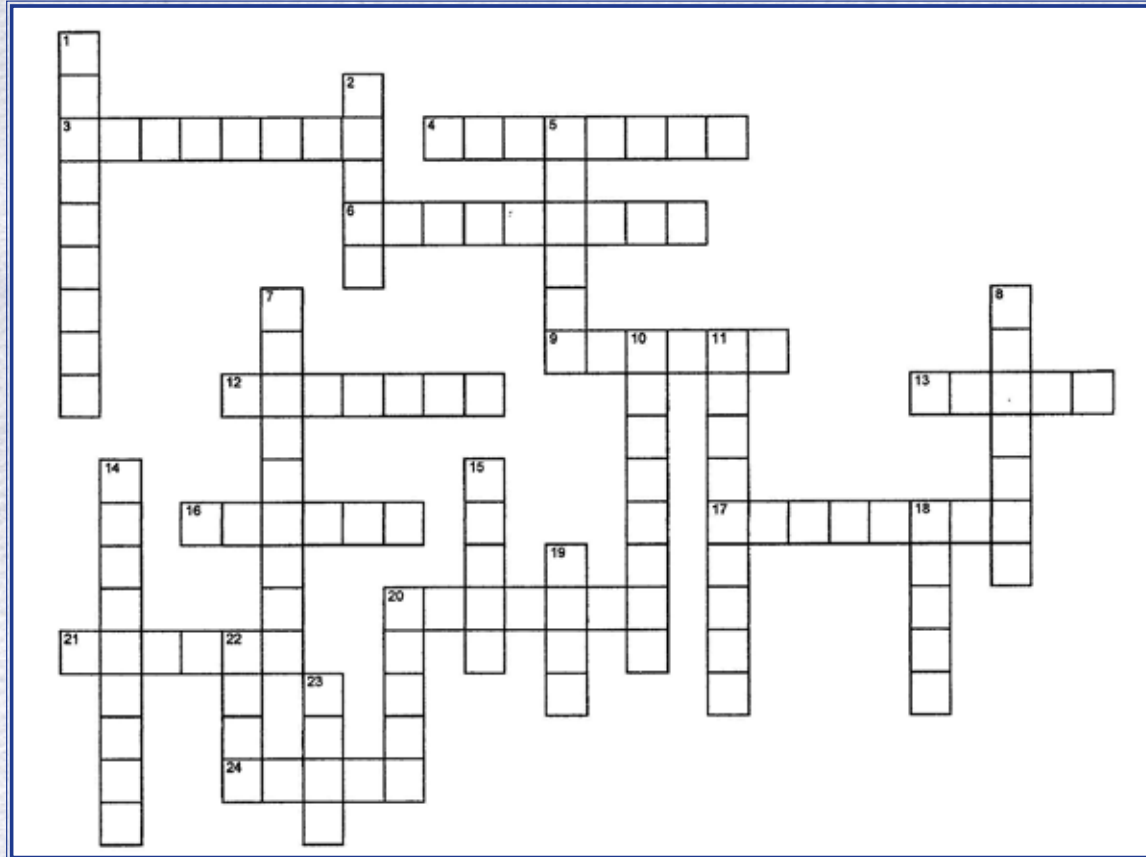


Mindful of Crosswords: The Benefits of Puzzles



Activity, Time and Materials

ACTIVITY:

Work on a crossword puzzle as an individual or within a small group. After completion of the puzzle, learn about the answers' cultural context within the folklore and folk art of the Northern Great Plains.

TIME:

Thirty to ninety minutes, but this can vary from person to person depending upon the participant's abilities, timeframe, and whether or not the participant chooses to read into the cultural context of the answers.

MATERIALS:

- Pencils or pens
- Photocopies of the crossword puzzle herein (for the visually impaired, enlarge the photocopies)
- The book *Sundogs and Sunflowers: Folklore and Folk Art of the Northern Great Plains*

**“THREE PLAGUES” (LONELINESS, BOREDOM,
HELPLESSNESS):**

For the individual, the working of the puzzle is intended to address boredom, while reading into the cultural context of the puzzle’s answers will allow for the individual to make a personal connection. The working of the puzzle in a small group is intended to address loneliness, while reading into the cultural context of the puzzle’s answers is intended to stimulate further conversation and sharing between group members. This is especially true, given that folklore often serves as common ground for people to connect.

