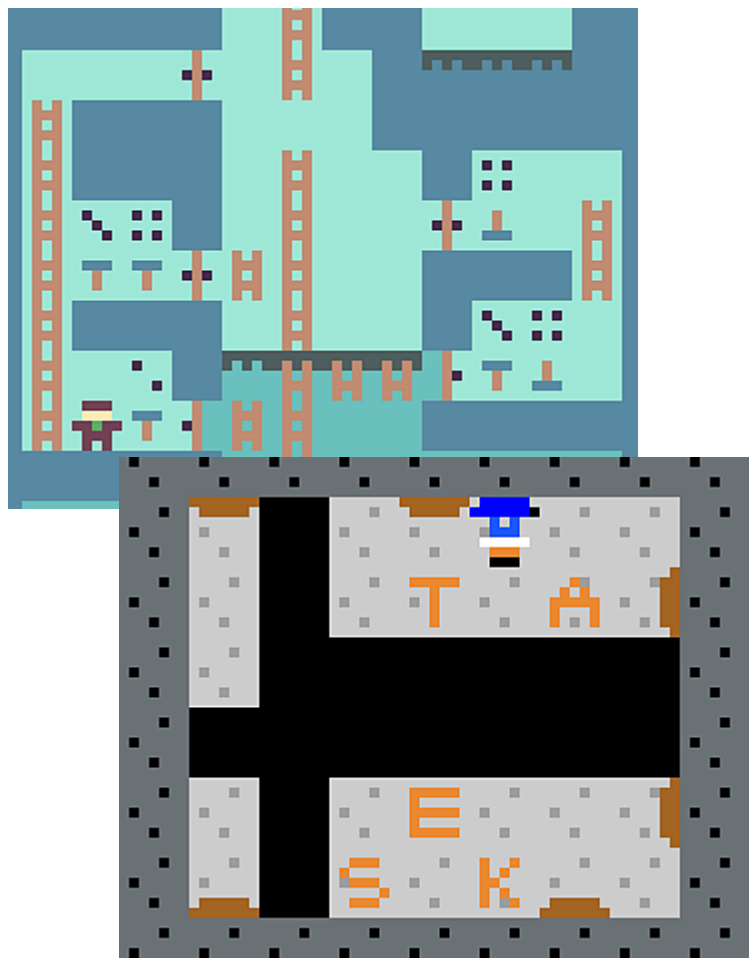


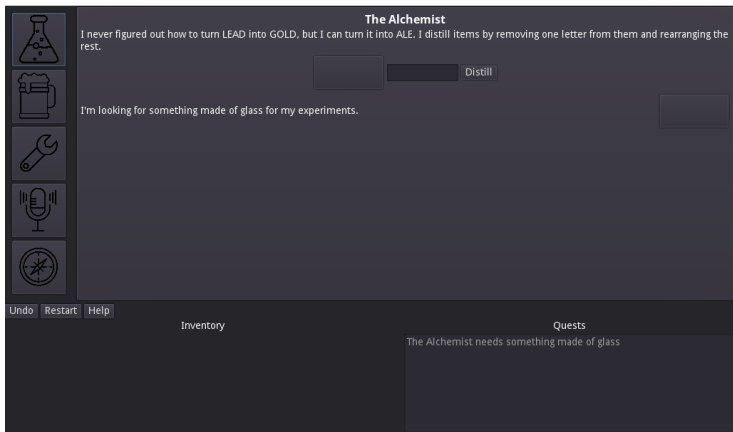
Metapuzzles: From Puzzlehunts to Puzzle Games

Greg Filpus/Aspeon

About Me

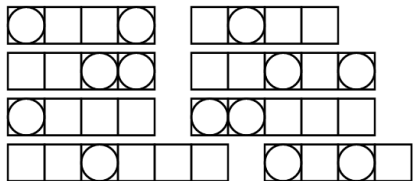


- Greg Filpus/Aspeon
- Small freeware puzzle games
- Puzzlehunt puzzles (mostly Seattle-area)



What problem caused the communications satellites to fail?

Place the datapoints you have collected into the grid below.
You will have to choose an order which helps you answer the question.
No external research is required to place the datapoints.



BATTLE: KEBABS

IRON CHEF

The key to a good kebab is making sure that once the meat's on the skewer, the result is edible.

