

Puzzle 9 - Complete the Cure - Walthrough

The first step to this puzzle is figuring out what it means. The pieces have what are called 'terminals' (two of each of four colors) and 'connection points' (circles on the pieces). The pieces are tempting to play with, but the instructions say 'Start out by figuring out what the previous answers have in common.'

CONFIRMED
PREFRONTAL CORTEX
HARMONIC
BONO
BEHOLD AND WONDER
BIRDSONG
PEONY ROOT
CONTRAIL

With a little guessing, a little luck, and maybe noticing something strange about the phrase 'Get on it', one might notice that each of these answers has the two letter string 'ON' contained in it. This isn't a whole lot to go on, but taking account of the pieces and how many 'connection point' letters are on our pieces, we have 16, which could mean two for each 'answer'. Stripping away the common strings 'ON' from our answers, we get:

C__FIRMED
PREFR__TALCORTEX
HARM__IC
B__O
BEHOLDANDW__NDER
BIRDS__G
PE__YROOT
C__TRAIL

There are a number of ways to potentially make this jump. First, the meaning of 'ON'. BONO parses as 'B' on 'O'. Is there a 'B' connection terminal? IS there an 'O'? Does it make sense to put them together? Well, there are a few ways, one of which connects two pieces with adjacent connection points (seems like they ought to fit), another which doesn't. If they did both fit together, it would require putting a 'C' on a 'T' - can we get that from our list? If we are looking for letters adjacent to the 'ON's, then yes, we do have C on T in 'contrail'. This is a promising strategy. Faster leaps of logic could just guess that all of the words have [letter]ON[letter] without such analysis, and just trial and error could make it make sense.

The first two pieces should come together pretty easy (the ones with the double connection point). After that, if one intuitively the rule that pieces only overlap on connection points, then there are limited orientations that allow the shape to 'loop' (note that each other piece has two connection points, which means they have to form a loop structure if all connection points are used). Once you have a rough ring, you might have to do some rotating 'folding' to get everything to fit right, but at that point it should be in more or less nice structured hexagonal rings with arms reaching out.

This is the form of the pieces together:

The next step is trying to decipher some message out of these seemingly random letters.

A couple things to notice, in some kind of order:

1. Noticing that just about every other letter on the thin paths has an obviously inverse orientation.

2. The instructions refer to the colored hexes as 'terminals'. 'Pathways' are also mentioned. Perhaps pathways run from terminal to terminal?

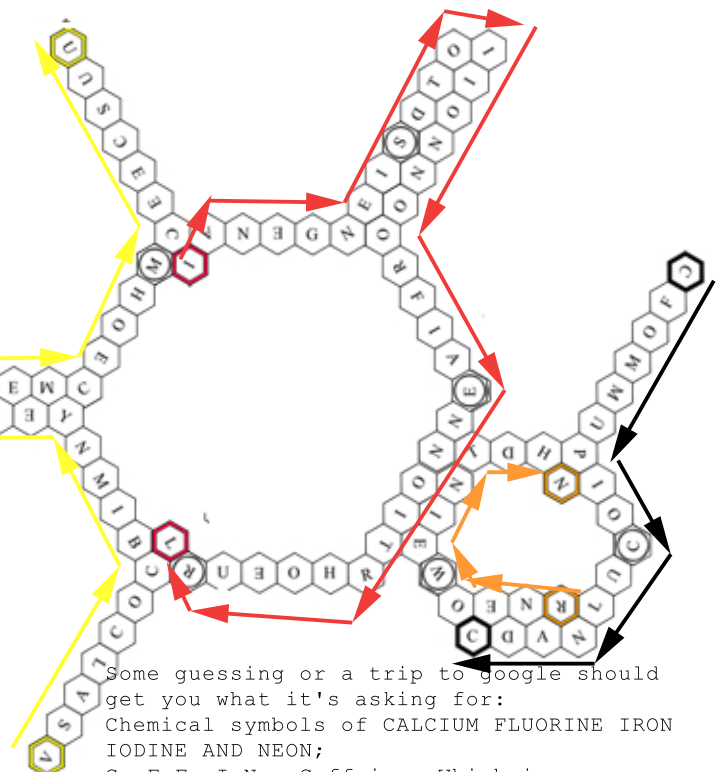
3. The yellow letters are both on 'ends'. Perhaps we can trace a path starting from yellow and ending in yellow. There are two 'routes' to do this.

4. Reading from yellow, every other letter, we get 'VACC' before a fork. Considering we have been talking about vaccines, the next letter 'wants' to be 'I'. If we follow that route, we get the message 'VACCINE CAN BECOME CU' and then we get to yellow. Running the opposite way, we have 'USE CHEMICAL SYMBOLS'.

5. Those seem to be a good path. Let's try red, because they are adjacent, and their route has been limited by the yellow path. 'LUORINE IRON IODINE A' and 'INGESTION OF ANOTHER'. These don't quite make sense with the red strings.

6. Black and orange can be sorted out pretty easily at this point: Black: 'COMPOUND' and 'CALCIUM F'. Orange: 'ND NEON' and 'RE WITH'.

7. There are a limited number of ways these strings can be put together and make proper sentences. But you can start with those that make sense in some 'color order' (yellow-orange-red-black?) VACCINE CAN BECOME CURE WITH INGESTION OF ANOTHER COMPOUND. We reverse the color order for the second half of the message: CALCIUM FLUORINE IRON IODINE AND NEON USE CHEMICAL SYMBOLS.



Some guessing or a trip to google should get you what it's asking for:
Chemical symbols of CALCIUM FLUORINE IRON IODINE AND NEON;
Ca F Fe I Ne. Caffeine. Which is our answer to the puzzle.

BONUS: Caffeine is also the same shape as the structure you just assembled. You might have noticed, but you didn't have to.