

**Sudoku** Difficult No 14,949

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

**Fiendish** No 14,950

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

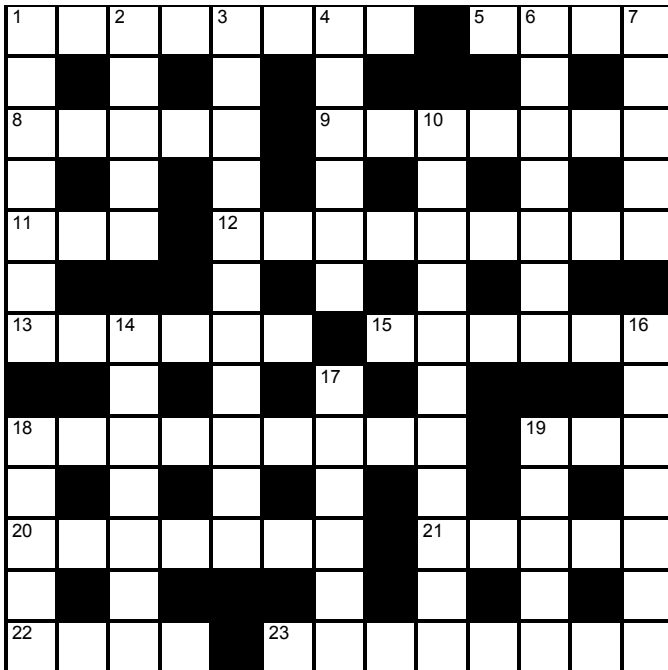
**Super fiendish** No 14,951

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

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**Cluelines** Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

The Times Quick Cryptic No 2688 by Trelawney



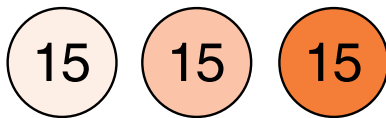
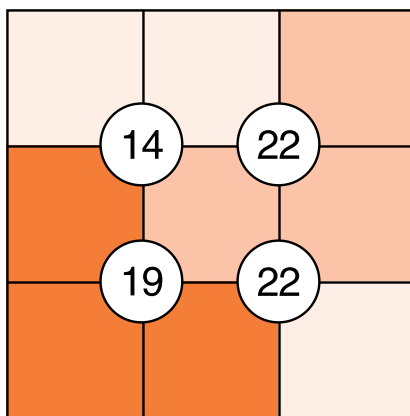
Across

- 1 Ancient period's character captured by wise person (5,3)
- 5 Revolutionary secretly listens to argument (4)
- 8 Underwear extremely visible? Bold! (5)
- 9 Mock fool carrying amplifier (7)
- 11 Chill pitcher regularly (3)
- 12 Spider is natural at scuttling (9)
- 13 Companion's corset adjusted (6)
- 15 A herb finally mailed out (6)
- 18 Somehow win orange from Scandinavia (9)
- 19 Vehicle found in Nicaragua (3)
- 20 Worst and best part of a motor race? (3,4)
- 21 Silly cousin an embarrassment, partially (5)
- 22 Boy eats last of leftover fat (4)
- 23 Piece from tabloid chaps inserted into broadsheet (8)

Down

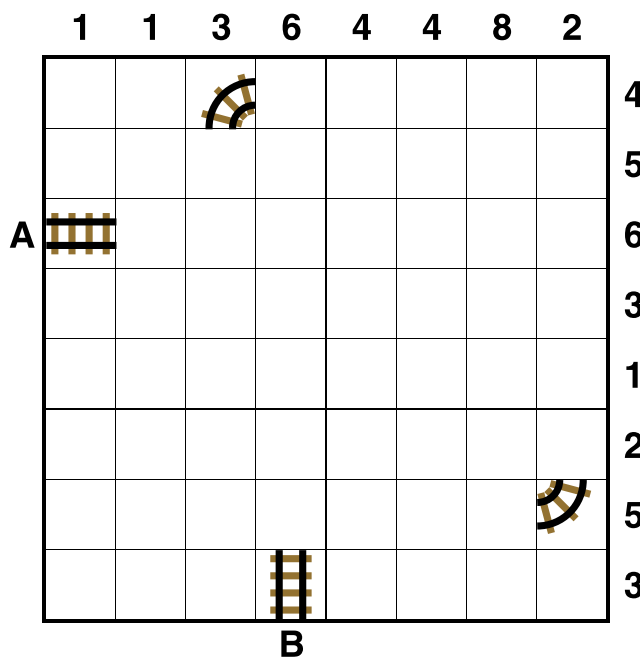
- 1 Wonderful fruit at the bottom of U-boat (7)
- 2 Give a speech, primarily on robbery and tax evasion (5)
- 3 See Croat jet crashing? This could be used! (7,4)
- 4 New lager includes oxygen in abundance (6)
- 6 Get hold of professional remedy (7)
- 7 Country not upset over general assembly at first (5)
- 10 Astounding request to a tall person at a concert? (4-7)
- 14 Clergyman, mostly, or museum director (7)
- 16 Arranged rent and MOT? Agony! (7)
- 17 Captain discards small fish (6)
- 18 Writer heads north over a large country (5)
- 19 Machine used for lifting bird (5)

