

Hollywood Squares (Solution)

There are three stages to solving this puzzle.

Stage 1: Determining where each of the panelists is located in the grid. From the first round:

- **Heinz Doofenschmirtz** is in the center square, as explicitly stated.
- **Carmen Sandiego** is stated to be **Molly Weasley**'s downstairs neighbor. This means that Carmen is in the bottom two rows in either the left or right column, and Molly is in the square above her.
- **Xena** was chosen to block three-in-a-row with Heinz and Carmen, so Xena is directly opposite Carmen's square.
- **Ralph Wiggum** was chosen for a block, presumably with **Apollo Creed** and Heinz. We'll get back to that.
- **Ozma** is stated to be Ralph's left-hand neighbor. This means that Ozma is in the left two columns in either the top or bottom row, and Ralph is to her right.
- **Trillian** was chosen to block after Ozma was chosen.
- **Oscar the Grouch** is the remaining square.

From the second round:

- **Apollo Creed** is Trillian's left-hand neighbor. This means that Apollo is in the left two columns in either the top or bottom row, and Trillian is to his right.
- **Ralph Wiggum** was chosen to block after Apollo Creed. So Ralph and Apollo are in opposite squares.
- **Oscar the Grouch** was stated to be Ralph's right-hand neighbor. So Ralph has neighbors to the left and right, which means Ralph must be in the center column, in either the top or bottom row.
- This means Ozma is in the left-hand column and Oscar the Grouch is in the right-hand column, both in Ralph's row. Also, Apollo Creed is in the center column in the row opposite Ralph, and Trillian is to the right of Apollo.
- **Molly Weasley** was chosen to block after Oscar the Grouch. Based on the above arrangement, the potential three-in-a-row is with Oscar and Heinz, so Molly must be opposite Heinz.
- This means Ozma is in the left-hand column in either the top or bottom row. But from the first round, we know that Molly was in one of the top two rows, so Molly must be in the top-left square, with **Apollo Creed** and **Trillian** with her in the top row. This means that **Carmen Sandiego** must be in the middle-left square, and **Xena** is in the middle-right square, while **Ozma**, **Ralph Wiggum**, and **Oscar the Grouch** are in the bottom row.

That gives the following arrangement:

Molly Weasley	Apollo Creed	Trillian
Carmen Sandiego	Heinz Doofenschmirtz	Xena
Ozma	Ralph Wiggum	Oscar the Grouch

Note that the panelists' initials, in grid order, spell MATCH X OR O. This will come into play in the next stage of solving.

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Stage 2: Solvers may notice the phrase MATCH X OR O from the panelists' initials above, but this might not be necessary to get the aha for the second stage. Solvers should consider the responses given by the panelists, which are all (verifiably) correct. Each response has the same number of letters as the panelist's full name. Additionally, if Xavier has chosen that panelist, their response has a single X, and if Ophelia chose that panelist, their response has a single O (sometimes Xavier's response will also have an O or Ophelia's response will have an X, but solvers should realize that this is not consistent). The panelists and their responses are given for each round below:

X:heinzdoofenshmirtz	O:heinzdoofenshmirtz
X:pharosofalexandria	O:defenderOfthefaith
O:mollyweasley	X:trillian
O:halfmarathon	X:oXytocin
X:carmensandiego	O:apollocreed
X:proximatecause	O:ratatouille
O:xena	X:ralphwiggum
O:hugo	X:doublehelix
X:apollocreed	O:oscarthegrouch
X:exoskeleton	O:transmogrifier
O:ralphwiggum	X:mollyweasley
O:hippocampus	X:ambidextrous
X:ozma	O:carmensandiego
X:Xray	O:deadseascrolls
O:trillian	X:xena
O:bordeaux	X:taxi
X:oscarthegrouch	O:ozma
X:masondixonline	O:gold

Looking at the letters in the panelists' names corresponding to X or O in the responses, the first round letters spell SEMAPHORE and the second round letters spell FROM HEINZ. This is a clue for how to extract an answer in the third stage. Note that Heinz is never the Secret Square, so each choice for a Secret Square can be interpreted as a flag in one of the 8 positions used in semaphore. Semaphore requires two flags for each letter, and while there is more than one way to pair up Secret Squares for this stage, a reasonable interpretation is to pair up the Secret Squares for the first turn each round, the second turn, and so far. Doing this yields pairs of flags that spell the answer, **GARFUNKEL**.