

Flower Cards Solution

Answer: **NISHIYAMATO**

This puzzle presents an image of cards, each of which has a flower on it.

A reverse image search or a Google search reveals that these cards are Japanese flower cards. Each card has an associated flower/month, and a point value between 1 and 20. The solver may notice several patterns in the cards as given:

- The first three rows all consist of January cards. The next three rows all consist of February cards, and so on.
- Within a month, the cards are ordered from highest value to lowest value.
- If a month has two cards of the same value, then at most one of those cards appear.

See page 3 for a transcription of the card locations, and their corresponding scores.

The total score of each month is always a multiple of 30; furthermore, every multiple of 30 from 30 to 330 is used exactly once. July is the exception to this rule, as its total is 28. July is also the only month which only uses a single card; this along with several other differences suggest that July should be treated differently from the other months.

Reading each month as Braille yields an English word, with a letter from A-G at the start. Again, July is the exception to this rule; in addition to starting one letter later than the other months, several patterns are used which do not correspond to English letters. July is instead written in Japanese Braille (as hinted in the flavortext).

Translating the Japanese yields the English “Month Old Name”. In Japanese, every month has an old/traditional name; these can be found on Wikipedia, and through a Google search.

Googling the Braille word with the corresponding old month name reveals that these refer to people or characters who happen to share their name with the traditional month name. Indexing into the last names by the initial letters (A = first letter, B = second letter, etc.) and sorting by score yields the answer **NISHIYAMATO**, a Japanese school.

MONTH	INDEX	SCORE	BRAILLE TRANSLATION	OLD MONTH NAME	LAST NAME	LETTER
MAY	5	30	ACTRESS	Satsuki	Yukino	N
DEC	4	60	CRAYON	Shiwasu	Mari	I
JUN	1	90	MANGAKA	Minazuki	Suu	S
FEB	1	120	SLAYER	Kisaragi	Hayato	H
SEP	6	150	ZERO	Nagatsuki	Tappei	I
NOV	2	180	SAMURAI	Shimotsuki	Ryuma	Y
APR	5	210	GRANBLUE	Uzuki	Shimamura	A
OCT	1	240	FREEZING	Kannazuki	Miyabi	M
AUG	2	270	LOTUS	Hazuki	Kashiwabara	A
JAN	4	300	KICKBOXER	Mutsuki	Ebata	T
MAR	7	330	SWIMMER	Yayoi	Matsumoto	O
JUL			つきふるいなまえ	Fumizuki		

Author's Notes: Hanafuda is a card game that my family plays a lot (The cards in the image are pictures of an actual deck of Nintendo brand Hanafuda cards which my family uses), so I've wanted to write a puzzle based off flower cards for a while. When I heard about this puzzle scholarship, I decided to make such a puzzle. I started off wanting a puzzle that relied heavily on Japanese and Japanese culture, while still accessible for English speakers. Hanafuda would work nicely for that; not many non-Japanese people know of it, but it has several accessible features for English speakers. The connection to traditional month names also fit well; I happened to know that Yayoi was a fairly common last name, and I was hopeful that the other months would also have nice names. Once I had that, it felt reasonable to use Braille as a nice starting point to encode the words, and total score to define an order, with one month used to clue month names. Unfortunately, Google Translate was rather uncooperative with this; the wording used in July is grammatically incorrect, because the grammatically correct form of this and several other cluephrases ends up being mistranslated (a few mistranslations use "moon" instead of "month", since the two are synonymous in Japanese, but most are completely off. The grammatically correct version of this ends up translated as "sifted name" for some reason). The rest of the puzzle fell in to place nicely, and I was quite happy to see that my old Japanese school worked as a thematically appropriate answer.

I struggled to decide how much flavortext to provide. The two hardest steps of the puzzle were reading July in Japanese Braille, and figuring out that each month was a name. Testsolving groups found both without flavortext, but just in case, I added flavor for the use of Japanese Braille. Another idea would have been to have flavortext along the lines of "Theresa May meets eleven of her Japanese counterparts", which would clue the use of months as names.

