

Have you tried...

1 For starters

Have you tried...

- ...reading the title and the blurb?
- ...typing it into a search engine?
- ...pursuing even a train of thought that doesn't seem to give a cogent answer at first?
- ...looking at the list of helpful websites?
- ...looking at the binder of useful stuff?

2 Letters and words

Have you tried...

- ...alphabetizing?
- ...using the leftover letters to spell something?
- ...rearranging the letters (aka "anagramming" or "transposing")?
- ...looking for unusual letter frequencies?
- ...determining if it is a Rot 13/Caesar shift in general?
- ...shifting from letters to numbers?
- ...treating letters as protein sequences?
- ...treating letters as call letters?
- ...turning it into a cryptic crossword clue?
- ...seeing if these words relate to song lyrics?
- ...seeing if there are any acronyms of phrases?
- ...diagonalizing (taking the first letter of the first answer, the second letter of the second...)?
- ...looking at a computer keyboard?
- ...a pun?

3 Numbers

Have you tried...

- ...graphing it functionally?
- ...graphing it parametrically?
- ...checking to see if your numbers are in the right base (including hex)?
- ...shifting from numbers to letters?
- ...using it as a phone number?
- ...using it as an IP address?
- ...matching numbers to MIT buildings?
- ...matching numbers to MIT courses?
- ...treating numbers as dates?
- ...treating numbers as atomic weights, numbers, etc.?
- ...treating numbers as latitude/longitude or GPS coordinates?
- ...treating numbers as radio stations?
- ...treating numbers as ASCII numbers?
- ...treating numbers as PLU numbers?
- ...treating numbers as ISBN numbers?
- ...seeing if there are any strange sequences?
- ...seeing if prime numbers are involved?
- ...seeing if fundamental constants are involved?
- ...asking what other numbers are close to the one you have?

4 Thirteen ways of looking at a puzzle

Have you tried...

- ...looking at it in a mirror?
- ...squinting at it from far away?
- ...tilting it?
- ...looking at it upside down?
- ...looking through it?
- ...rewriting it neatly?
- ...rewriting it on graph paper?
- ...saying it out loud to someone else?
- ...putting yourself in the constructor's shoes?
- ...making it 3D?
- ...cutting it up?
- ...folding it?
- ...connecting the dots?

5 What is it?

Have you tried...

- ...looking at a song/poem/book/movie/TV show?
- ...Braille?
- ...Morse code?
- ...overlaying it on a map of MIT?
- ...getting on the T?
- ...checking it for pop culture references with Tanis, Jenn, Denis or James?
- ...using the Library of Congress or Dewey decimal system?
- ...asking whether it has anything to do personally with the constructing team?
- ...Palm graffiti?
- ...running it by someone who goes to MIT?

6 Zen

Have you tried...

- ...trusting your instincts?
- ...trusting someone else's instincts?
- ...asking "what's weird about this?"
- ...taking a step back?
- ...asking for fresh brains?
- ...checking your work?
- ...asking someone else to check your work?
- ...explaining your work to someone else?
- ...doing what you've already done again to the output?
- ...consulting the list of expertise?
- ...leaving the room?
- ...asking people if it looks like anything they recognize?
- ...thinking about what's missing?
- ...asking yourself whether you've used all the information?
- ...keeping even a strange-looking result?
- ...brute force?
- ...not thinking about it?
- ...splitting up tasks to solve in a group?
- ...talking to a hunt veteran?
- ...talking to a hunt newbie?
- ...asking "what's the pattern"?
- ...rereading the instructions?