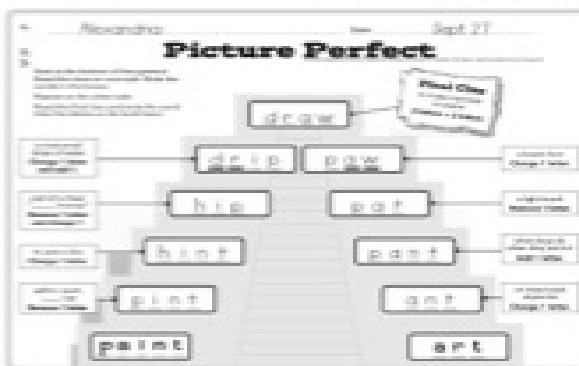


## Solving the Pyramid Puzzle

Students will enjoy solving the pyramid puzzle on their own. But, before they begin working independently, demonstrate how to solve the puzzle to ensure they understand the steps and will succeed. As you work on the puzzle with students, you might use a think-aloud method to model strategies for using the clues to complete the puzzle.

1. To begin, students read the bottom word on one side of the pyramid. Then they look at the clue on the next step up. That clue gives a hint about the next word's meaning. It also tells whether to change, add, remove, or rearrange letters in the first word to come up with the next word. In the example at right, for instance, a is removed from past to get the word pat.
2. Students work their way up the pyramid in the same manner, one word at a time, until they've filled in the last word on that side. (Encourage them to check that each word makes sense and is spelled correctly before moving on to the next word.)
3. Once they complete one side of the pyramid, they use the clues to do the other side.
4. To find the final mystery word, students read the clue

and look at the equation at the top. Then they combine letters from the last word on the left and right sides—using the first letter of the last word on the left and right sides—using the equation as a guide—to discover the final word. For example, in the puzzle below, the final clue takes 2 letters from each word ( $2 \text{ letters} + 2 \text{ letters}$ ). As an additional check, the letters that students should use will be underlined with bold lines.



## Tips for Working With the Puzzle

Try these quick and easy suggestions!

- Decide ahead of time whether you want to do the pyramid puzzle with the class as a whole, or have students work alone, in pairs, or in groups. Then print a copy of the puzzle for each student. For whole-class or small-group lessons, you might use an interactive whiteboard or overhead projector. If using the puzzle in a learning center, place copies in a folder and have students remove one to complete during their visit to the center.
- At first, you may want to read the clues aloud to students, especially beginners. You might also provide additional clues, or elaborate on the meanings of words, to give students help with those that they find difficult.
- For extra support, list the "answers" for the puzzle in random order on the board or chart paper. Have students choose words from the list to complete the puzzle.
- If students get stuck on a particular word, you might tell them the word, then see if they can spell it correctly by making the appropriate changes in the previous word.
- After students solve the puzzle, encourage them to look at the two bottom words and the final word up at the top of the pyramid. Ask them to tell how these three words are connected to each other and to the puzzle title.

- Using a completed puzzle, point out that the final word gets its beginning consonant(s) from the last word on the left and a word-family ending from the last word on the right. Then invite students to brainstorm other words that share the same beginning letter (or letter combination) or the same word-family ending with the final word.
- Have students sort words from the puzzle into various categories, such as words belonging to the same word family, words that begin with the same letter, nouns and verbs, short- and long-vowel words, or animal and object words. Doing this can help deepen students' understanding of word relationships.
- Try reversing the activity. To do this, fill in the answers on a puzzle and mask the clues. Copy the puzzle and distribute it to students. Then work with them to come up with their own clues for all of the words.

## Answers

**It's Wintertime!**, page 73

top: snow  
left: cold, hold, hole, hop, skip, sweep  
right: lake, lake, lawn, low, low,  
snow