Skewers

- Group of two
- Skinny
- Cover with concrete
- Indiana Jones' hat
- Heathen
- Wilderness trip
- Leader of the pack
- Word is a part of it
- Spherical map
- Acquire knowledge
- Noble gas
- Extremely overweight
- Quiet, in music
- Performance
- Trumpian adverb
- Ten-cent piece
- Imbecile
- Start of a fire
- Red softwood tree
- Prickly plant

Meats

- Madden developer
- Knock on
- All right
- The Bayou St.
- FCC chair Pai
- Hot drink
- 54, to Caesar
- Primate
- Make a mistake
- Sobriety organization
- The Keystone St.
- Unhappy
- Skill rating for games
- Uncooked
- Email address sign
- Where bees live
- Where you pitch a tent
- DC time zone
- Called up
- Jimmy Eat World genre

Metapuzzles!

- A puzzle that brings together information or resources across a broader scope than a single puzzle.

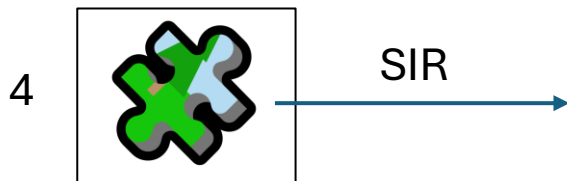
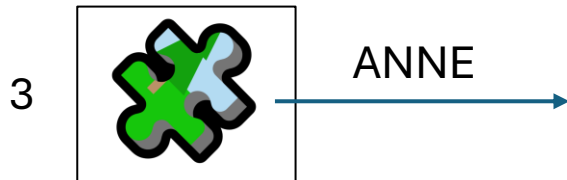
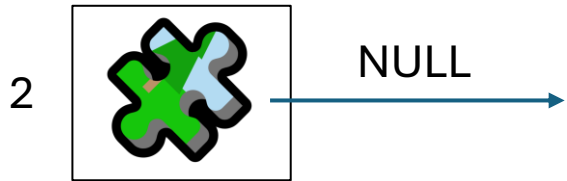
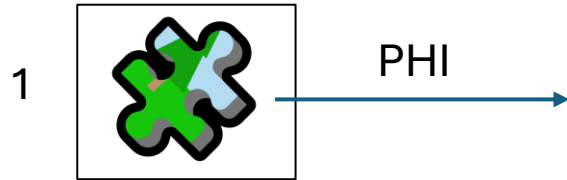


Puzzlehunts

What's a puzzlehunt?

- Team-based competitions about solving puzzles with no instructions
- Some use of ciphers (Morse, Braille, etc.), not as much cryptography/steganography as ARGs
- The implicit goal of each puzzle is to find an answer, a word or short phrase
- “Find a common thread” is often a starting point
- Metapuzzles combine answers from multiple puzzles
 - (insert “usually” after every word on this slide)

