

Puzzle #0: A Puzzling Easter Egg Hunt

As the opening puzzle to “EPP14: Hatching A Devious Plan,” I have hidden many, many small, plastic eggs for you to find. Each plastic egg has a colored top that is either blue, green, orange, pink, or yellow. Each bottom is also one of those five colors (not necessarily matching its upper half color). This, of course, yields twenty-five possible egg designs.

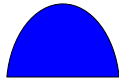
Each plastic egg is snapped shut and you should not try to open them.* Each egg holds one of the objects from the list on the next page. When you find an egg, you are to try to determine which of the objects it holds (again, *without opening the egg*). There are multiple copies of each of the twenty-five egg types out in the wild, but each egg type holds the same object (e.g., if you decide that a BLUE-TOP/GREEN-BOTTOM egg holds a “thumbtack,” then you can assume that all of the BLUE-TOP/GREEN-BOTTOM eggs hold thumbtacks).

Once you are finished with a found egg, put it back where you found it so that other teams may discover it; do not take it with you.

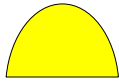
On the next page is a puzzle whose decoded message should inspire you to tell me a particular answer. If you tell me that answer, your team has finished this puzzle, and you will receive your Puzzle Booklet and Props for the rest of the day (and you will be free to head back to your team headquarters).

If you do not finish this puzzle by noon, I will give you your Booklet and Props at that time. Note that I will not be back at my house until about 12:30 pm, so no hints may be given or call-ins made before that time (you should still be able to submit puzzle answers through your team's dashboard, however).

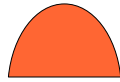
* It is possible that the plastic eggs could pop open while being handled. You are allowed to hold, examine, and even shake the eggs as you need, but you are asked to do so carefully. Here is an “Honor System Rule” every team should abide by: if your plastic egg pops open (whether from mishandling or just bad luck), immediately reconstruct the egg (putting whatever object may have popped out back in), and put the egg back where you found it. You will, of course, know what the object in that egg type is, *but do not incorporate that knowledge into your puzzle solving until you have found another egg of that exactly color-combination, and do not tell anyone else (including your own teammates) what accidentally came out of the egg.* Once you have found another egg of that type, you may immediately use the knowledge of its contents in your puzzle solving. If you are unable to replace the contents of an egg when it pops open, the throw the egg away.



Blue



Yellow



Orange



Pink



Green

 Orange	2	6	8	4	2
 Blue	4	2	5	3	4
 Green	2	2	2	7	1
 Yellow	2	3	3	6	2
 Pink	3	4	3	7	7

A list of the items hidden within the eggs:

BEADS (4), BOTTLE CAP, COFFEE GROUNDS, DICE (2), DIME, DISH SOAP, FLOUR, GUMMI BEAR, JELLY, LEGO BRICK (1×2), MARBLE, MARSHMALLOW (MINI), MATCHSTICK, NOTHING, PAPER CLIP, PEANUT BUTTER, PENNY, QUARTER, RICE, ROCK, SALT, SCRABBLE TILE, SCREWS (3), THUMB TACK, WATER.