Suko No 4128



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Train Tracks No 2256



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Word watch

David Parfitt

Stercoration

- a The act of manuring the ground
- b The art of voice projection
- c A protective plate for the chest and ribs

Remontant

- a Flowering more than once a season
- b Either party involved in a quarrel
- c A person requesting forgiveness

Rackarock

- a A hybrid form of popular music
- b A great battle in Norse mythology
- c A type of explosive

**Poker** Byron Jacobs

**The downswing**

The beauty (and horror) of poker is that it can mess with your head like nothing else. There is hardly any other activity where excellent performance can lead to relentless and apparently unending loss. Being stuck in a rut where you can do nothing to counteract the appalling misfortune you are experiencing can be soul destroying. Welcome to the downswing.

Every reasonably experienced poker player has been through the dreaded downswing. This is when, for a prolonged period of time, you simply cannot get your fair share of luck – or even any luck at all. Not for a hand or two, not for an hour or two and not for a day or two, it can last weeks, months, even years. Downswings happen to everybody and, unless you are extraordinarily mentally resilient, they are torture.

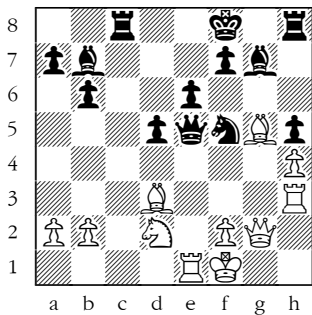
One evening you get A-A on four occasions and lose four big pots because, every time, some idiot hits an absurdly lucky river card. The next evening you play numerous online tournaments. On nine occasions you get the money all-in as a 55-45 favourite and lose every single one. Then you don't get a playable hand for three hours. Despite recent misfortunes, you play good, disciplined poker and await some decent cards. You then get a run of good hands and, of course, lose the lot. You think that sounds bad? We've only just started. Next week is even worse.

What can you do when you are stuck in this horror show? Well, first of all it won't help to complain. No matter how unfortunate your tale of woe there will be someone else who, in Four Yorkshiremen style, can trump it. So, take a deep breath and understand that you are not being singled out for special treatment. This happens to *everybody*. No one is immune. No one enjoys it but the stronger players handle it better.

Next – and this is hard – trust your game. One of the difficulties maintaining equilibrium as a poker player is that the feedback loop is awful. Excellent play often leads to horrible losses and awful play can be rewarded with big wins. Maintaining confidence in your play when results are disastrous is extremely difficult. Stuck in a downswing, it is easy to believe your game isn't working and this leads players in one of two unhelpful directions. They may become far too aggressive because their usually solid style seems to be failing. Alternatively they become too passive because it feels as though every time they played aggressively (and correctly) they suffered a horrible reverse.

Without falling prey to mindless positive thinking, it is also possible to try to extract useful information from a downswing. It could simply be horrible luck but it is sensible to be open to the possibility that there are situations where you are misplaying your hands. So study hard.

**Winning Move**



**Black to play.** This position is from Bournel-Postny, Titled Tuesday, chess.com 2024.

This is a strangely messy position where both kings have been displaced. The black queen is threatened and a natural (and not bad) move for Black is 1... Qxb2. However, after 2 Bxf5 exf5 the black pawn structure is weakened and White has decent chances. Black found something much better. Can you see it?

