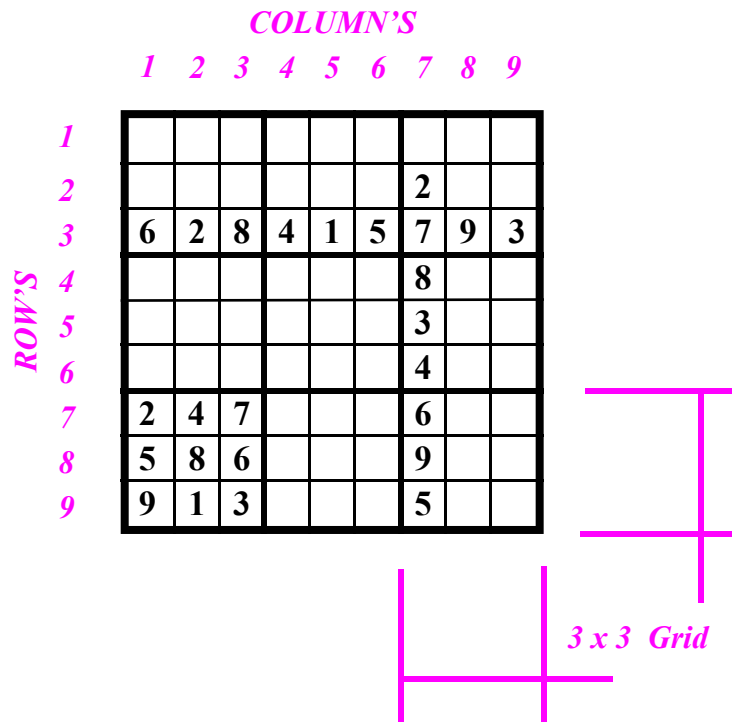


How to Solve a Sudoku Puzzle

One thing you don't have to be is a mathematician to solve a Sudoku puzzle, only simple logic is needed, although tough one's do cause food for thought. However, all Sudoku puzzles presented in our competitions will not require hours of frustration.

Firstly, the grid is made up 9 x 9 squares making 81 in all which are split into 3 x 3 grids. Each grid, will finish up with digits 1 to 9 and as shown, each column and row will also end up with digits 1 to 9.



The purpose is in determining where each number goes and to start you off, every puzzle has squares already filled in as shown here. Here you can see 4's highlighted. Looking at the right hand grids shows that columns 7 and 8 already have 4's in them which leaves the middle block of column 9 with 2 possible squares. This is easily solved by looking at the 4 in row 4, this closes that row so the only place a 4 can go in the middle grid is in row 5 column 9. (Shown in Yellow)

	5	8	2				7	
1			7	4		2		
					9	4	1	5
2		4		5			6	
	3		1		7		9	4
	9			6		3		1
6	4	1	5					
		3		1	4			7
	8				6	1	4	

As the middle section left and right 3 x 3 grids have 4's in them we can look at the very centre grid. Rows 4 and 5 have 4's in them as do columns 5 and 6 (red lines eliminate these), thus only allowing row 6 column 4 to have a 4 in it.

	5	8	2				7	
1			7	4		2		
					9	4	1	5
2		4		5			6	
	3		1		7		9	4
	9		4	6		3		1
6	4	1	5					
		3		1	4			7
	8				6	1	4	

With that square filled, there is only one square left as shown below and once that is filled in, that complete's all the 4's. However, it is not always that easy to fit the numbers in and often you have to work through from 1 to 9, gradually filling in each row, column and grid until the puzzle is complete.

4	5	8	2				7	
1			7	4		2		
					9	4	1	5
2		4		5			6	
	3		1		7		9	4
	9		4	6		3		1
6	4	1	5					
		3		1	4			7
	8				6	1	4	

Remember, if you see 2 of the same digits in a row or in a column or in a 3 x 3 grid, then you have made a mistake. So rather than try and back-track, it is best to start over, rubbing out what you have done an starting again with a clean sheet.

When solving our competition puzzles, may we suggest you print off a copy of the page, solve the puzzle using a pencil and then enter your results.

Don't forget to fill in ALL details as required before sending the your solution to us.

Best of luck