



There were 5 clear theme entries: OKBLUEJAYS, POLARBEARS, MALEDOMINATED, HOLYGRAILS, and PINNUMBERS. The first word of each of these theme entries is one letter away from a tree: O(A)K, PO(P)LAR, MA(P)LE, HOL(L)Y, and PIN(E). Each of the missing letters spells out **APPLE**, which is a type of tree, and therefore out meta answers.