**Codeword** No 5227

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 25 | 5  | 22 | 21 | 21 | 6  | 18 |    | 10 | 18 | 19 | 2  | 26 |
| 16 |    | 9  |    | 18 |    | 4  |    | 22 |    | 18 |    | 14 |
| 7  | 18 | 19 | 16 | 19 |    | 9  | 16 | 23 | 16 | 15 | 2  | 18 |
| 22 |    | 2  |    | 22 |    | 18 |    | 7  |    | 2  |    | 23 |
| 4  | 18 | 18 | 21 | 6  | 18 | 26 | 26 |    | 12 | 18 | 10 | 7  |
| 13 |    |    |    | 22 |    | 3  |    | 17 |    | 26 |    |    |
| 26 | 16 | 11 | 18 | 25 | 1  |    | 13 | 10 | 17 | 25 | 25 | 17 |
|    |    | 10 |    | 1  |    | 9  |    | 25 |    |    |    | 24 |
| 6  | 18 | 18 | 7  |    | 19 | 17 | 4  | 3  | 17 | 9  | 22 | 18 |
| 22 |    | 18 |    | 17 |    | 26 |    | 17 |    | 16 |    | 10 |
| 13 | 16 | 20 | 16 | 4  | 22 | 16 |    | 21 | 17 | 9  | 18 | 21 |
| 3  |    | 18 |    | 2  |    | 22 |    | 17 |    | 19 |    | 2  |
| 25 | 2  | 10 | 14 | 26 |    | 23 | 17 | 8  | 23 | 17 | 9  | 19 |

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|    | U  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | S  |

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

**Cluelines Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

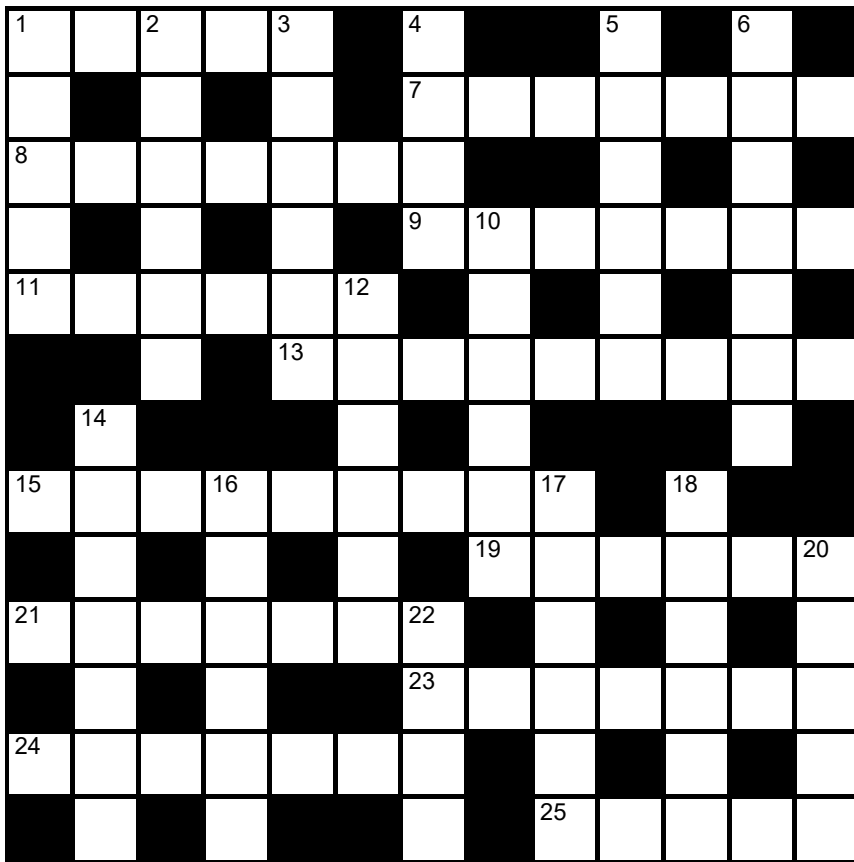
**Lexica** Easy No 7439

Hard No 7440

|     |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |     |     |   |   |   |   |     |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|-----|
| ... | N | R | O | E | I | F | ... | A   | U   | S | R | I | Y | ... |
| P   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | B   | G   |   |   |   |   | ●   |
| ... |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | ... | ... |   |   |   |   | ... |
| ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | O   | E   |   |   |   |   | R   |
| ... |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | ... | ... |   |   |   |   | ... |
| I   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | ●   | O   |   |   |   |   | C   |
| ... |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | ... | ... |   |   |   |   | ... |
| U   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | T   | S   |   |   |   |   | E   |
| ... |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | ... | ... |   |   |   |   | ... |
| O   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | S   | L   |   |   |   |   | D   |
| ... |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | ... | ... |   |   |   |   | ... |
| U   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | T   | E   |   |   |   |   | R   |
| ... |   |   |   |   |   |   |     | ... | ... |   |   |   |   | ... |
| ... | C | E | U | N | ● | C | ... | ... | M   | E | D | E | O | E   |

Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

times2 Crossword No 9543



**Across**

- 1 Stiff, inflexible (5)
- 7 One of the three main types of rock (7)
- 8 Broad strait (7)
- 9 Placed, positioned (7)
- 11 Tall slender deciduous tree (6)
- 13 (Of writing) defamatory (9)
- 15 Put oneself forward (9)