ASSOCIATED MEDICAL STUDY:

The *Journal of Neuroscience Nursing* published an article stating that cognitive growth is supported through mental stimulation and cognitive activities. This study showed that mental stimulation that was cognitively challenging would help facilitate neural plasticity, thus increasing reserved cognitive skills and improving cognitive functioning. Neural plasticity refers to adding new nerve cells based on outside experiences and the strengthening or weakening of nerve connections. Improving neural plasticity is documented as one of the most important and effective means of treating any brain changes or damage.

*--Vance, D.E., N.M. Webb, J.C. Marceaux, S.M. Viamonte,
A.W. Foote, and K.K. Ball. “Mental Stimulation, Neural
Plasticity, and Aging: Directions for Nursing Research and
Practice.” Journal of Neuroscience Nursing 40 (August 2008):
241-249.*

Activity Plan

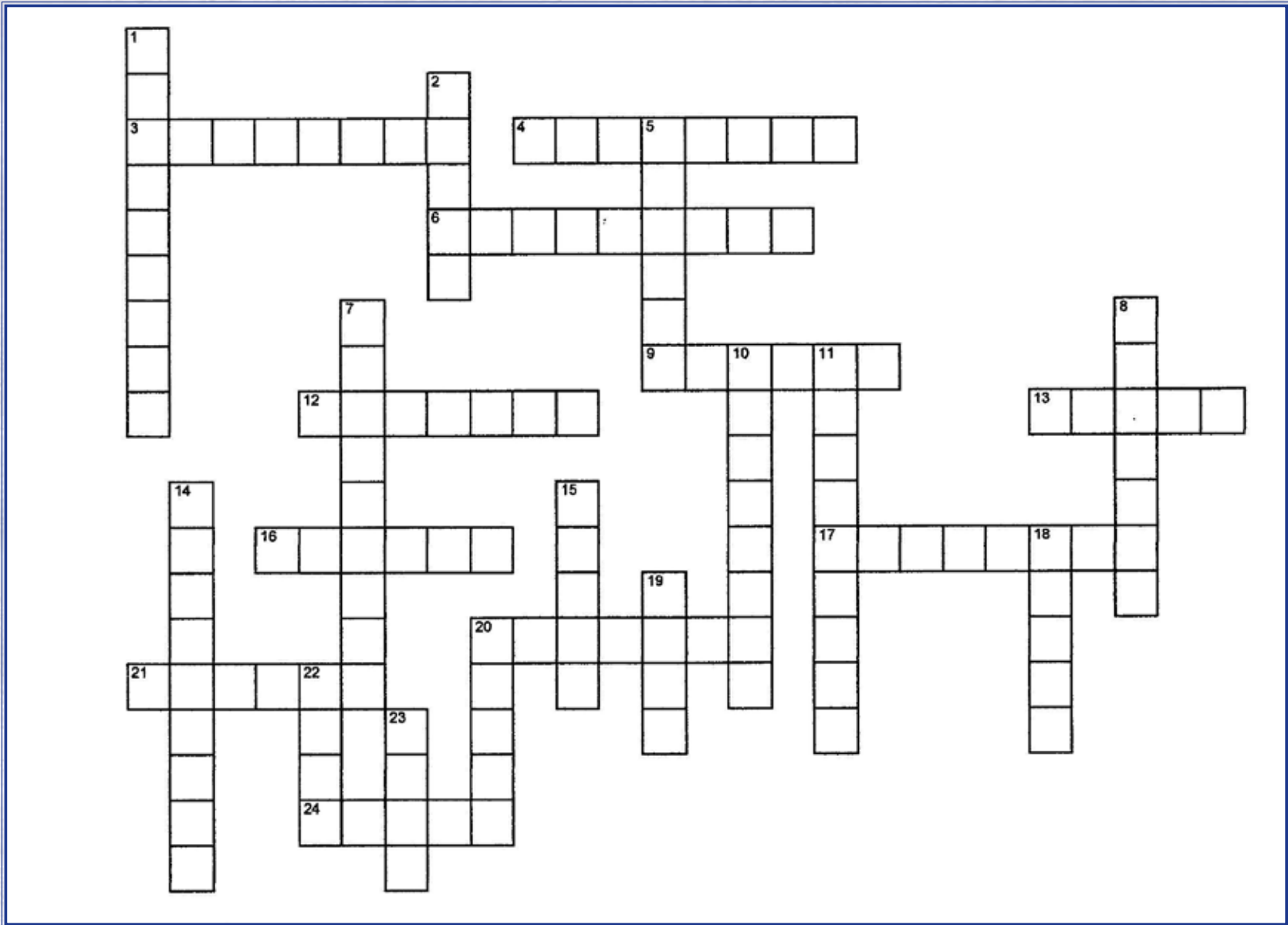
SESSION 1 (30 TO 90 MINUTES):

