



Welcome to Ana-Links Puzzles!

Ana-Links are a new kind of puzzle, invented by designer Pavel Curtis, that combines aspects of jigsaws, wordplay, and mechanical puzzles in a unified, multi-stage solving experience.

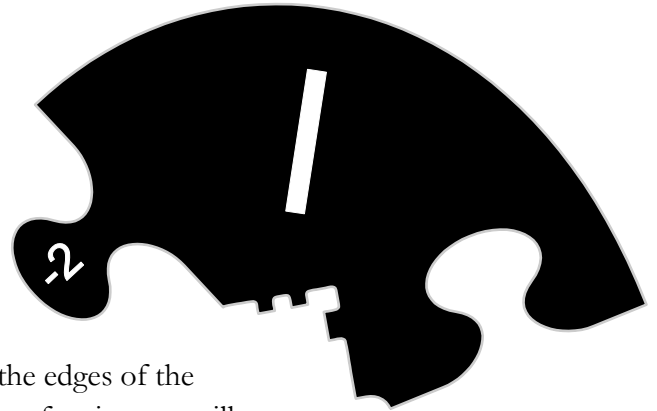
How do they work?

Every Ana-Links puzzle consists of a set of large, plastic, jigsaw-like pieces, typically with five to eight pieces per puzzle. Each piece has one ‘outie’ jigsaw tab and one ‘innie’ jigsaw socket; this makes it possible to assemble the pieces into a single, continuous loop where every piece’s outie has been fitted into some other piece’s innie. This assembly is

made a bit more difficult, though, by the fact that all of the innies and outies have exactly the same shape, so that almost every outie will fit nicely into all of the other innies! There’s only *one* way, though, to put all of the pieces together in a complete loop.

To solve an Ana-Links puzzle, you need to collect three separate clues:

- First, notice that each puzzle piece has a large letter etched onto it. For your first clue, you must arrange those letters to make a single word. We call this the *anagram clue*.
- Second, assemble the pieces into a single, complete loop, as described earlier. When you’ve done that, the edges of the pieces on the inside of the loop will form the outline of a picture, a silhouette of some familiar shape. We call this the *picture clue*. Be forewarned, though: sometimes it can take some noodling to figure out just what the picture represents, since you won’t have any information about which way is up!
- Third, now that you’ve assembled the pieces into a loop, notice that each letter is followed, reading clockwise around the loop, by a little bit of arithmetic, like “+7” or “-5”. Shift each letter forward or backward in the alphabet as indicated by the arithmetic. For example, if the letter “A” was followed by “+3”, that would yield the new letter “D”, and if “B” was followed by “-7”, that would lead to “U”. Reading these new letters in clockwise order around the loop (you’ll have to work out the starting point) will reveal one more word or phrase. We call this the *shifted clue*.



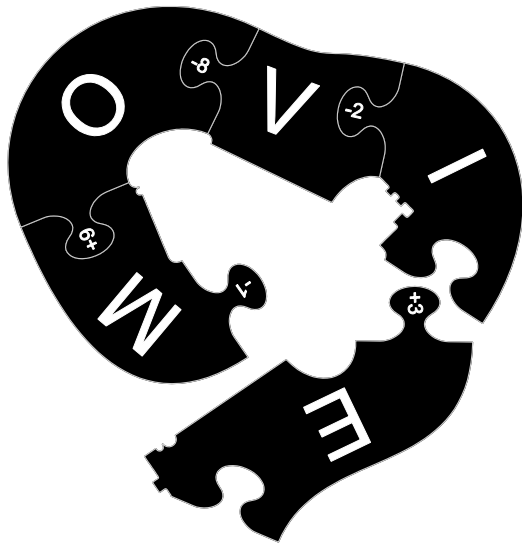
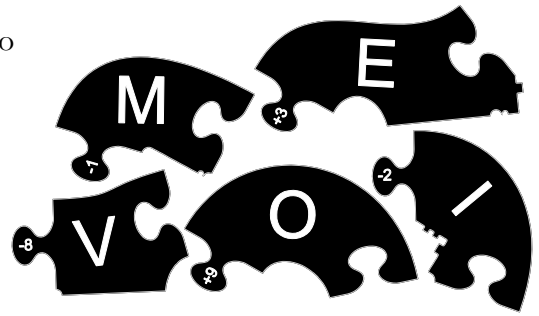
Now that you have all three clues, you’re ready to find the answer to the puzzle! One of your three clues (it could be any of the anagram clue, the picture clue, or the shifted clue) will be the *category* that the answer fits into (like “films” or “country” or “flower,” either singular or plural). The other two clues will work together, making a cute pun (or perhaps a awful one, depending on your tastes) to indicate an answer in that category. Note: sometimes the pun will use the clue just as it is, but sometimes you’ll need to use a *synonym* of the clue (like in a crossword puzzle). Put the clues together in one order or the other to point you at your answer.

Look at the other side for a fully worked-out example puzzle!

An Ana-Links Puzzle Example

The five pieces at right make up our example Ana-Links puzzle. To find the first of our three clues, we need to rearrange the letters on the pieces to spell a single word. In this case, since there are only five letters, that's not too hard: they spell "**MOVIE**".

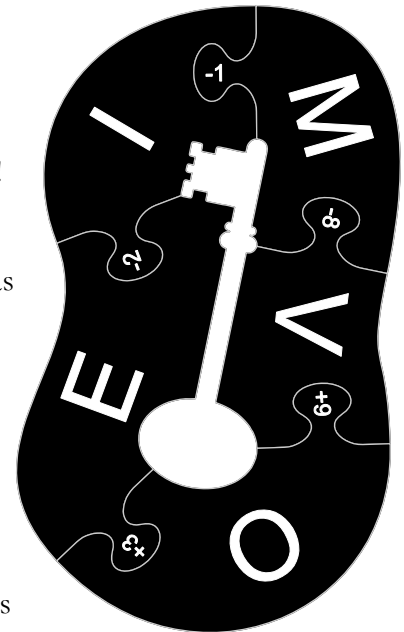
For our other two clues, we need to put these pieces together in a single, continuous loop. In general, every piece will fit plausibly with every other piece, but most ways won't make a



complete loop. At left, we've tried putting them together in the order of the word we found in the first clue, but it won't fit! One thing you can count on is that *that* trick will never work: the pieces never make the loop in the order of the anagram clue. We wouldn't want to make the puzzle too *easy*, would we? Of course not!

After a little bit of fiddling around with the pieces, though, the correct assembly emerges, as shown here:

Now we look at the silhouette formed in the space *inside* the loop; what *is* that a picture of? Why, it's an old-fashioned **KEY!** That's our second clue.



For the third clue, we shift each letter forward or backward in the alphabet as indicated by the bit of arithmetic after it, reading clockwise around the loop. So 'E-2' is '**C**', 'I-1' is '**H**', 'M-8' is (L, K, J, I, H, G, F, ...) '**E**', 'V+9' is (W, X, Y, Z, wrap around to A, B, C, D, ...) '**E**', and O+3 is '**R**'. Altogether, that spells "**CHEER**"!

One of these clues is the *category* our answer fits into; "MOVIE" appears to be the most likely one. After some experimentation, we end up treating "CHEER" like a crossword clue and get "RAH" and then use "KEY" just as it is to yield "RAH-KEY" or the well-known movie "**ROCKY**"!