

## Meet the Relatives (solution)

by Celestine Lau

First, solve the word clues. These are in alphabetical order and should be relatively easy to determine on their own.

	Nocturnal mammals (4)	BATS
	Sadder (5)	BLUER
	Move in the slightest (5)	BUDGE
	Medium-grain rice that's good for sushi (7)	CALROSE
	Kids (8)	CHILDREN
	Prevailing weather (7)	CLIMATE
	Grant or discuss (6)	CONFER
	Stitch, or an exclamation of frustration (4)	DARN
	Baby garment (6)	DIAPER
	Imitate (7)	EMULATE
	Travel or inquire (7)	EXPLORE
	Obviously offensive (8)	FLAGRANT
	Buoyant object (5)	FLOAT
	Opening, briefly (5)	INTRO
	Door handle (4)	KNOB
	Biblical outcast (5)	LEPER
	Pinocchio, for one (4)	LIAR
	Danger (6)	MENACE
	Relating to the present (6)	MODERN
	Model of the Solar System (6)	ORRERY
	Egyptian god of the dead (6)	OSIRIS
	One using glue (6)	PASTER
	Assume a posture (4)	POSE
	Citation (5)	QUOTE
	Putrefy (3)	ROT

👤	Shortage (8)	SCARCITY
👤	Famous person (4)	STAR
👤	Imposing levies (6)	TAXING
👤	Buy or sell (5)	TRADE
👤	Troublesome wild animal, informally (7)	VARMINT
👤	One's happiness and fortunes (7)	WELFARE
👤	Entirely (6)	WHOLLY
👤	Fall from a surfboard (7)	WIPEOUT
👤	Tolkien, for one (6)	WRITER

Consider the feeder answers together with the given diagram. The diagram depicts a family tree with 8 “families” of people at the top of the tree and various groups of people below that “inherit” from one or more of the 8 families. The task is thus to assign the 34 people (corresponding to the answers to the 34 word clues above) to their correct groups in the family tree.

Each of the 8 feeder answers can be used to describe a person – but they can also be used to describe a word in an oblique way. For example, a “two-faced” word could be one that is a word when read both forward and backwards. Each of the 8 “properties” corresponds to one of the 8 families at the top of the tree, and is “inherited” downwards by all the people in groups connected to the family. It may be useful at this time to count the number of people who should exhibit each of the 8 properties (we do not know the assignments of properties to families yet, so let’s just number the properties 1 to 8 from left to right).

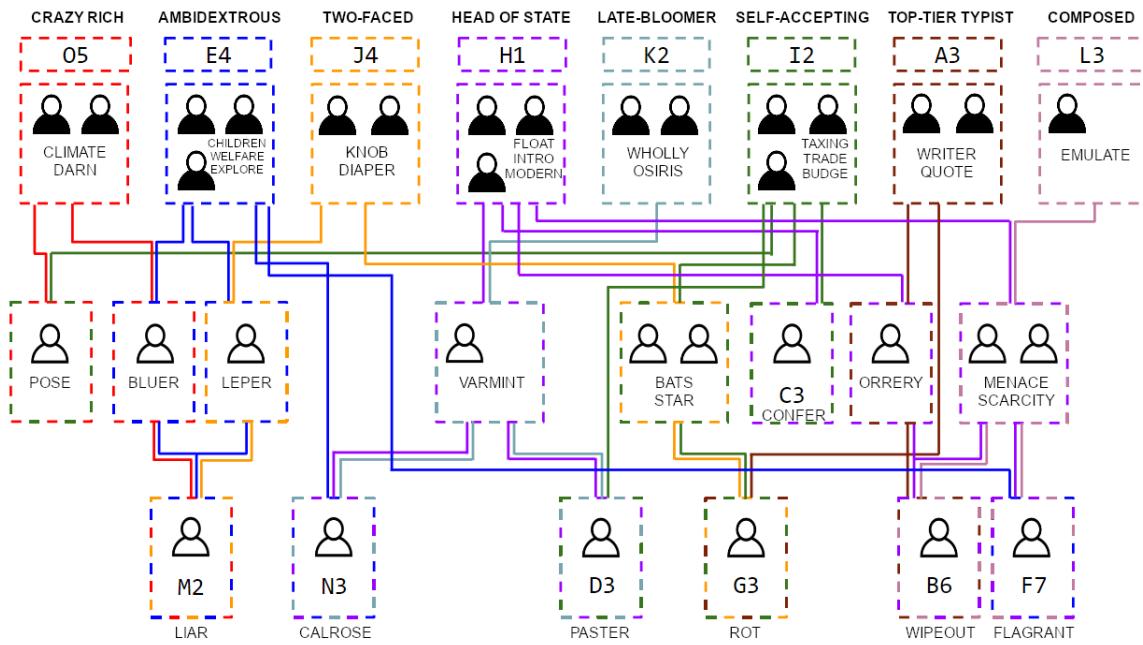
- Property 1: 5 people, of which two have one other property (#2, #6), and one has two other properties (#2 and #3)
- Property 2: 8 people, of which two have one other property (#1, #3) and three have two other properties (#1 and #3, #4 and #5, #4 and #8)
- Property 3: 7 people, of which three have one other property (#2, 2 x #6), and two have two other properties (#1 and #2, #6 and #7)
- Property 4: 12 people, of which five have one other property (#5, #6, #7, 2 x #8) and four have two other properties (#2 and #5, #2 and #8, #5 and #6, #7 and #8)
- Property 5: 5 people, of which one has one other property (#4) and two have two other properties (#2 and #4, #4 and #6)
- Property 6: 9 people, of which four have one other property (#1, 2 x #3, #4) and two have two other properties (#3 and #7, #4 and #5)
- Property 7: 5 people, of which one has one other property (#4) and two have two other properties (#3 and #6, #4 and #8)
- Property 8: 5 people, of which 2 have one other property (2 x #4) and two have two other properties (#2 and #4, #4 and #7)

