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Introduction To Sudoku

By Steve Hall

Have you ever played with a Rubik's Cube? You may have mastered the Rubik's cube and are looking for a greater challenge. Try the puzzle game called Sudoku. Sudoku is a number placement puzzle that requires logic skills and patience. It is a fantastic puzzle game that can be found in newspapers, books and on puzzles and games websites.

How do you play Sudoku

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a series of grids. The grids include one large 9 x 9 grid that houses, nine 3 x 3 smaller grids. The purpose of the game is to place a number from 1-9 in each of the grid cells. You don't have to worry about finding the sum of the numbers of the rows, columns, like in Magic Squares.

No addition is involved; however there are three conditions that rely on each other and must be followed. Each number 1-9 can appear only once in each column, once in each row, and once in each small 3 x 3 grid. Mathematically, Sudoku puzzles are a derivation of Latin Squares.

The famous mathematician Leonard Euler created Latin Squares. They are a prevalent part of discrete math. Basically, a Latin Square consists of an n x n table filled with numbers, letters, or symbols. Each symbol can only appear exactly once in each row and exactly once in each column. Sudoku puzzles take the Latin Square one step further with the 3 x 3 smaller grid constraints. The fact that you have to make sure that each small 3 x 3 grid contains each number 1-9 only once significantly increases the complexity of the puzzle.

Sudoku puzzles come in varying levels of difficulty. The amount of numbers given initially in the 9 x 9 matrix varies. One would think that the more numbers you are given initially, the easier the puzzle would be to solve. This is not always the case because the "placement" of the numbers has a profound effect on the complexity of the puzzle.

Where did Sudoku puzzles originate?

Sudoku is the Japanese word for "placement puzzle". Sudoku swept Japan in the mid-1980's. Before that, however, a puzzle constructor in the United States named Howard Garnes created the first puzzle of this type in 1979. It was called "Number Place" instead of Sudoku. It was published in the Dell Magazine Math Puzzles and Logic Problems.

How do you solve a Sudoku puzzle?

Good question! The key is to have patience and use your logic skills. Don't just use a trial and error method. Many players construct their own puzzle solving techniques and methods, which they share in Sudoku player online forums.

You can start anywhere in the puzzle, but as a beginner start by focusing on the top three smaller 3 x 3 grids. Look at the initial numbers and start with the number "1". Check to see if a "1" appears in the other two smaller 3 x 3 grids. Then find cells in these smaller grids where you can possibly place a "1"

while still adhering to the rules. You will also need to take into consideration 3 x 3 grids that are attached to the given grid. It is like dancing on eggshells, but the key is to look for patterns. Logically, you need to prove why a number should go in a certain cell.

Sudoku is a clever puzzle game that will sometimes make you feel like you are going around in circles. However, practicing on different puzzles will help you to understand certain techniques that work and those that lead you to a dead end. The beauty of the game is that there are a great number of Sudoku puzzles to solve. Time yourself. Many puzzle solvers can finish a puzzle in 10 to 30 minutes. Get out your stopwatch and see how fast you can solve a Sudoku puzzle.

Steve is a member of the GrandMatrix team. They provide a broad range of games and puzzle articles and reviews. Read more articles, download and play the latest PC games for free plus enjoy thousands of user submitted puzzles, quizzes and word games at:

<http://www.grandmatrix.com>

Sudoku - Mind Games At Their Best?

By Gabriel Adams

Sudoku is a logic based puzzle, somewhat similar to a crossword puzzle, except it uses digits instead of words. The name Sudoku is an abbreviation of a Japanese phrase which means "the digits must remain single". It is also sometimes called Number Place or Nampure.

The history of Sudoku

You can find predecessors of Sudoku as early as 1895, when an early version or variant of Sudoku appeared in a French newspaper.

Introduction To Sudoku

The game now known as Sudoku was not invented until 1979, however, and was actually invented in Indianapolis, not Japan. Sudoku became widely popular in 1986, when the Japanese puzzle publisher Nikoli found and published the puzzle.

The game of Sudoku

Sudoku is based on a graph of squares, nine squares by nine squares. This graph is sub-divided into 9 3x3 squares or regions. The board looks much like 9 tic tac toe games all together.

The game is played by placing digits (1–9) in the squares on the game. Easy enough. The tough part is that each region (3x3 square, each diagonal row, each horizontal row, and each vertical row of squares must contain one of each of the nine digits, but may not have duplicates.

Each Sudoku game has some of the fields pre populated with numerals, called givens or clues. The difficulty is not necessarily related to how many fields are populated, though.

Difficulty

Sudoku is a very simple game in it's construction, but it can require some serious brain effort and skill to solve. Publishers often rank games according to difficulty, using 4–5 levels to organize games by their difficulty.

Accessibility

Sudoku puzzles are published in many newspapers and magazines around the world. They are also available in print form, and as computer games. Probably the easiest way to get them, though, is from a website that features free Sudoku puzzles. Many websites can also generate custom puzzles for free.

Visit

<http://www.sudoku-puzzles.net>

for free sudoku games and more.



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