- 19 Sharp bend (6)
- 21 Interrupt, bother (7)
- 23 Eye expert (7)
- 24 Book-lending facility (7)
- 25 The present (5)

**Down**

- 1 Summary of events so far (5)
- 2 Clear Italian spirit (6)
- 3 Repudiation of a claim (6)
- 4 Inner determination (4)
- 5 Become disengaged from a train track (6)
- 6 Bone of the upper arm (7)
- 10 Complied with (6)
- 12 One involved in a civil disturbance (6)
- 14 South American country (7)
- 16 Positive change in a trend (6)
- 17 Strong, durable (6)
- 18 United as partners (6)
- 20 Manage, cope (3,2)
- 22 Lads (4)

**Solution to Crossword 9542**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | Y | P | A | S | S | E | D | H | A | L | L |
| I | E | M | N | W | G | U |   |   |   |   |   |
| R | E | S | O | U | N | D | O | D | I | U | M |
| D | T | G | U | L | L | I |   |   |   |   |   |
| S | O | N | G | R | U | F | F | I | A | N |   |
| C | L | E |   | T | A |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| H | A | S | T | E | N | P | L | A | Y | E | R |
| I | N | T | E |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| P | R | O | F | F | E | A | D | A | M |   |   |
| S | R | I | O | D | R | B |   |   |   |   |   |
| H | I | K | E | R | W | R | I | G | G | L | E |
| O | E | E | E | N | O | D |   |   |   |   |   |
| P | A | L | E | E | L | E | G | A | N | C | E |

**Need help with today's puzzle?** Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

**KenKen** Medium No 6219

|     |     |    |    |    |    |
|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|
| 1-  | 3-  |    | 2- | 3÷ |    |
|     | 6×  | 5- |    | 8+ | 2- |
| 10× |     |    |    |    |    |
|     | 15+ |    |    | 3÷ |    |
| 6×  | 6   | 8+ |    | 2÷ | 2- |
|     | 7+  |    |    |    |    |

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

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**Futoshiki** No 4767

|                      |   |                      |                      |                      |                      |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | > | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> |   | <input type="text"/> | ∇                    | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | > | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <                    | 2                    |
| <input type="text"/> | > | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | ∧                    | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | < | <input type="text"/> | 5                    | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

**Kakuro** No 3726

|    |   |   |    |    |  |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|---|---|----|----|--|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |   |   | 11 | 3  |  |  |    | 16 | 30 | 11 | 4  | 17 |
|    |   | 4 |    |    |  |  | 4  | 24 |    |    |    |    |
| 11 |   |   |    |    |  |  | 4  | 22 |    |    |    |    |
|    | 4 |   |    | 5  |  |  | 5  | 18 |    | 4  |    |    |
|    |   |   |    |    |  |  |    | 19 |    |    |    | 16 |
|    |   | 3 |    |    |  |  | 32 |    |    |    |    | 17 |
|    |   |   |    |    |  |  | 34 |    |    |    |    |    |
|    | 7 | 4 | 18 |    |  |  |    |    |    | 4  | 16 |    |
| 6  |   |   |    | 19 |  |  |    |    |    |    |    | 26 |
|    |   |   |    | 24 |  |  |    |    |    | 8  |    |    |
| 29 |   |   |    |    |  |  |    |    | 8  | 8  |    | 4  |
|    |   |   | 16 |    |  |  | 4  |    |    |    | 3  |    |
|    | 4 | 3 |    |    |  |  | 16 |    |    | 16 |    |    |
| 26 |   |   |    |    |  |  |    | 27 |    |    |    |    |
|    |   |   |    |    |  |  |    |    |    | 16 |    |    |
| 28 |   |   |    |    |  |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |

Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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**Quintagram®**

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

**1** US musician to destroy loudspeaker system (5)

**2** State of squat tea-urn used every so often (5)

**3** I came from old Roman church, a Mecca for tourists (6)

**4** Very old Times, with music and radio interviews? (3,3)

**5** Proper fuss, with name not available for singer! (5,5)

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| A | A | A | A | A | A | C | D |
| E | E | I | I | M | N | N | N |
| O | O | O | P | P | P | P | P |
| Q | R | R | T | V | V | X | Z |

