



Sweet Nothings

Here is the Christmas Puzzle for 2023. Santa has decided to pop a few sweets and chocolates in the children's stockings this year and those clever elves have worked out a way to spell their names using the names of the sweets. As in previous years, clues will provide you with letters to fit into the answer grid below, spelling out 28 children's names. In each case you need to enter letters from the answer, indicated by the numbers in square brackets after the letter count. In as many cases as possible this will include the first letter, but not always. For example, for the clue **'PHONEY LEFT INSIDE' (5 : [1, 3])**, the answer might be **FLAKE (FAKE [= PHONEY] about the letter L for LEFT)**: You would then need to enter into the grid the first letter - **F** - and the third - **A**. General knowledge, a mildly cryptic approach and a good dictionary should provide most of the answers.

Please feel free to send electronic copies of the puzzle to friends and family who might be interested in having a go as well (download available at <https://tinyurl.com/christmas-puzzle2023>).

When you have worked out the message, send all your answers – clues and names - by email to: abdemonpuzzles@gmail.com. Closing date: January 8th, 2024, with the winner to be chosen at random from the entrants with the most correct answers.

Over the past two years, thanks to your generosity, we have together raised nearly £3000 for charity. This year we have chosen to support the National Autistic Society which aims to create a society that works for autistic people and have set up a Just Giving page to accept donations. There is no expectation, but if you would like to give something please consider visiting:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/fundraising-christmaspuzzle2023>

Child 1					Child 2					Child 3					Child 4				
Child 5					Child 6					Child 7									
Child 8					Child 9					Child 10									
Child 11					Child 12					Child 13									
Child 14					Child 15					Child 16									
Child 17					Child 18					Child 19									
Child 20					Child 21					Child 22									
Child 23					Child 24					Child 25									
Child 26					Child 27					Child 28									