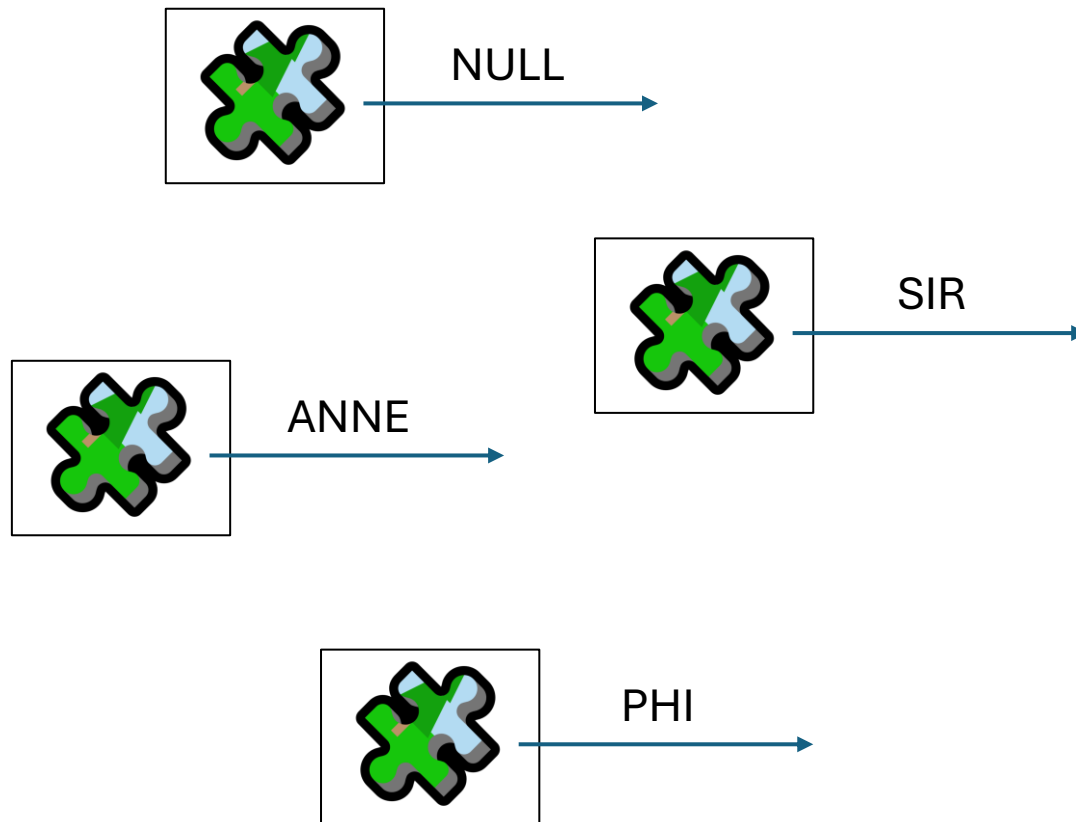
“Pure” meta



My Metapuzzle

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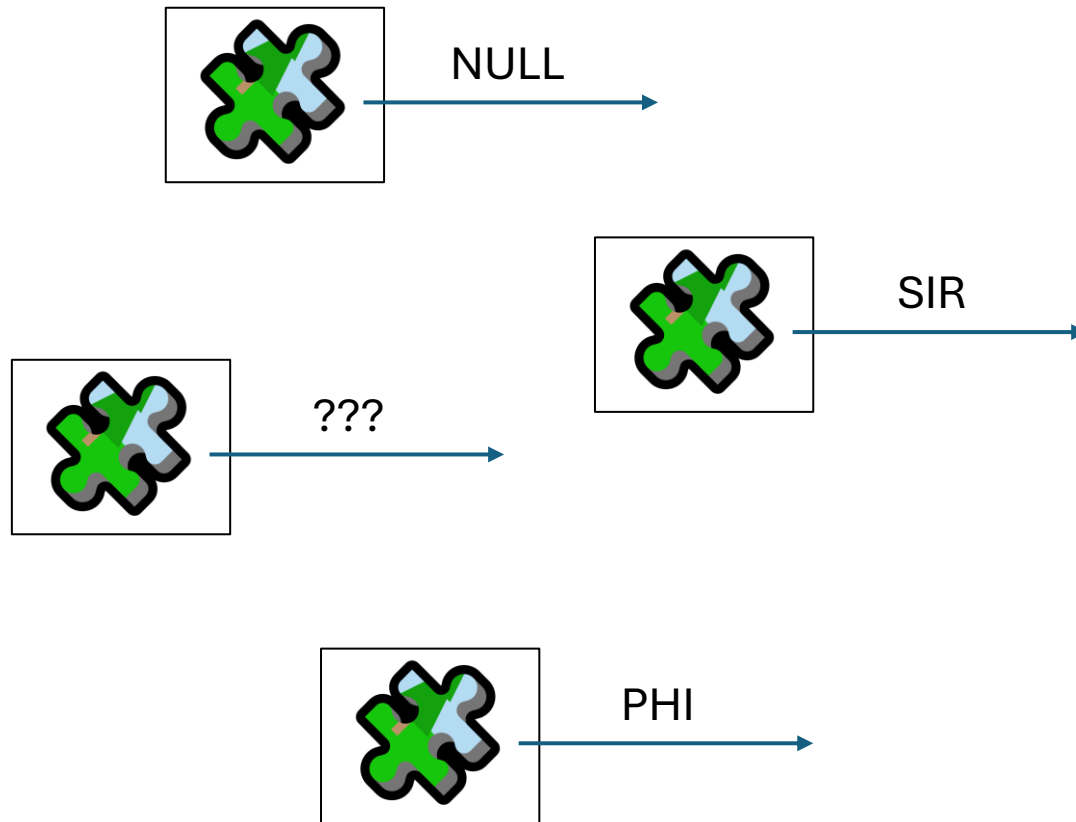
“Shell” meta