**Brain Trainer**

|               |            |           |       |                      |                     |                      |          |                      |                       |                     |               |  |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|--|
| <b>EASY</b>   | <b>45</b>  | 20% OF IT | x 2   | + 17                 | $\frac{2}{5}$ OF IT | x 4                  | - 13     | x 2                  | + 7                   | $\frac{1}{3}$ OF IT | <b>ANSWER</b> |  |
| <b>MEDIUM</b> | <b>107</b> | x 6       | + 75  | $+\frac{1}{3}$ OF IT | 50% OF IT           | - 62                 | $\div 8$ | $+\frac{3}{4}$ OF IT | x 5                   | + 218               | <b>ANSWER</b> |  |
| <b>HARDER</b> | <b>241</b> | x 3       | - 255 | $\div 12$            | SQUARE IT           | $+\frac{2}{3}$ OF IT | x 2      | - 3445               | $\frac{13}{25}$ OF IT | x 4                 | <b>ANSWER</b> |  |

**Polygon**

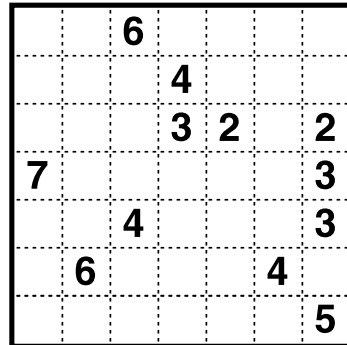


From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. **How you rate** 10 words, average; 14, good; 21, very good; 29, excellent

**Yesterday's answers**

admin, aid, aim, akin, amid, ani, dim, din, dink, ink, inn, kadi, kai, kami, kid, kin, kina, kind, kinda, maid, main, **mankind**, mid, mind, mink, nim

**Cell Blocks No 5110**



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

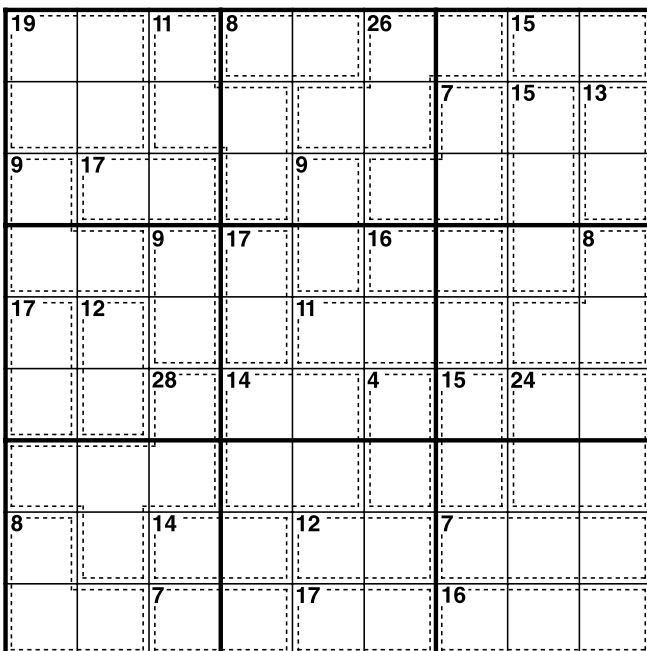
**Set Square No 3729**

|   |   |    |   |       |
|---|---|----|---|-------|
|   | x | -  | 3 | = 5   |
| + | ■ | -  | ■ | x     |
|   | + |    | + | 4     |
| + | ■ | x  | ■ | -     |
|   | + |    | x | = 108 |
| = |   | =  | = |       |
| 8 |   | 14 |   | 3     |

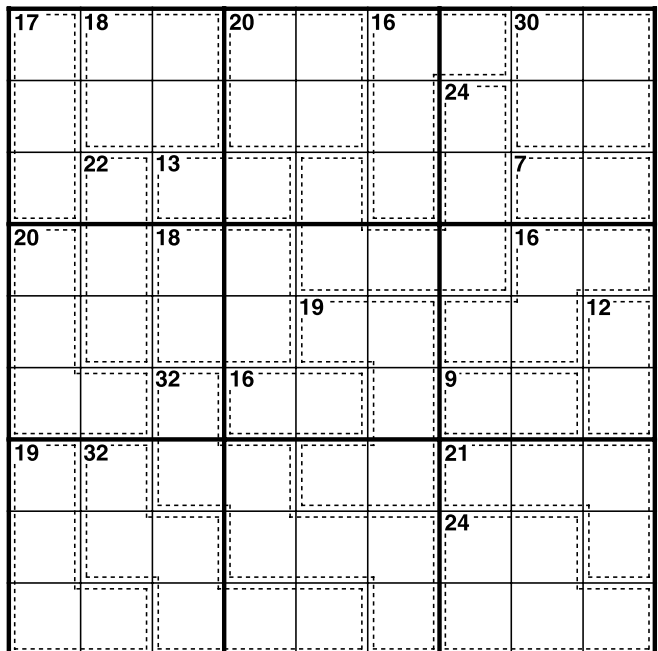
Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