1	Rhinoceros escaped, remaining partially hidden (5: [1, 4])	46	Where Christian seized control? (6: [1, 2])
2	Blur, live on variety show (10: [1, 10])	47	Give a little wave (6: [1, 2])
3	Vehicle with a computer in the back (7: [1, 7])	48	Son likes playing (when keeping dry) (8: [1])
4	When might you get dressed to the nines? (5, 6: [1])	49	After shuffling, cut spades (5, 4: [1, 7])
5	Rub substandard arch down completely (7, 3, 8: [1, 3, 17])	50	Grandma uses old mangle (7, 7: [1, 8, 12])
6	On which you'll find a dancing bear ... (9: [2, 4])	51	Cabaret club (6: [1])
7	Not quite at liberty to turn peculiar (6: [1])	52	The Toffees need vast sums of money (7, 5: [1, 2, 9, 10])
8	Get hit playing this in Vegas? (5, 4: [1, 7])	53	Constant murmur is annoying (7: [1])
9	Witches' hubbub, where hats are removed and heads splashed with cold water (5, 5: [3, 8, 10])	54	At first, perhaps exam results channelled young people into grammar schools? (5, 4: [2, 3])
10	Wethers pulled back by tethers (8: [1, 3])	55	Have a go at bringing a married type in first (4, 4: [1, 2])
11	Solo trill acquires accidental notation (9, 8: [1, 12])	56	Men stole herbs to make stew (7, 6: [11, 12])
12	Want to risk Fury being pummelled? (4, 6: [1])	57	Force her error – <i>faux pas</i> (at the Ambassador's party?) (7, 6: [2])
13	A vampire's lot is frightful (5, 7: [1, 2, 4, 10])	58	Sixty – more dull than possibly imagined (5, 8: [1, 2])
14	Ace of Clubs? Force out in trick (4, 5: [3, 4])	59	Absorbed in the Sicilian carol <i>O Sanctissima!</i> (5: [1, 2])
15	Like a flat white road (5, 3: [1, 2])	60	Angrily, I hurl desk into snug (7, 7: [1, 13])
16	A thoracic lesion's unlikely (unless inhaled) (9, 7: [1, 2])	61	Small dog (6: [1])
17	Spread evenly across salesroom (4: [1, 2])	62	Bilko caught short in army manoeuvres (5, 3: [1])
18	Stashed away by schoolgirl in dormitory (6: [1])	63	Mike tucks into a piece of lamb (5: [3])
19	Spirituals felt uplifting (5, 9: [1, 7, 10])	64	Lass tucks into an edible confection (7, 5: [4, 5, 12])
20	Fool missed final directions (5: [1])	65	Festival introduces a couple of unknowns (6: [1, 2, 3, 4])
21	Barristers' fees for carrying on (10: [7])	66	Hear Spooner challenge rugby players (4, 5: [5, 6])
22	Where Phoebe Throssel met Valentine Brown (7, 6: [1, 2, 11])	67	What patient butler could arrange (6, 7: [9])
23	Simple Martini, shaken or stirred (4, 9: [3, 4])	68	Shows a loss (6: [4, 5])
24	At end of game, after victory, return self-satisfied (4, 4: [2, 3])	69	Later, mess about (9: [1, 2])
25	Go brown quickly during launch of Gloden's intimate cossetting sessions (11: [1, 2])	70	Heckles Tory leader ... (5: [1])
26	Bad spelling? (5, 5: [1, 9])	71	... as cabinet roles reassigned in reshuffle (12: [2, 3])
27	Shortcut to bed when swept up by macho type (12: [4, 12])	72	Take hairband off head (8: [1, 3])
28	Damages watering hole (4, 3: [2])	73	Pith helmet worn by first cousin (5: [1])
29	Bee jabs Lily indiscriminately (5, 6: [1, 7])	74	Mata Hari – Bosche spy undercover (7: [1, 5])
30	Sounds like a horse (8: [1])	75	Dating app suggests drink, making heads turn (6, 6: [5, 6, 7])
31	Sport fake accent ordering these in't Yorkshire Dales (10, 5: [1, 5, 7])	76	Force back Frenchman into the sea near the shore (12: [2, 9])
32	(2 – 0) + 9 (4: [1, 3])	77	Plans go awry (7: [2])
33	I found cultural organisation very big (6: [1, 5])	78	I'm carried by Native American horse (5, 3: [1, 6])
34	Try concealer, or go as the model <i>au naturel</i> (6, 9, 6: [1, 8])	79	Takes passengers up and down (6, 6: [1])
35	Mr. Rusty – I'm an eccentric! (6, 5: [6])	80	Plays in a band in which Rod is involved? (10: [3])
36	Select cut sounds like a treat for teddy bears (6: [1, 5])	81	Artist invites rascals to retrospective (7: [1, 2])
37	When you spook lions there may be occasional losses (5: [1])	82	Listen, Mrs. Malaprop! (9: [2, 3])
38	Essential part of Panapoulos's Pizza Proposition (9, 6: [1, 5])	83	Evens out one element of Dualism (4: [1, 2, 3])
39	Fraudulent scheme sets up sucker (9: [1, 2])	84	Betrayer scrawls haphazard message (10, 5: [1, 10])
40	Supernova (9: [1, 2])	85	Macedonia? (5, 5: [1, 2])
41	Here's something around the middle of October (6: [2, 3])	86	Rushed to complete manuscript (7: [2, 3])
42	Teach cool dancing first, but then finish <i>Last Tango in Paris</i> (9, 7: [1, 2])	87	Han's co-pilot cut short by the arrival of The Sith (7: [1, 3, 7])
43	A second large ruby is mislaid (6, 5: [2, 3, 4])	88	Careless song on the radio (5: [1, 5])
44	Leave Bishop's hat behind (10: [2, 5])	89	What gloves and pullovers have in common? (4, 6: [1, 9])
45	Price offset in knockdown (6, 5: [1, 5])	90	Next, Tom's starring in pantomime! (5, 6, 5: [1, 4])