

Eight if by School Bus

by Ben Smith

From the mentions of standardized testing in the flavortext for this puzzle, solvers should deduce that this is what they need their Scantron form for.

This is a paint-by-numbers puzzle (25 × 5 for hard teams, 15 × 5 for normal teams). Once solvers have correctly filled in the bubbles on the test form, the filled in sections should resemble a picture of ... nothing in particular.

That's because each row is meant to be interpreted as its binary equivalent. Teams should deduce from the flavortext's reference to "negative space" that rather than using the black bubbles they filled in, they should use the empty spaces as binary ones. Converting each row to its corresponding letter of the alphabet will reveal the answer, **CRITICAL DENSITY**.

Hard version

The hard version of the Scantron form consists of 26 rows of bubbles. Each row has five bubbles labeled (T), (F), and KEY. The bubbles are filled with black ink to form the word "SOLUTION". The bubbles are arranged in a grid with a key to the right. The key is a vertical column of bubbles, each with a letter next to it. The letters are: S, O, L, U, T, I, O, N, I, S, C, R, I, T, I, C, A, L, D, E, N, S, I, T, Y.

Normal version

The normal version of the Scantron form consists of 26 rows of bubbles. Each row has five bubbles labeled (T), (F), and KEY. The bubbles are filled with black ink to form the word "CRITICAL". The bubbles are arranged in a grid with a key to the right. The key is a vertical column of bubbles, each with a letter next to it. The letters are: C, R, I, T, I, C, A, L, D, E, N, S, I, T, Y.