My Metapuzzle

1. A letter?
2. A number?
3. A person?
4. A title?

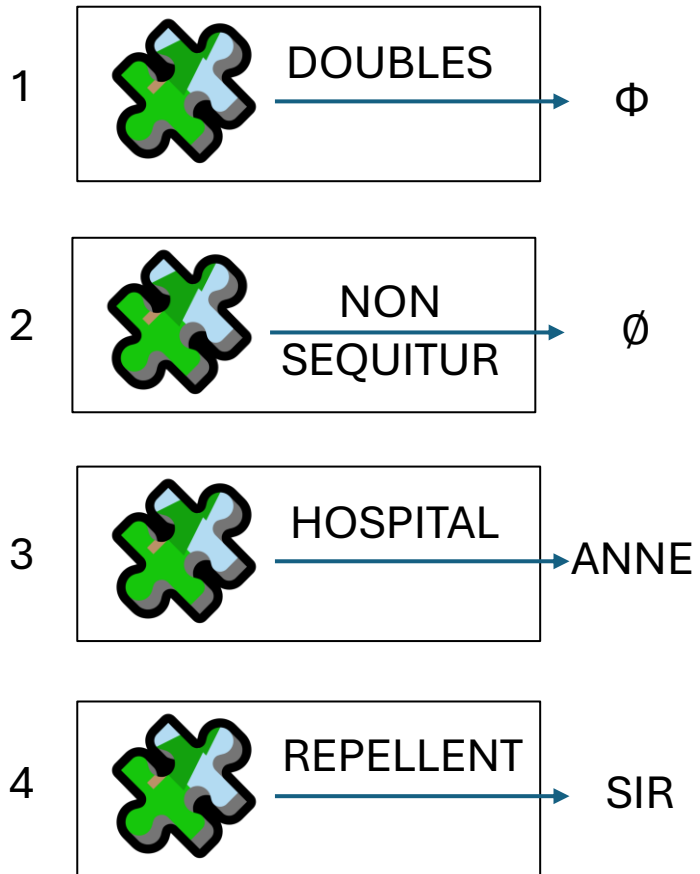
Partial solving / Backsolving



My Metapuzzle

1. A letter? - PHI
2. A number? - NULL
3. A person? - ???
4. A title? - SIR

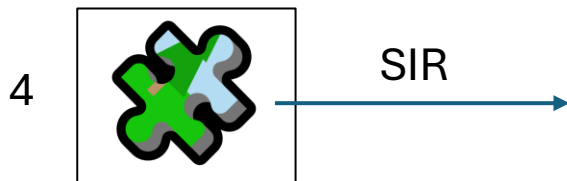
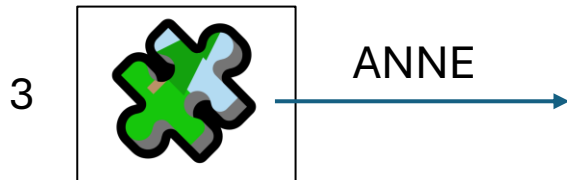
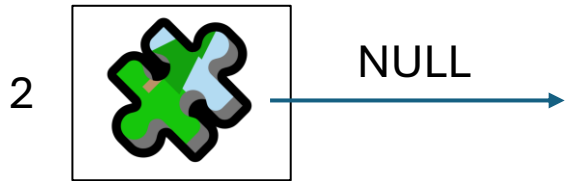
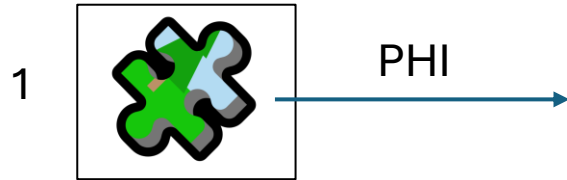
“Token” meta



My Metapuzzle

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Making a puzzlehunt meta



My Metapuzzle

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But what about video games?