(Time can vary from person to person, depending upon the participant's abilities, timeframe, and whether or not the participant chooses to read into the cultural context of the answers).

1. Provide copies of the crossword puzzle and answers to those wanting to try it. Explain that further information and the cultural context of the answers in the puzzle can be found in the book *Sundogs and Sunflowers*. Encourage the use of the book, make it available, and let participants know where it can be found.

2. If the puzzle is worked by a group, have someone within the group read the cultural and folkloric information associated with each answer. Read the information while working on the puzzle or upon the puzzle's completion, especially if someone is unfamiliar with the answer.

Crossword Puzzle



(Enlarge copy for the visually impaired.)

Questions with Cultural and Folkloric Information about the Puzzle's Answers

The puzzle's questions below are followed by the page numbers in the book *Sundogs and Sunflowers: Folklore and Folk Art of the Northern Great Plains*, from which the puzzle's questions were derived. The cultural and folkloric context to the answers can be found on these pages and can serve as fun points of discussion and reminiscence.

Across:

3. raucous wedding tradition
page 134

4. circular-shaped skin infection
page 186

6. a blooming sun follower
pages 156, 278-279

9. "Oak before ash, we'll have a ____."

page 99

12. "Red sky at morning, sailor take ____."

page 103

13. a scary Norwegian supernatural being
pages 4, 158

16. German wedding delicacy
pages 281, 282

17. second longest American river
pages 22, 30

20. atmospheric sign for extreme cold
pages 94-95

21. a blood stopper
page 175

24. "Keep your words soft and ____."

