

Title:

Beat The Kakuro Monster

Word Count:

603

Summary:

Trailing the revival and the reign of the sudoku puzzles in 2005, another Western game gives a Japanese twist hit the puzzle scene. Kakuro puzzles, formerly known as cross sums, are now making waves as the newest puzzle craze. Bearing similarities in look and style to the more popular sudoku, kakuro puzzles promise to be more challenging and even more addictive than sudoku.

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Keywords:

kakuro puzzles

Article Body:

Trailing the revival and the reign of the sudoku puzzles in 2005, another Western game gives a Japanese twist hit the puzzle scene. Kakuro puzzles, formerly known as cross sums, are now making waves as the newest puzzle craze. Bearing similarities in look and style to the more popular sudoku, kakuro puzzles promise to be more challenging and even more addictive than sudoku.

We know how brain and mental workouts enhance mental functions and sudoku has been included among the list of top brain boosters. Rightly so, since sudoku certainly poses quite a challenge to players. But if you think that simply placing numbers on squares in correct logic is challenging enough, try solving kakuro puzzles. They provide added difficulty and challenge of a higher degree since they require logic, cognitive, and practical mathematics. They are sure to provide you with a tougher and grittier mental exercise than the tamer sudoku. Certainly, these puzzles are not for the faint-hearted.

Kakuro puzzles are daunting, but they are not impossible. Enthusiasts emphasize that players need not have exceptional mathematical abilities or a genius like Einstein's to solve the puzzles. Practical mathematical knowledge is often enough to solve the puzzles as long as players employ effective strategy and logic. Having sufficient grasp and mastery of the puzzle rules make it easy for players like you to use the right tactics. The rules of the puzzles are

relatively simple. The "playing board" looks similar to a crossword with white and dark squares. However, there are no clues at the bottom of the box. The numbers on the white spaces are the only clues a you have. Each number represents the sum of the missing numbers in cells or boxes it refers to. Note that same numbers can't be addends for the same run. For example, if the number in the box is 4, you can use 1 and 3 but not 2 and 2. Though the trial-and-error technique is often used, there are more sophisticated and logical techniques than filling your boxes with erasures and pencil marks.

A popular tactic is to search for cells with least combinations. These are usually the digits on the lower end of the number spectrum like 3, 5, 4, and other single digits. This limits the possible answers or numbers for a specific cell. Applying the same technique for the adjacent cells gives you a shot at the correct figure. Another tactic used in solving kakuro puzzles is looking for common numbers. This happens when two cells share a number. Finding the common number allows you to decide where to position the other number. To illustrate, if 3 and 1 are your answers for the number 4 at the vertical column or run and 1 and 5 for 6 at the horizontal line, 1 is your common number. Therefore, 1 merits the box at the intersection of 6 and 4. Experienced players solve puzzles by finding all possible and valid combinations plus correct cross referencing. Because as in sudoku, the position of the numbers matter in kakuro.

This third trick is probably the most elementary and least sophisticated. Marking answers on the edges of the boxes or cells with a pencil does not help you to solve the puzzles. However, it does help you track down your digits and combinations. This is especially helpful since kakuro puzzles have no definite limits. The "playing board" can measure as little as 3 by 3 or extend to God knows where. Over time, playing becomes easier because of practice. Also, you would have stock combinations in your head which you can use in playing. This is also a sign that you need to ditch the easier puzzles and move on to more challenging kakuro puzzles.