

# Puzzlers

Do your students like contests?  
Do your science fiction/fantasy/Meg Cabot/action adventure readers need to get  
out of their rut?  
Are you looking for ways for your students to apply their analysis and synthesis  
skills?

Then **Puzzlers** may be for your students!!

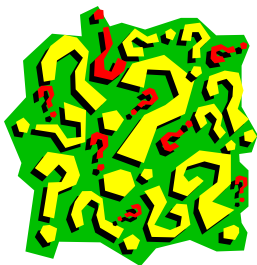
**Puzzlers** are short sets of questions about various books and authors.

**Puzzlers** are created by students using higher level thinking skills.  
Once students realize they are **not** creating test questions in which the object is  
to display knowledge, they begin to think more creatively and find connections  
between different books and authors.

**Puzzlers** can be answered by individual students or teams of students through  
personal knowledge or through research, usually on the Internet, for prizes or  
points.  
Give small weekly prizes or points and a major 9 week/semester prize depending  
on total points.

**Puzzlers** require students to be research other authors and genres in order to  
answer questions. This may be the stimulation they need to try something new.

**Help students realize that their questions will most likely be  
“Googled” in order to be answered. They should strive to give enough  
clues to be “Googled,” but still require some analysis from the  
students who are answering the questions.**



## Typical Puzzler Question Formats

- Which element (book, title, character, setting) in the group does not belong and why?
- What does each element in the group have in common?
- Matching questions—author/book, character/book, setting/book, villain/book, main character/book or setting, book titles/movie titles, authors/pseudonyms.
- Clues for books with one word titles, alliterative titles, titles that are names
- Author oddities—one hit wonder authors, Nobel prize winners, authors and their birthplaces
- Anagrams—titles, authors, characters

**Here is my handout to help guide students as they create their puzzlers. Plan on at least two (2) drafts before you get something usable.**

1. Create five (5) questions.
2. Questions must be about **mainstream** literature—no manga, anime, comics, books based on movies or TV shows, etc.
3. Obscurity is **not** the goal. Try to have at least one fairly recognizable character per question.

You may wish to choose from some of these successful ideas--

- Give quotes (First lines, last lines or lines that help identify theme or characters) • identify book
- Give a groups of characters • identify book
- Give a group of books • identify the author.
- Give a group of books • identify what's in common such as genres, settings, theme, similar characters.
- Scramble the title, author, and/or main character and give a clue • solve the anagram(s).

## **Examples of Different Puzzler Formats**

**Fill in the missing item in each of the following series**

*The Crystal Cave, The Last Enchantment, \_\_\_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_\_*  
The Hollow Hills

**Identify the book in each of the following groups of books that does NOT belong in the group and explain why it does not belong.**

*The Killer Angels, Farewell My Lovely, And Then There Were None, The Bootlegger's Daughter, The Blessing Way*

The Killer Angels—it is not a mystery

**Identify the name of the writer in each of the following groups of authors that does NOT belong in the group and explain why it does not belong.**

Roger Zelazny, Michael Shaara, JRR Tolkien, Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Frederick Pohl, Ray Bradbury, Frank Herbert

Michael Shaara—he is not a sci fi/fantasy writer

**Identify the war or military conflict(s) associated with this book.**

*A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway*      World War 1

**Identify the Shakespeare character who says the following; cite the play as well:**

“I will wear my heart upon my sleeve...” Iago in Othello

**Unscramble the following to find the title of an autobiography by an African American writer whose initials are M. A.**

HOW THICK BREAD SWINGS DYEING

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings