

# A PUZZLING CONCLUSION

BY KEN WEBER

## Patience and Basic Vocabulary Required

After a weekend of steady rainfall with the sky promising more, Miss Lang knew there would be no outside recess at S.S. #6 East Luther on Monday, so on Sunday evening she prepared this indoor exercise for her pupils (35 of them in her one-room school in 1901).

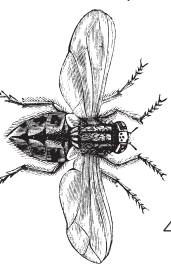
Here are 13 five-letter words, each with two letters missing. Enter the 26 letters of the alphabet on the 26 blanks and make 13 regular English words. Senior students may use each letter of the alphabet only *once*. If necessary, junior students may repeat *up to five* letters.

\_ue\_n    h\_m\_n    \_a\_er    \_uc\_y    \_\_and    tou\_\_    \_\_ust  
 hea\_\_    \_\_ry\_t    e\_i\_t    id\_o\_    \_rie\_    o\_o\_e

Existing letters do not move. No word above has a correct alternative spelling.



### One Path of Compound Words

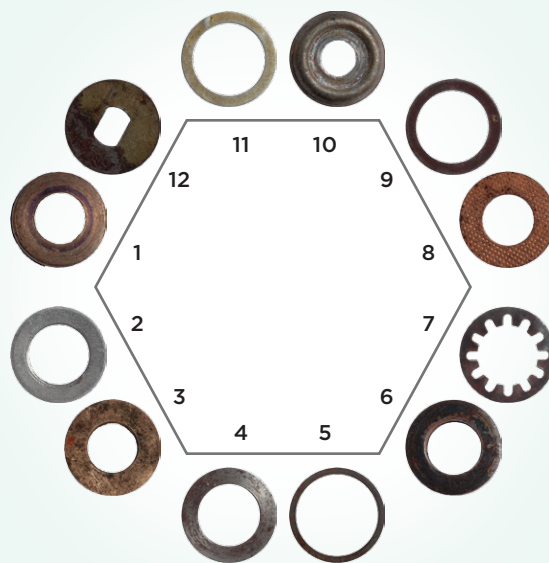


- 1 — news flower horn brain
- 2 — pipe pot letter child
- 3 — line luck birth box
- 4 — right car place backer
- 5 — wash fare pool kick
- 6 — side stand cloth room
- 7 — mate light spoon bound
- 8 — mast house less bill
- 9 — fly stage tender brick
- 10 — coach hearted wheel foot

Choose a word from #1 that together with a word from #2 will form a regular compound English word. The word you choose from #2 must then be used to create a regular compound English word when put together with a word from #3. The word from #3 must combine with a word from #4, and so on until by #10, you have nine regular compound English words.

### Silas Renarm Guards His Pennies

Somewhere on the road between Alton and Hillsburgh, Silas Renarm lost a penny from a puzzle he used to keep children busy while their adult guardians visited his “magical” elixir medicine show. Prohibition had boosted sales of his elixir in every town he visited, but true to his nature, Silas was reluctant to put even a penny at risk. So instead of 12 pennies in the puzzle below, he substituted metal washers when the show opened in Hillsburgh.



The challenge is to rearrange the washers into pairs, one atop another, at positions 1 to 6, by jumping them, one at a time, over two adjacent washers and landing on a third. (For example, jump washer 12 over 1 and 2 to land on washer 3.) Jumps can be in either direction. A completed pair counts as an adjacent two.

In the show at Hillsburgh, Silas offered a penny (*a real penny*) to any child or adult who could meet the challenge in six jumps. Could you have earned the penny? *Hint: Start with the example.*

### Adelaide's Near Miss

She didn't realize the headlights on her car were not on when the little black dog darted into the middle of Highway 9, but Adelaide was still able to stop in time.

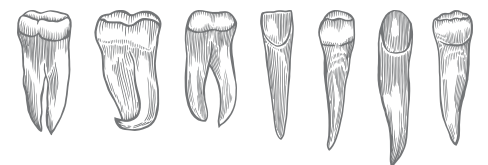
Why?

### Abe's Terrible Toothache

Abe's toothache developed when he was on a hiking trip in very remote mountain country. The guide took him to an equally remote community where, to Abe's surprise, there were actually two dentists. They were partners sharing an office and were the only dentists available in this part of the country.

Abe couldn't help but notice that Dr. Molar's natural teeth appeared to need significant attention, while the natural teeth of his partner, Dr. Incisor, appeared to be in very good condition. On the wall of their shared office hung framed certificates indicating the two dentists had identical qualifications and had graduated at the same time from the same class. Both were available, were willing to go right to work, and charged the same fee.

Which dentist should Abe pick? Why?



### You Get a Second Chance!

100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108

Choose any key number from the line above (100 through 108) and reduce it to exactly zero by subtracting from it progressively, beginning with the numeral 1.

For example, subtracting progressively in this way from, say, the number 15, you would proceed in this fashion:

15 - 1 = 14  
 14 - 2 = 12  
 12 - 3 = 9  
 9 - 4 = 5  
 5 - 5 = 0

**The challenge:** Only one of the key numbers above can be reduced to exactly zero by this method, so a second chance is available if you started with the wrong number.

Take the very last numeral you reached by subtracting from a wrong key number and, in just one calculation, use it to determine which key number is the right one.