Information: Languages and ciphers

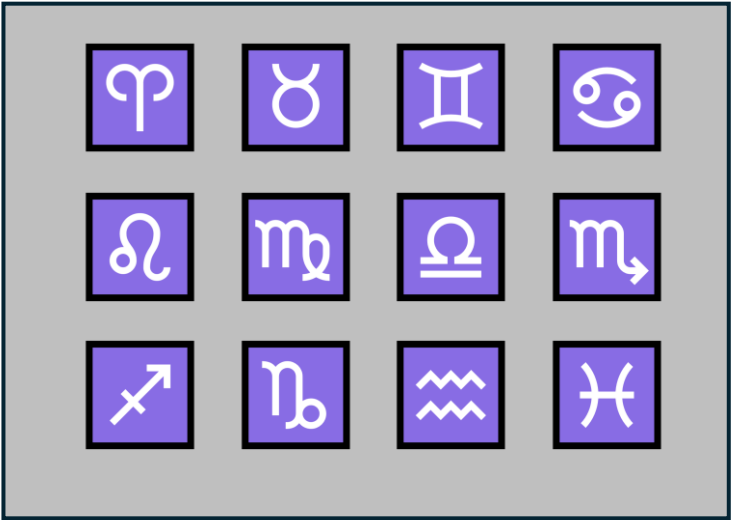
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○ ℳ ◆ ◆ Ⓜ ⚡ ℳ

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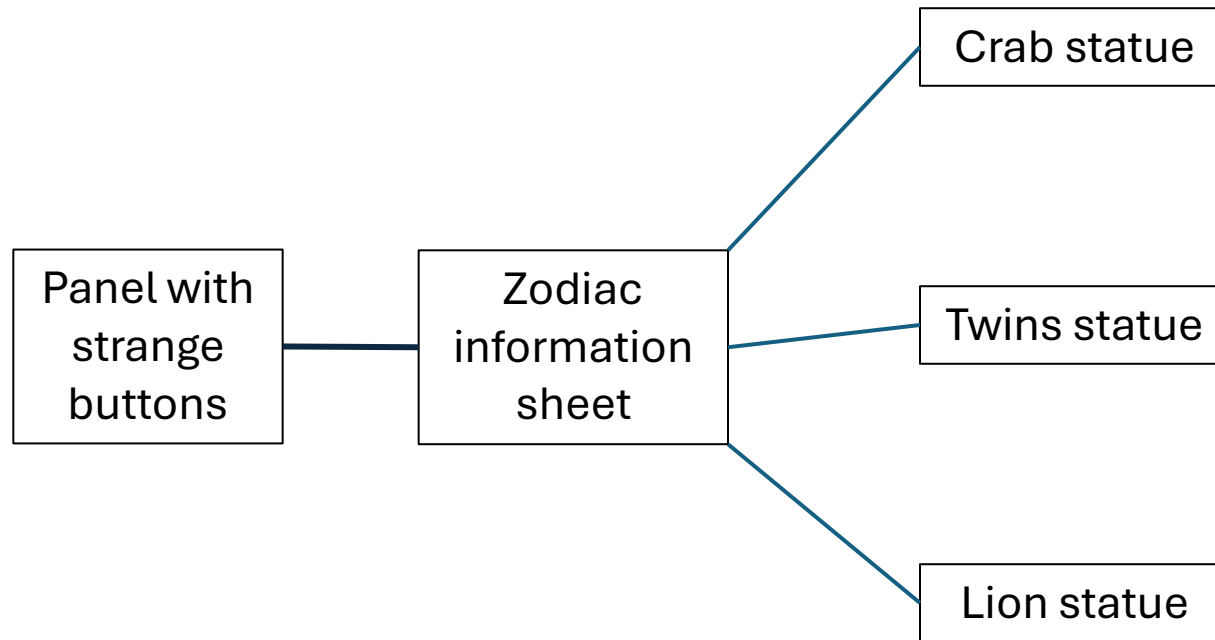


