

BAPHL15 Solution: Twenty-Six Easy Pieces (meta)

Author: Grant Elliott (with huge thanks to everyone who contributed, patched, and tested)

At kickoff, teams received a set of 26 instructions labelled *How to Play* and a flowchart with connected boxes numbered 1-26. At the start of the game they unlocked a meta puzzle *Twenty-Six Easy Pieces* with no additional content, as well as the first four puzzles, with four more unlocked at the next location.

Teams must pass their set of eight answer words (all of which are found in the OSPD) through the instructions, changing words as requested and recording a single letter for every instruction. When steps follow others in the flowchart, the entire set of eight words, however modified (usually by replacing a single word), is passed on to descendants. After every step, the list must contain eight OSPD words and every step must enact some change in the list. Some steps might have multiple ways to proceed, but only one will work with subsequent steps.

In many cases, constraints imposed downstream may make it feasible to work backwards or to backsolve missing answers. The instructions were released at kick-off in the hopes that teams would try to backsolve from very early in the game. The title is a reference to the film *Five Easy Pieces* about a piano prodigy, tying it back to the instruction sheet *How to Play*. (If you like, it can also be a reference to the Feynman book *Six Easy Pieces*, but that information is not very useful...)

When finished, the twenty six extracted letters in order spell the answer THE PIRATE GHOST OF BAPHLS PAST

ACORN
CATERPILLAR
FIANCEE
FORD
OILERS
ROCKY
TRAGEDY
WINE

1. Replace a word with a four or more letter substring that is a sin. Record the first deleted letter.

TRAGEDY ⇒ RAGE (T)

2. Replace a leading bigram of a word with a letter not found in that word to make part of a kiwano melon. Record the letter.

ACORN ⇒ HORN (H)

3. Replace the first of a double letter with a consonant, then move that letter to produce something associated with the wealthy. Record the letter that was initially doubled.

FIANCEE ⇒ FINANCE (E)

4. Delete a trailing bigram, as well as one additional letter which, when prepended to the bigram, forms a three letter word which is not an animal. Record the additional letter.

SPOILER ⇒ SOIL (P)

The intermediate three letter word is PER

5. Replace a word with a four-letter substring, exactly half of whose letters are the same. Record the rightmost letter in the new word whose lowercase form does not reach the cap line in this font.

CATERPILLAR ⇒ PILL (I)

6. Delete a word's last letter and reverse a leading proper substring of at least two letters. Record the penultimate letter of the new word.

ROCKY ⇒ CORK (K)

7. Replace a single letter in one word to make a verb for losing part of oneself. Record the new letter.

WINE ⇒ WANE (A)

8. Delete the first, last, and any other letters in a word to leave a color. Record the deleted letter that was immediately to the left of the first letter in the color.

TRAGEDY ⇒ RED (T)

9. One of the words is an alphabetically ordered (forwards or backwards) sequence of atomic symbols. Replace that word with the name of second element. Record the penultimate letter of the element.

ACORN ⇒ OXYGEN (E)

10. Replace the last letter of a word with a letter that occurs at its same index in exactly two other words to make something edible. Record the new letter.

WINE ⇒ WING (G)

G occurs in at index 4 in TRAGEDY and OXYGEN

11. Delete a letter from a word and anagram the result to make something that limits options. Record the deleted letter.

HORN ⇒ NOR (H)

12. Change a letter in a word and anagram the result such that no letter is in its original position to make a way to trick the enemy into a mistake. Record the original letter that was changed.

WORD ⇒ DRAW (O)

13. Delete a trailing bigram such that one letter in the bigram alphabetically immediately precedes a letter in the remaining string. Record that letter from the remaining string.

SPOILER ⇒ SPOIL (S)

14. Prepend the same letter to two different words, neither of which already contains it. Record the letter.

OILERS ⇒ TOILERS | WINE ⇒ TWINE (T)

15. Replace a trailing bigram with a single letter not found in any other entry to make something fiendishly clever. Record the last undeleted letter.

FORD ⇒ FOX (O)

16. Replace a word's first letter to make part of a poem. Record the replaced letter.

FORD ⇒ WORD (F)

17. One word appears in the title of a major sports film with exactly one other nontrivial word that begins with a different letter. Replace it by the other word. Record the first letter to be repeated within the new word.

ROCKY ⇒ BALBOA (B)

The film is Rocky Balboa (2006). BALBOA is an OSPD word, as it is a monetary unit in Panama.

18. Change a letter in a word and anagram the result to make a metallic element. Record the first letter of the element's symbol.

OILERS ⇒ SILVER (A)

19. One word can be split into something a chef does and a concrete noun. Delete the noun. Record the first deleted letter.

CATERPILLAR ⇒ CATER (P)

The intermediate concrete noun is PILLAR

20. Reverse the last two letters of a word and insert between them a letter which occurs exactly four times over all the words. Record the first letter of the word.

HORN ⇒ HONOR (H)

O appears in HORN, FORD, OILERS, and ROCKY

21. Delete the last letter of a word and reverse the remaining string. Record the first letter in the result to not appear in any other word at the same index.

PILL ⇒ LIP (L)

22. Delete a trailing trigram from a word to leave something that comes from a seed, then replace a bigram in another word with the deleted letters in any order to form a verb. Record the last letter in the reordered trigram.

OILERS ⇒ OIL | WINE ⇒ WIRES (S)

23. Insert a consonant into a word and anagram the result to make something to be careful of when starting a book. Record the inserted letter.

OILERS ⇒ SPOILER (P)

24. Delete a leading substring to make a New World food. Record the last deleted letter.

ACORN ⇒ CORN (A)

25. Replace all but the leading bigram of a word with an alphabetically preceding trailing bigram of a different word to make something that must be resisted. Record the new word's last letter.

FORD ⇒ FOES (S)

The trailing bigram is copied from WIRES

26. Replace a *D* in a word with the third letter of another word. Record the new letter.

FORD ⇒ FORT (T)

The third letter is copied from CATERPILLAR