It helps to consider how many words could match each property when trying to deduce what wordplay rule fits each feeder answer. For example, 7 of the 34 words can be read both forward and backward, making it very likely that the property of “being able to be read both forward and backwards” is described by TWO-FACED. The different colored icons beside each word also help with the matching, as the black shirted icons match only one property, while the white shirted icons match more than one property.

In order, the properties are:

- #1: CRAZY RICH: Crazy indicates anagramming, and Rich indicates something associated with money – the word can be anagrammed to form the name of a currency.
- #2: AMBIDEXTROUS: This indicates the ability to use both the left and right hands – the word contains both “L” and “R” exactly once and the “L” is on the left of the “R”. To make this clearer, no other word contains both “L” and “R” in the wrong order, or both “L” and “R” where there could be multiple “L”s or “R”s.
- #3: TWO-FACED: Two-faced can indicate that the word “faces both ways” – it is also a valid word when read backwards.
- #4: HEAD OF STATE: Head indicates the start of the word – the word begins with a 2-letter US state abbreviation. (The fact that it is a US state, and not a state of some other country is unclued. However, US state abbreviations are a pretty common set, and there are the most examples of this, covering various state abbreviations, to hopefully make this clear.
- #5: LATE-BLOOMER: Late indicates the end of the word, and Bloomer indicates a flowering plant – the word ends with the name of such a plant.
- #6: SELF-ACCEPTING: Accepting indicates the ability to “accept” an extra letter, and Self clues the letter “I” – It is possible to add an “I” to the word to form a valid word.
- #7: TOP TIER TYPIST: Tier also means “row”, and Typist clues a keyboard – the word consists only of letters found on the top row of a QWERTY keyboard.
- #8: COMPOSED: The word is composed of two valid words. The smaller words also contain three letters or more to make it clearer – there are no other words that are composed of valid words where one could be less than three letters.

The full solution is shown below:



The 8 feeder answers and 7 of the people have extraction indices (e.g. E4) marked. Since the letters run from A to O, they should be used as an ordering, and the number used as an index into the feeder answer / clue answer respectively. This gives the final answer **PUNS IN THE FAMILY**, something that this family would certainly appreciate.

#### Constructor's Notes:

This puzzle was in a way constructed around the pun. I felt that a family themed puzzle was suitable for the storyline of the first meta, and came up with the pun, which worked very well with a puzzle based on “hereditary” traits and inheritance (double meaning intended).

Coming up with sufficient wordplay indicators with enough overlap was a challenge though, I had to reject some ideas because either they couldn’t be clued well enough with a feeder answer, or words satisfying them are rare and have insufficient overlap (I wanted a fair mix in the 3-properties category between the 8 properties). It was also somewhat important that the phrases could be used to describe people. Some of the ideas I rejected include HEART OF GOLD (contains AU in the middle), ANIMAL LOVER (contains an animal), and BESPECTACLED (contains 4 ls). I’d be happy to hear if you have any other fun wordplay ideas!