Ⓜ = A

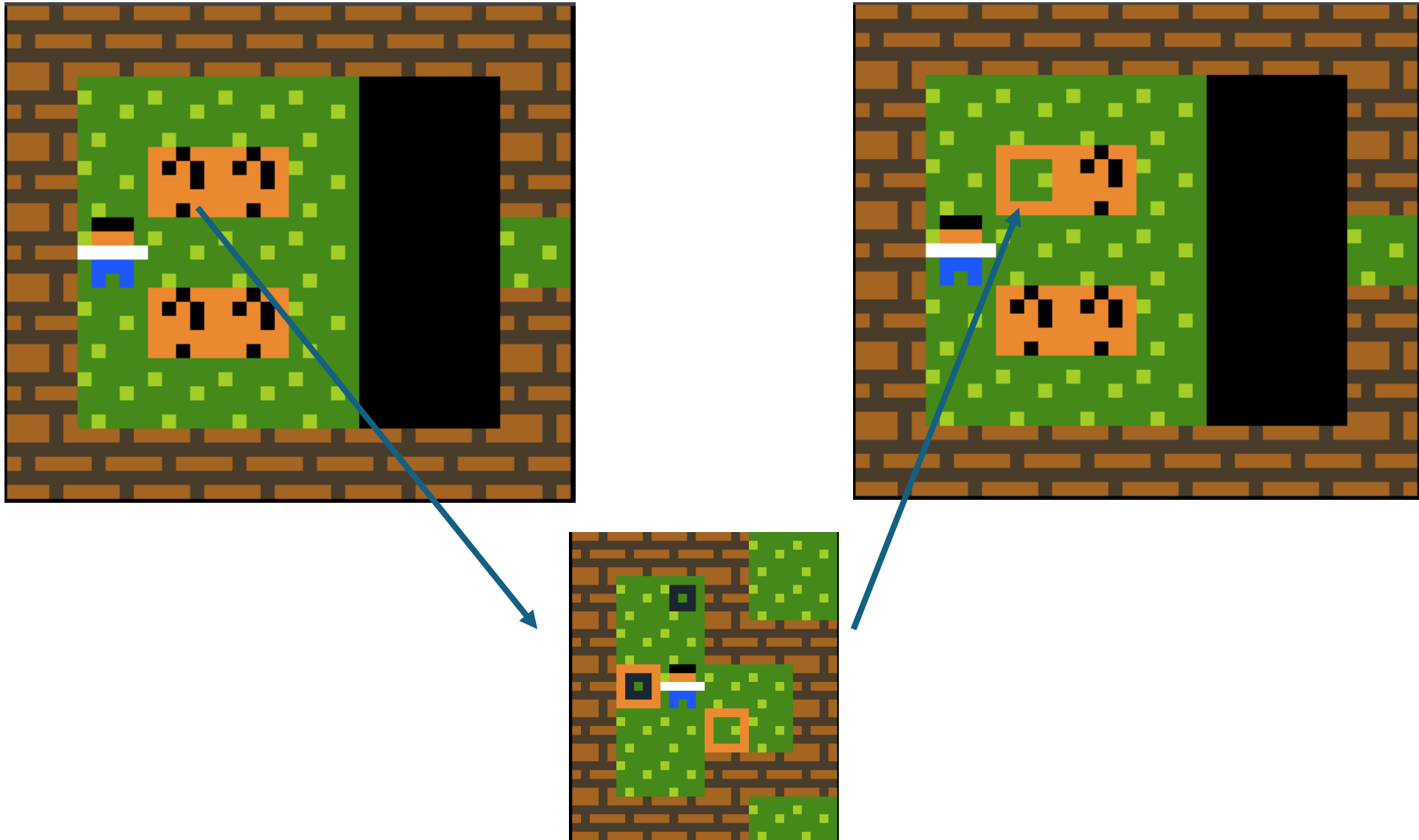
Shell?: Answer entry



Shell? Mind maps



Resource/Tokens: One solve => one box



Weirder stuff

- Breaking the abstraction layer
- Meta matching: which answer goes with which meta?
- Weird answers, weird structures

Final Thoughts

- What are “answers” in your game? Information or resources?
- Do you have an abstraction layer? Can you break it?
- How does the player know there’s a metapuzzle? Is there a common thread, or a “shell” to organize info?
- Do you want to require 100% of the “answers” to solve?

Thanks for listening!

- The blog this talk is based on:
<https://aspeon.neocities.org/blog/tags/musings-on-metapuzzles/>
- I'll be more free to talk spoilers on Discord
- Questions?