page 112

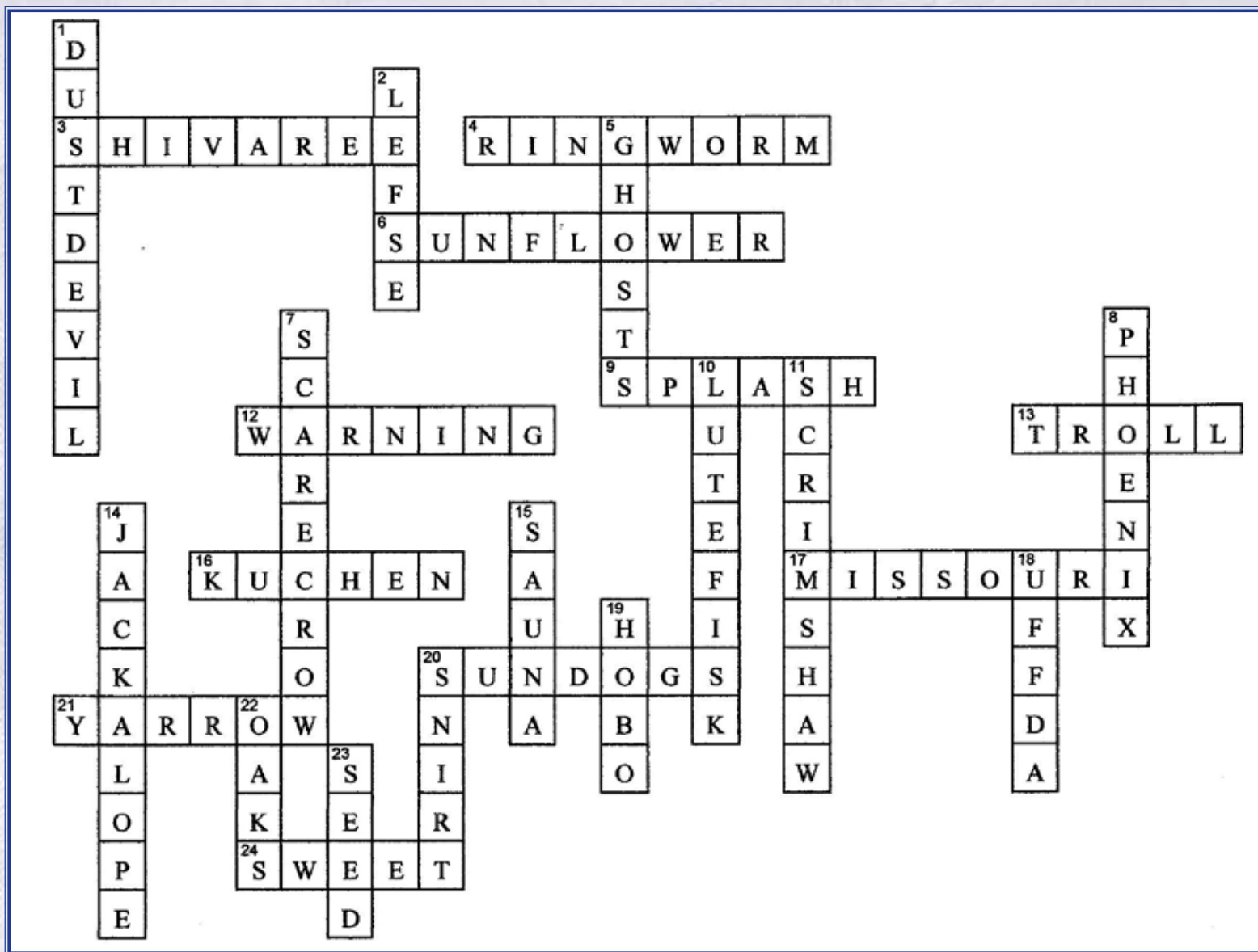
(Enlarge copy for the visually impaired.)

Down:

1. a dirty whirlwind
pages 105, 159
2. a flat Norwegian delicacy
pages 211, 284, and 291
5. Halloween's revenants
pages 2-3
7. garden guardian
page 210
8. mythical bird that rises from the ashes
page 136
10. stinky Norwegian dish
page 283
11. ivory or antler engraving
page 230-231
14. a bouncy Old West fictional animal
page 253
15. Finnish bath
page 185
18. Ole and Lena's exclamation
page 291
19. railroad hopper
page 272
20. snow and dirt
page 116
22. "Small strokes fall large ____."
page 112
23. "Farmers never die—they just go to
____."
page 116

(Enlarge copy for the visually impaired.)

Answers



(Enlarge copy for the visually impaired.)

AUTHOR • TROYD GEIST:

Troyd is the state folklorist with the North Dakota Council on the Arts who is charged with encouraging the preservation and continuation of folk and traditional arts, heritage, and culture. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Sociology/Anthropology from North Dakota State University, and has participated in and conducted projects involving the impact of folk art and folk traditions on personal health and well-being. Those efforts include traditional storytellers working with fetal alcohol research and prevention programs, Bell's palsy as viewed and treated in traditional cultures, familial Alzheimer's disease tracking using anthropological methods, and the use of culturally infused narrative and traditional music for guided imagery. He directed the original *Art for Life* pilot project in 2001-2003, which measured the effects of long-term folk arts and artist interaction on combating the negative impact of the "Three Plagues" (loneliness, boredom, and helplessness) that many residents in elder care facilities experience. Subsequently, he developed the *Art for Life Program*. With Dr. Timothy J. Kloberdanz, Troyd co-edited, co-compiled, and co-authored the book *Sundogs and Sunflowers: Folklore and Folk Art of the Northern Great Plains*.

(Crossword puzzle created by Troyd Geist, North Dakota Council on the Arts.)

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