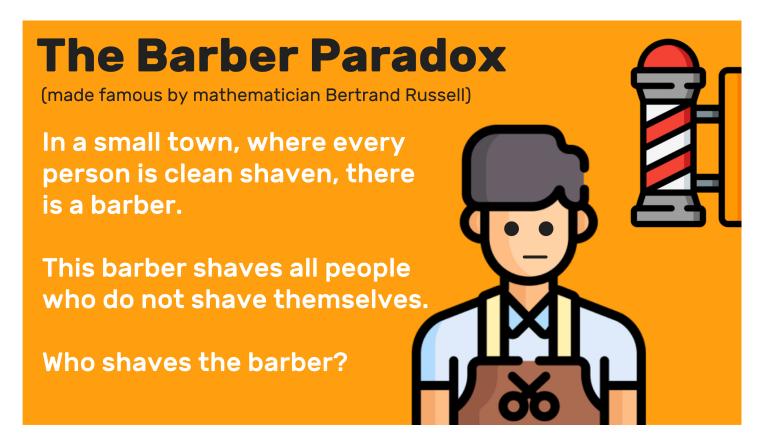Name: _____

The Barber Paradox is a famous math brainteaser created by British mathematician Bertrand Russell in the early 1900s. Can you find an answer that makes sense?

The Barber Paradox

(made famous by mathematician Bertrand Russell)

In a small town, where every person is clean shaven, there is a barber.

This barber shaves all people who do not shave themselves.

Who shaves the barber?

My Answer:

This brain teaser is considered a paradox for a reason!

Answering this question results in a contradiction. The barber cannot shave himself as he only shaves those who do not shave themselves. Thus, if he shaves himself he ceases to be the barber. Conversely, if the barber does not shave himself, then he fits into the group of people who would be shaved by the barber, and thus, as the barber, he must shave himself.

A barber is one who shaves those who do not shave themselves. So, can a barber shave himself?

- If he <u>does</u>, he cannot be a barber, since a barber does not shave himself.
- If he <u>doesn't</u>, he falls in the category of those who do not shave themselves, and so, cannot be a barber.