**Killer Tricky No 9492**



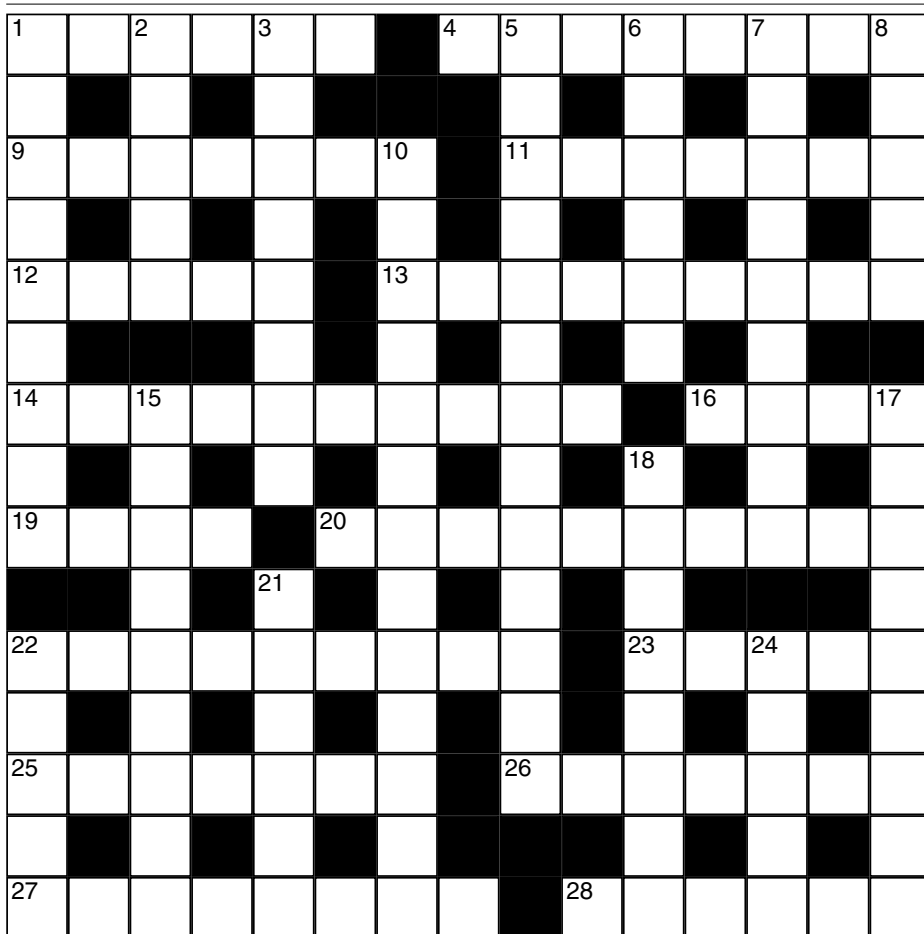
**Killer Deadly No 9493**



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

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Times Crossword 28,929



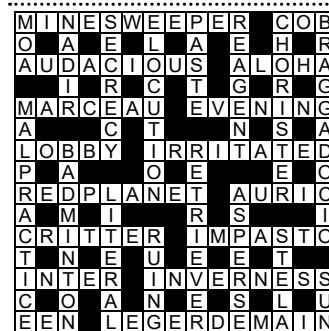
ACROSS

- 1 The only soldier without a grave (6)
- 4 Flounce downstairs after no end of rage (8)
- 9 Predicted month no way looking hot (7)
- 11 Taser — which is initially fired into one getting tanned (7)
- 12 Pack turning towards vermin (5)
- 13 Discuss terms say on new set of books I took in (9)
- 14 Be busy skewering folly and cruelty (10)
- 16 Flower shirts (4)
- 19 It's bloody to travel by train (4)
- 20 I break into office cabinet, delaying speech (10)
- 22 Savoury mince of game the hotel put out (9)
- 23 Objection chapter is tough (5)
- 25 Spots long tie being knotted (7)
- 26 Industrial plant gave off stench: years, on and off (7)
- 27 Unconcerned being unable to drive round rear of village (8)
- 28 Angled strike and cut on back of leg (6)

DOWN

- 1 Remarkable time bird is around (9)
- 2 King's up for a drink (5)
- 3 Start of month: occasion for going to sea (8)
- 5 View audience has in burst of sun's showing displeasing quality (13)
- 6 Youngster holds search, not the first, for reward (6)
- 7 Keen to take in one nearly new feature (9)
- 8 Was sporting about loss eventually, having come off this? (5)
- 10 Acted in unison to scupper public attacks (13)
- 15 Marx, at a single reading initially, who aimed to finish Moby Dick (9)
- 17 Brat, not at home, collared by policeman informally for a fine perhaps (9)
- 18 Weight of stupid one out of three authors? (8)
- 21 Stalin's colleague left to introduce uranium for energy, his final farewell? (6)
- 22 Wind timepiece up briefly that one's broken (5)
- 24 Giant bird given a name (5)

