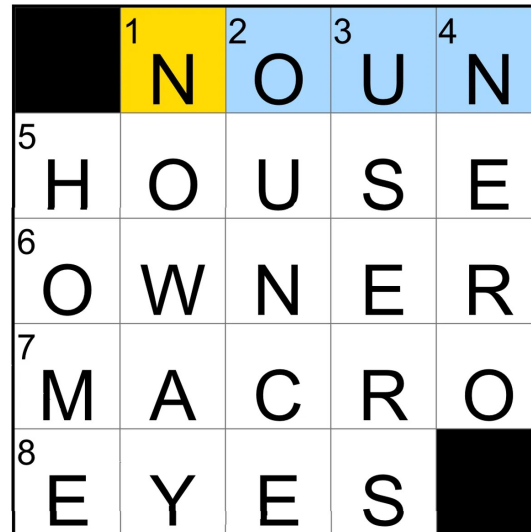


Re-inventing the Mini Crossword

I've always been a fan of the *New York Times* Mini Crossword; It's a quick, fun challenge that's become a staple in my daily routine.

However, as much as I love it, I found myself wanting more: a way to **track scores** with friends and puzzles that felt more connected to **my generation**. So, I decided to create my own!



The Two Big Problems

The NYT Mini Crossword is iconic, but it lacked features that I wanted

- **Competition:**

There was no way to compete or compare scores with friends
(Unless all your friends are subscribed to the NYT which is at least £12/month)

- **Modern Relevance:**

Many clues and answers didn't feel tailored to today's culture and trends (it's also very Americanised)

The Concept

My goal was to recreate the NYT's design as closely as possible all while implementing my new features.

- **Daily refresh:**

New crossword, updated everyday

- **On-screen Keyboard:**

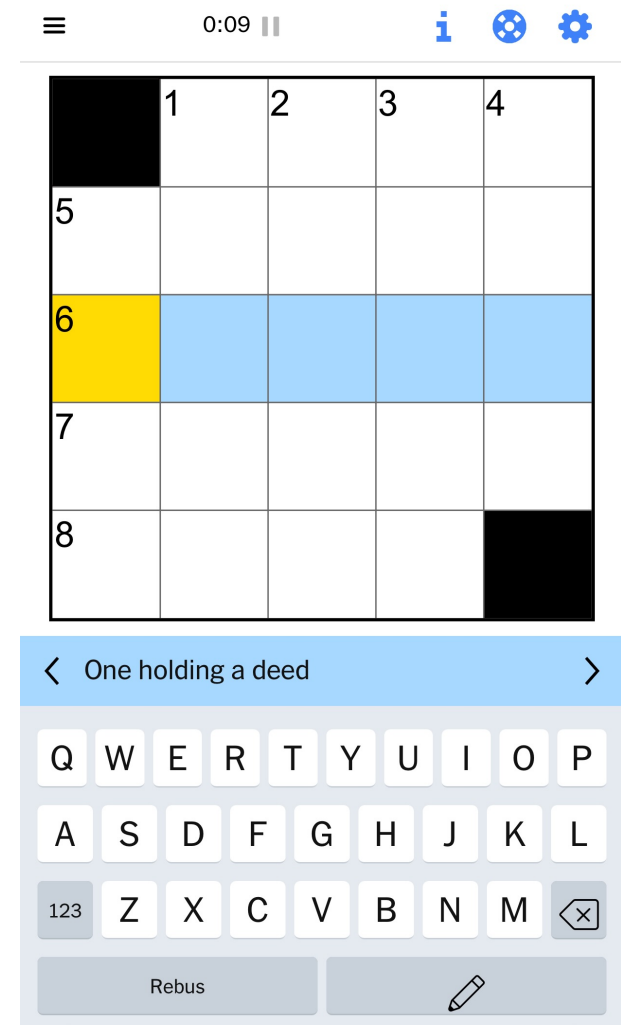
For a simple and clean experience

- **Colour guides:**

The blue line showing the direction and the yellow cell for the current position

- **Clues slider:**

A way to scroll through the crossword clues



Screenshot from the NYT's Mini

Development Process

Here's how I brought my vision to life:

* **HTML/CSS** for the front-end design:

Essentially copying how the NYT's crossword looks:

