



## Chem at Work



### Scott Kim

**Puzzle Designer, San Francisco, CA**

“A real puzzle master is rare,” says Scott Kim. “There aren’t many of us in the world.” Scott is a full-time puzzle master, living in San Francisco, California. He creates all kinds of brainteasers. Scott has designed three-dimensional puzzles based on the art of M.C. Escher. He has also designed puzzles for computer and video games, like the web game “Bejeweled.” He even writes a monthly column on puzzles for *Discover Magazine*.

Scott designs each puzzle to test a specific set of knowledge. Does that sound familiar to you? That’s because the *Chapter Challenge for Fun with the Periodic Table* is to create a game to do just that. Fun is also a goal in Scott’s puzzles, just as it is for your game. According to Scott, the biggest mistake that new puzzle masters make is to be too complicated. “Keep it fun and use simple concepts. The concept should be easy for you to explain in the directions.” Also, it is helpful for the instructions to include examples. Did you do that in your game?

Scott teaches others how to be puzzle masters. He advises new masters to design a puzzle around a subject. “Think about what’s important to understand about your puzzle. If you’re trying to make a puzzle out of the periodic table for example, it might be useful that all the elements have letter symbols. Acronyms are a good tool for letter puzzles.”

The testing phase is a crucial trial for a new puzzle. “The single most important aspect of puzzle design is to test your product. Give the puzzle to your friend and *restrain yourself*. Don’t give them hints. Let them struggle. Everything you need to know is in that process. Then revise your puzzle and test it again.”



### Tom Lensch

**Woodworker, Dayton, OH**

Tom Lensch has been carving wood since he was a little boy. His specialty is making puzzles. He has made over 75 different puzzle designs come to life.

Puzzle masters from around the world design the puzzles. Tom shares his work with students for free because he feels that the challenges puzzles present are important to education.

### Thuyanh (Ann) Nguyen

**Senior Clinical Safety Specialist, Durham, NC**

Thuyanh Nguyen works at Quintiles Transnational Corp. Before a new drug is sold to the public, it must undergo years of tests.

She makes sure that when patients take a new drug in a clinical trial, all adverse effects are recorded. Her puzzle is to solve what combination of chemicals caused the bad reaction.