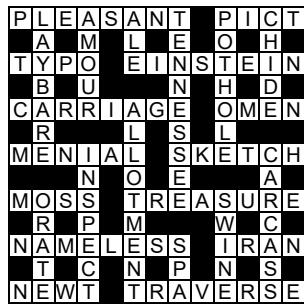
Yesterday's solution 28,928



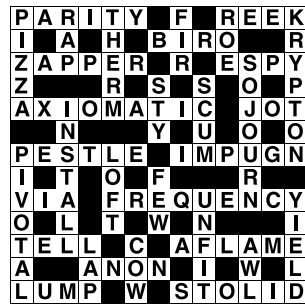
Check today's answers by ringing 0905 757 0141 by midnight. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 2687



Codeword 5226



Kakuro 3725

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

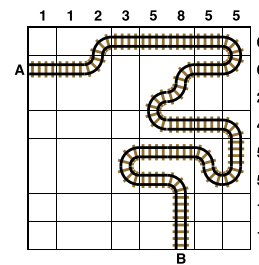
Sudoku 14,946

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

Tetonor 469

|         |        |         |        |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 270     | 13     | 175     | 32     |
| 15 x 18 | 5 + 8  | 7 x 25  | 25 + 7 |
| 26      | 200    | 54      | 88     |
| 22 + 4  | 50 x 4 | 4 + 50  | 4 x 22 |
| 112     | 23     | 220     | 42     |
| 7 x 16  | 16 + 7 | 4 x 55  | 7 + 35 |
| 40      | 245    | 33      | 59     |
| 8 x 5   | 35 x 7 | 18 + 15 | 55 + 4 |

Train Tracks 2255



Sudoku 14,947

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

Cell Blocks 5109

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 |   |   |   |
| 2 |   | 4 |   |
| 4 |   | 4 |   |
|   | 6 |   |   |
| 8 |   |   | 4 |
|   | 3 |   |   |
|   |   | 3 | 4 |

Set Square 3728

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | x | 2 | x | 8 |
| + |   | x |   | x |
| 9 | + | 5 | x | 7 |
| + |   | - |   | - |
| 3 | x | 4 | - | 1 |

Lexica 7437

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | A | N | D | A | L |
| A |   | O |   |   |   |
| L | U | R | K |   |   |
| A |   | M |   |   |   |
| D |   | A |   |   |   |
|   | F | L | O | P |   |

Sudoku 14,948

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

Futoshiki 4766

|   |       |       |       |   |
|---|-------|-------|-------|---|
| 4 | 2 > 1 | 5     | 3     |   |
| 2 | 5     | 3     | 1 < 4 |   |
| 1 | 3 < 4 | 2     | 5     |   |
| 3 | 1     | 5 > 4 | 2     |   |
| 5 | 4     | 2     | 3     | 1 |

KenKen 6218

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| 4 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 |

Lexica 7438

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | O | G |   | G |   |
| R |   |   |   | U |   |
| U |   | H | A | N | G |
| T |   | I |   |   | R |
| C | A | P |   |   | I |
| H |   |   | B | I | D |

Today's solutions

Killer 9490

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

Killer 9491

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

Cryptic Quintagram

- 1 Zappa
- 2 Qatar
- 3 Venice
- 4 Vox pop
- 5 Prima donna

Suko 4128

|    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 2  | 7  | 8 |
| 14 | 22 |   |
| 1  | 4  | 3 |
| 19 | 22 |   |
| 5  | 9  | 6 |

Brain Trainer

- Easy 31
- Medium 673
- Harder 3,380

Word watch

**Stercoration** (a) The act of manuring the ground (OED)

**Remontant** (a) Flowering more than once a season (Collins)

**Rackarock** (c) A type of explosive (OED)

Chess – Winning Move

1 ... Qxe1+ leads to a winning king hunt: 2 Kxe1 Rcl+ 3 Ke2 Nd4+ 4 Ke3 Rel+ 5 Kf4 (the only way to continue is 5 Be2 but then 5 ... Ba6! is overwhelming) 5 ... Be5 mate



# Samurai difficult

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

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

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 3 |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 6 | 2 | 7 |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |

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

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## Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger ( $>$ ) or smaller ( $<$ ) than the number next to it.

|  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 3 |
|  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 2 |
|  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
|  | 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
|  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
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## Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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## Sudoku easy

