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4x4 Puzzle Time: A Challenge for 7th and 8th Graders

The 4x4 puzzle, also known as the 15-puzzle, is a classic brain teaser that has puzzled people for centuries. The puzzle consists of 15 square tiles arranged in a 4x4 grid, with one square missing. The goal of the puzzle is to slide the tiles around until they are arranged in order from 1 to 15, with the empty square in the lower right corner.

Puzzle Question

Here is a 4x4 puzzle in its scrambled state:

1 4 3

8 7 2

5 9 6

12 11 10

Answer

To solve the puzzle, you need to carefully slide the tiles around until they are in the correct order. Here are the steps for solving the puzzle:

- 1. **Start with the corner tiles.** Move the corner tiles into their correct positions first. This will give you a good starting point for the rest of the puzzle.
- 2. **Work on the edges.** Once the corner tiles are in place, start working on the edges. Fit the edge tiles into their correct positions, one at a time.

- 3. **Fill in the middle.** Once the edges are complete, you can fill in the middle tiles. Start by placing the tiles that are next to the empty square.
- 4. **Finish the puzzle.** Once all of the tiles are in place, slide the empty square into the lower right corner to complete the puzzle.

Puzzle Tips

Here are a few tips to help you solve the 4x4 puzzle:

- Look for patterns. As you slide the tiles around, look for patterns that can help you quickly find the correct positions for the tiles.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. It's okay to make mistakes when solving the puzzle. Just undo your last move and try a different approach.
- **Take your time.** Don't get discouraged if you can't solve the puzzle right away. Take your time and work through the puzzle step-by-step.

Conclusion

The 4x4 puzzle is a great way to challenge your students' problem-solving skills. The puzzle is challenging enough to be engaging, but it's also solvable with a little bit of patience and practice.

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