

Puzzle Test Tips

1. Have a Plan

Of course, no one strategy is going to work all the time. The list below is simply meant to give you a few new ways of thinking about the puzzle solving process. Use them to help you when you get stuck. Best of luck!

Before you dive into a puzzle, it's always a good idea to stop and think about the puzzle before you begin. Instead of taking a wild stab at the puzzle, see if you can identify a good strategy that will help you approach the puzzle in a way that will lead to a quick solution. In Crazy Machines, you need to stop and think about how you are going to solve the puzzle before you begin putting your objects in place. Without a plan, chances for success are very slim. That being said, if you think through the problem first, you're bound to do well!



2. Don't Over Think

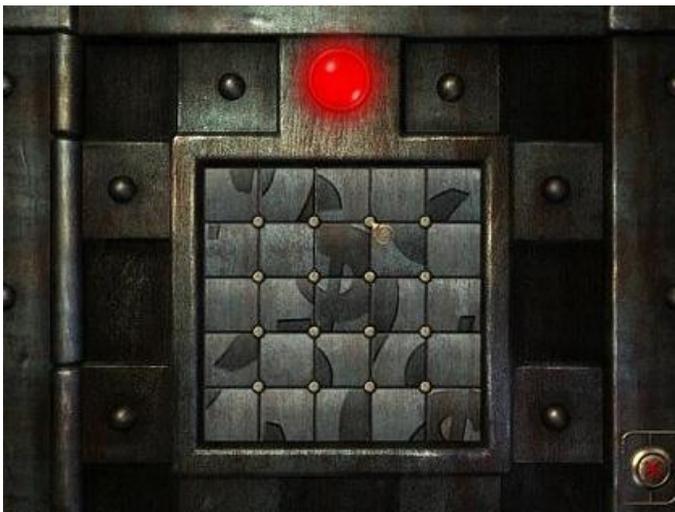
None of the puzzles in Big Fish Games require advanced problem solving skills. If you find yourself thinking you need to use advanced mathematics to solve a puzzle, you're probably overdoing it. While some puzzles can be tricky, they very rarely require advanced computational skills. In Mystery Case Files: Return to Raven Hearst, Rose's door puzzle is a great example. We've seen players develop very complicated formulas to solve this. Really, it's little more than adding or subtracting the numbers on the left to the numbers on the right.

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3. Look for Patterns

Sometimes a repeating pattern can lead to a solution. Rather than look for a complicated series of steps, try looking for a pattern. Moreover, by recognizing patterns of movement, you will be able to move pieces and know how this movement will affect the puzzle. The dollar sign safe puzzle in Safecracker is a great example of where recognizing patterns comes in handy. By analyzing the movement of the pieces, you begin to see the manner in which the puzzle pieces interact when moved. As you get more pieces into position, it becomes more difficult to move the remaining pieces. Understanding the movement patterns governing the puzzle pieces will help you efficiently get the final pieces into place.



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4. Group Items

Sometimes it's helpful to look for ways to group objects in a puzzle. Perhaps you notice there are only two types of objects in the puzzle (light and dark is a good example). What happens if you put them together? Try grouping items based on common characteristics. A great example of this technique can be seen in Mystery Case Files: Ravenhearst. The puzzle has a 'day' side and a 'night' side. If you look at the puzzle pieces you'll notice they also are 'day' and 'night' themed.



5. Check Your Inventory

What are you carrying? In many games you collect objects as you play through the game. Do you have something in your backpack or your pocket that can help you solve the puzzle? Check to see if the key to the puzzle is hidden on you! In Mystery Case Files: Return to Ravenhearst, the first puzzle you encounter in Ravenhearst Manor is the fireplace puzzle in the living room. Without giving too much away, let's just say you need objects found outside the house in order to solve the puzzle. It's also a good idea to refer to notes in your case book...



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6. Work Backwards

Working backwards is a common technique you may remember from childhood maze puzzles. If you know where the end of the puzzle is, start there and work through the steps in reverse order to find the beginning. This is a common technique used to solve piping puzzles. Since you can see the end of the puzzle, start there and fit the pieces from end to beginning rather than beginning to end. In Azada (and many other puzzle games) you will find the following pipe fitting puzzle. If you struggle with solving it by working from left to right, try working from right to left.



7. Take Notes

Often, it takes many different attempts to solve a puzzle. To prevent yourself from repeating failed attempts, try taking notes. This is also a very handy technique when you find yourself in a maze situation. Don't waste time trying to remember your movements. Grab a piece of paper and a pencil and start recording each step you take. That way, if you get lost, you can always reverse your steps and get back to the beginning. In the case of an actual maze, it's a good idea to draw a actual map. In Nancy Drew: Ghost Dogs of Moon Lake, you encounter a forest outside the main cabin. Many players have commented on getting lost in the forest. Drawing a map as you make your way through this forest offers two benefits. First, you're unlikely to get lost. Second, a map clearly shows the layout of the area thereby allowing you to see when you've explored it all.

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8. Don't Give Up

This puzzle solving technique sounds kind of silly, but we often hear people insist certain puzzles are “impossible” or “broken”. Not true! All Big Fish Games puzzles are thoroughly tested to make sure then can indeed be solved. Don't let yourself fall into the trap of thinking the puzzle is flawed. The Magnet Box puzzle in Safecracker is a great example of this. We heard from a lot of people who thought this puzzle was impossible (just between us, I thought it was impossible for a bit too!). While some puzzles are very challenging, they all can be solved.



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9. Guess and Check

This is a classic technique many learn in grade school mathematics courses. While it may not be very efficient or reliable, sometimes it's all you have to work with. One nice thing about this technique is the low level of effort it requires. It can be a great way to relax your mind. Moreover, isn't a fantastic when it actually works? The cipher puzzle in *The Lost Cases of Sherlock Holmes* is a great example of a puzzle where guess and check will actually work well. As there are only a limited number of characters, it shouldn't take very long to check each one and find the solution to the puzzle.