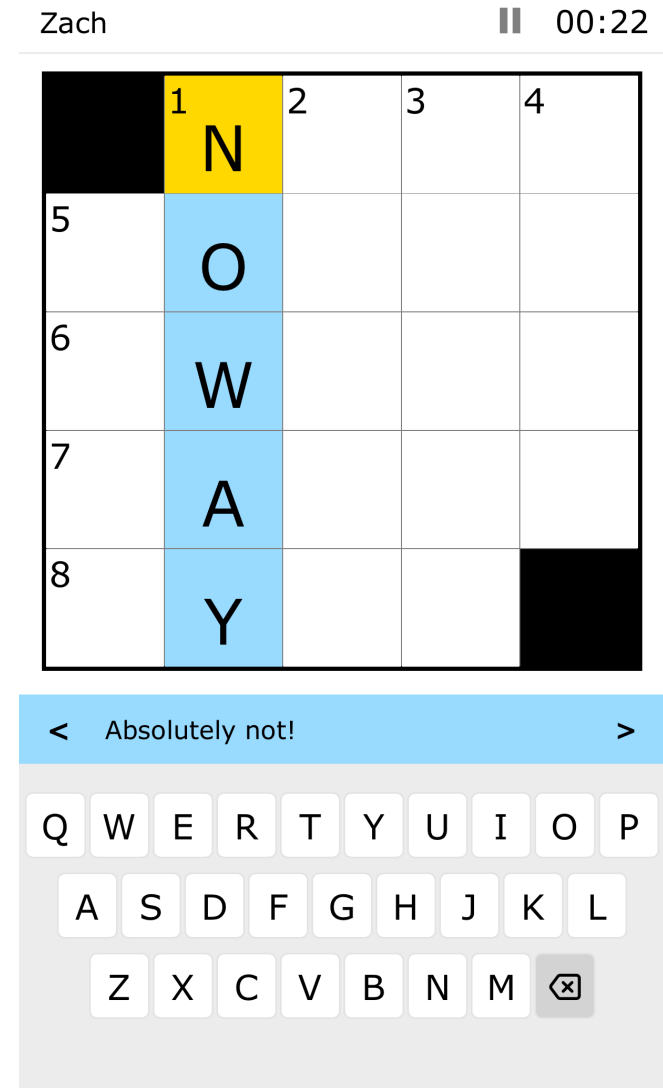
- With an added name input

Welcome to today's Crossword!

Sunday 5th Jan 2025

Enter your name:

Start Crossword



Screenshot from my Crossword

Development Process

* Javascript: for the game's functions:

- Check if crossword is completed correctly
- Scroll through clues and display color guides

* Google Firebase:

- To store usernames and their times
- To display the leaderboard

Rank	Name	Time
1	Arthur	01:07
2	Sara	01:27
3	Lili	02:49
4	romy	04:17

Congratulations!

You have successfully completed
the crossword in 00:17

Come back for tomorrow's crossword!

See Leaderboard

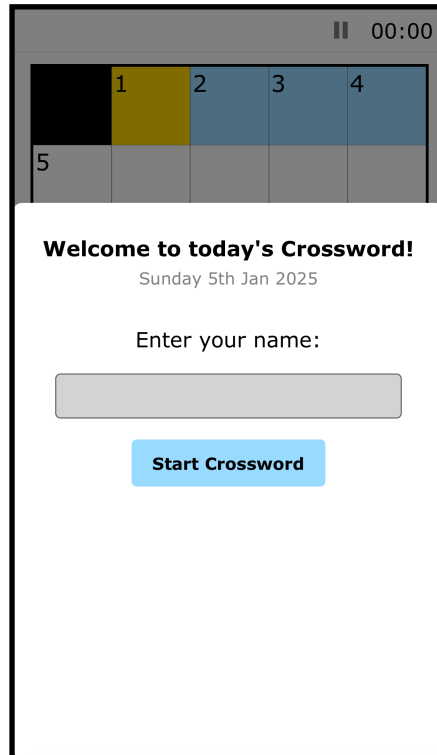
Try Again!

Your current answers are not
correct. Keep trying!

Return to Game

Showcase

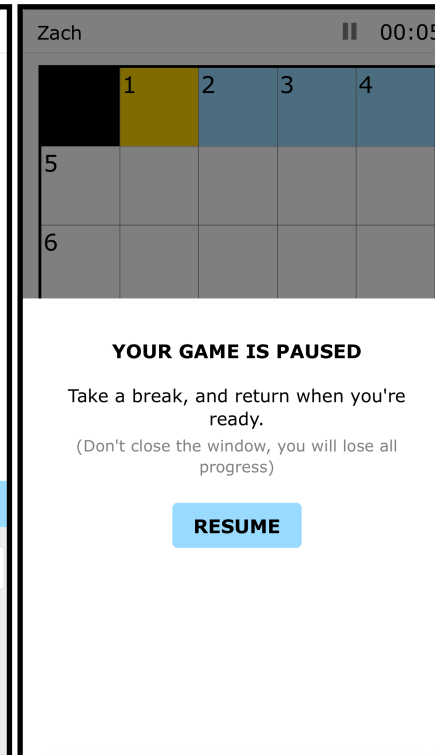
Welcome



Crossword



Paused



Leaderboard



To play my crossword visit:

<https://stepzach.github.io/nyt>

Outcomes

* User Feedback:

- I tested the game with my friends and got some initial feedback, which I used to iterate the design.
(Confusion on how to view the down clues and some clues being too difficult)

* What I Learnt:

This Project was mostly for fun (and to cure my boredom during the winter holidays) but it taught me valuable lessons in backend development and balancing functionality with aesthetics.

* Future Plans:

- An aggregate leaderboard to compete everyday over a week (with average timings and maybe a graph to show progression)
- An AI powered crossword generator so I don't have to manually update the solution and clues everyday.

Source Code

To see the code behind this project, visit my GitHub repository:

<https://github.com/Stepzach/NYT>

But beware it won't be pretty! As this is an ongoing project there will likely be random bits of code scattered around the place :)

Disclaimer:

This project is a personal recreation of a crossword puzzle game inspired the NYT's mini crossword. While the visual appearance and gameplay mechanics may resemble it, all code, crossword words, and clues have been independently developed by me and are entirely original. This project is for personal and non-commercial use only and is not affiliated with The New York Times.



To stay updated on future developments, or to see more of my fun projects:
Follow me on Instagram @zstepsdesigns

I share all my creative endeavors there and would love to connect!