains the bellhop's two, so you subtract to reach the twenty five room, not add.

72. Lower. While in the boat the rock displaced its full weight in water, but resting on the bottom it displaces only its smaller volume.

73. Toward the front. The heavier air inside the car is thrown to the back, and that pushes the lighter helium balloon forward.

74. No. Floating ice displaces exactly its own weight in water, so as it melts it fills precisely the space it had been displacing.

75. Fourteen drops. Start at floor fourteen, then floor twenty seven, then thirty nine, each time climbing one fewer floor, which caps the worst case at fourteen tries.

76. The parrot was completely deaf. It truly would repeat every word it heard, but since it could hear nothing, it had no words to say.

77. By tacking, which means sailing at an angle across the wind first one way and then the other in a zigzag, so its overall progress is upwind.

78. His own son. Since the man has no siblings, 'my father's son' can only be the man himself, so the portrait's father is him.

79. Only the perfect square lockers: one, four, nine, sixteen, and so on up to one hundred. They are toggled an odd number of times because only perfect squares have an odd count of divisors.

80. Nine, two, and two. Two age sets multiply to thirty six and share the same sum of thirteen, and mentioning a single oldest daughter rules out the six and six pair, leaving nine, two, two.

81. The two are exactly equal. Each glass ends with the same amount of liquid it started with, so any wine missing from the wine glass has been replaced by an equal amount of water.