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

## Killer gentle

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 3  |    | 16 |    | 12 |    | 8  |    | 8  |
| 17 | 7  |    | 8  | 4  | 21 |    |    |    |
|    | 11 | 9  |    |    | 15 | 5  |    | 12 |
| 8  |    |    | 12 |    |    | 14 | 17 |    |
|    | 17 |    | 6  |    |    |    |    | 15 |
| 11 |    | 7  |    | 13 | 3  |    |    | 13 |
|    |    | 13 |    |    | 23 |    |    |    |
| 8  |    | 17 | 6  | 13 | 10 |    |    |    |
| 11 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 12 |

## Suko

|    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
|    |    |  |
| 18 | 27 |  |
| 14 | 23 |  |

|    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| 11 | 18 | 16 |
|----|----|----|

Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

## Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 3  | 21 | 21 | 20 | 25 | 17 | 8  | 18 |    | 3  |    | 13 |
|    | 21 |    | 11 |    | 17 |    | 23 |    | 14 | 23 | 22 | 21 |
| 3  | 23 | 20 | 25 | 2  | 7  | 23 | 18 |    |    | 19 |    | 16 |
|    | 26 |    | 2  |    | 5  |    | 25 | 2  | 16 | 18 | 20 | 10 |
| 15 | 19 | 21 | 23 |    | 17 |    | 2  |    |    | 9  |    | 9  |
|    | 12 |    | 18 | 17 | 8  | 7  |    | 23 | 13 | 20 | 21 | 8  |
| 25 |    |    | 4  |    | 20 |    | 8  |    | 6  |    |    | 21 |
| 8  | 16 | 24 | 21 | 20 |    | 7  | 21 | 18 | 9  |    | 4  |    |
| 9  |    | 21 |    |    | 1  |    | 15 |    | 23 | 18 | 17 | 18 |
| 7  | 23 | 8  | 16 | 18 | 23 |    | 23 |    | 20 |    | 22 |    |
| 1  |    | 16 |    |    | 13 | 26 | 16 | 20 | 20 | 16 | 13 | 2  |
| 19 | 17 | 20 | 2  |    | 20 |    | 18 |    | 21 |    | 17 |    |
| 12 |    | 12 |    | 18 | 21 | 25 | 20 | 23 | 8  | 16 | 18 | 21 |

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | S  |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
|    |    | I  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | K  |

## Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 6 | 1 | 5 | 4 |   |
| 5 |   | 4 | 1 |   | 3 |

Solutions in tomorrow's Times2

THE  TIMES

MindGames Wednesday May 29 2024  
Brain boost puzzles

# Yesterday's solutions

## SAMURAI

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

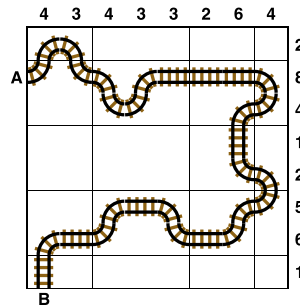
## SUKO

|    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 5  | 2  | 6 |
| 11 | 20 |   |
| 1  | 3  | 9 |
| 7  | 4  | 8 |

## MINI SUDOKU

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 4 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 |

## TRAIN TRACKS



## FUTOSHIKI

|   |     |     |     |   |
|---|-----|-----|-----|---|
| 3 | 4   | 1   | 5   | 2 |
| ∨ |     |     |     |   |
| 2 | 1   | 3   | 4   | 5 |
| ∧ |     |     |     |   |
| 5 | 3 < | 4 > | 2   | 1 |
|   |     |     |     |   |
| 4 | 5   | 2 > | 1   | 3 |
| ∨ |     |     |     |   |
| 1 | 2   | 5   | 3 < | 4 |

## SUDOKU

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

## KILLER

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

## CODEWORD

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | S | P | E | C | K | L | E | B | I | R | O |
| A | I |   |   | O |   | I | M |   | N |   |   |
| S | H | A | L | L | O |   | N | A | P | P | Y |
| K | N | E |   | E |   | Q | I |   | X |   |   |
| A | M | O | N | G |   | S | Q | U | I | N | T |
| N |   |   | I |   | T |   | I |   | G |   | I |
| C | A | V | I | T |   | E | S | T | E | E | M |
| E | I |   | I |   | D |   | I |   |   |   | P |
| S | T | Y | M | I | E |   | T | R | O | L | L |
| S | A |   | A |   | A |   | O | Z |   |   | O |
| M | I | M | I | C |   | F | E | R | V | O | U |
| O |   | I |   | Y |   | E |   |   | N |   | E |
| G | O | N | G |   | I | N | J | U | R | E | D |