

LOGIC



ROMPECABEZAS

By Rodolfo Kurchan

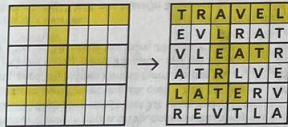
Note: *Rompecabezas* (literally, "break heads") is Spanish for "puzzle." Here are an even dozen rompecabezas, in four varieties, by a master puzzle creator in Argentina. Read more about him in "Argentina's Unsung Puzzle Maestro" at the bottom of this page.



CRISSCROSS SUDOKU

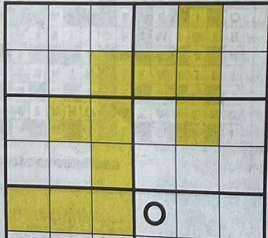
Place the given words in the shaded spaces. Then finish the puzzle using the usual Sudoku rules. Do not repeat a letter in any row, column or 3 x 2 outlined area.

Example:



EAT · LATE · ALERT · TRAVEL

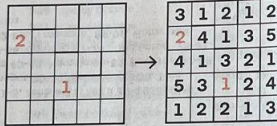
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ONE-UP

Between each pair of walls, place the numbers 1 through n , where n is the length of the space. For example, a single square — one with walls immediately on either side of it — will be filled with a 1. Two-square spaces will be filled with a 1 and a 2, and so on. The order of the numbers in the squares is for you to determine.

Example:



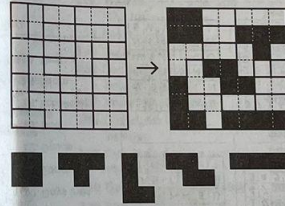
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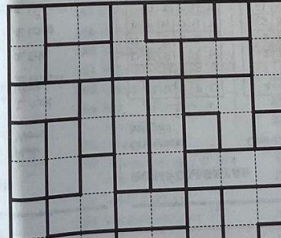
PAINT TETROMINOES

Shade some bolded regions in the grid to reveal the five tetrominoes shown below. The shapes can be rotated and flipped, but they cannot touch each other, not even at their corners. Regions cannot be partly shaded.

Example:



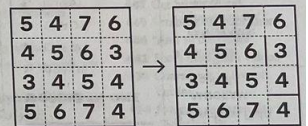
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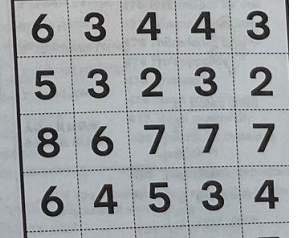
SENTINELS

A sentinel appears in each square in the grid looking horizontally and vertically in every direction. The number in the square indicates how many other squares he can see, including the one he is in. Draw walls between certain squares so that all the numbers are correct.

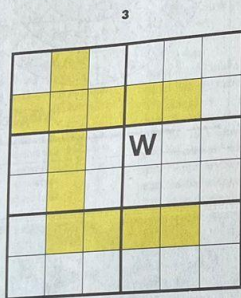
Example:



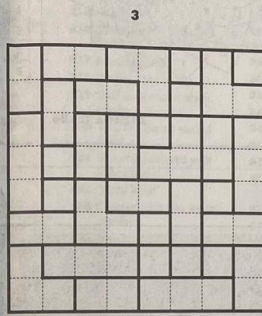
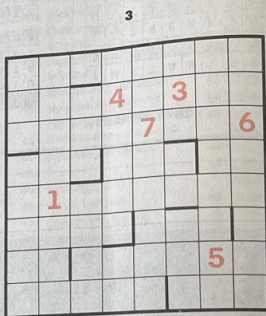
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MEN · MINE · TIME · MINUTE



LOVE · NOVEL · VOWEL



5	8	6	8	4
3	6	5	7	6
3	7	5	6	5
4	7	4	6	5
3	6	4	7	3



ARGENTINA'S UNSUNG PUZZLE MAESTRO

By Will Shortz

Even if you don't know Rodolfo Kurchan by name, you might be familiar with his inventions. The 53-year-old Argentine puzzle constructor is one of the most prolific — and perhaps least known — giants in the modern world of logic puzzles.

Take, for example, One-Up, Kurchan's addictive little grid-logic challenge, which appeared for 14 weeks in The New York Times Magazine earlier this year. It's as simple to learn and as difficult to stop doing as Sudoku. Actually, speaking of Sudoku: Kurchan also invented Crisscross Sudoku, a grid-logic/word hybrid that had a run in The Times last year. (You can find examples of several Kurchan creations, including Crisscross Sudoku and One-Up, on this page.) He estimates that, to date, he has created around 10,000 puzzles of many original varieties.

According to Kurchan, this makes him a very rare breed — after all, the puzzle scene in Argentina, and elsewhere in South America, isn't especially robust. He got his start at age 12, when his parents gave him a book on recreational mathematics by Martin Gardner, the Scientific American columnist. He was hooked. Kurchan became an avid follower of the Argentine puzzle magazine Juegos. "I waited for it to come out on newsstands every month so I could buy it and solve the puzzles in it," he says. Before long, he was constructing puzzles himself. Eventually, Juegos's editor, Jaime Poniachik, became a mentor: "He was like a father to me," Kurchan says. "We got together every week to chat and make puzzles together."

Today Kurchan owns and manages a rare-coin-and-stamp shop in Buenos Aires. But puzzles remain his real passion. His résumé is as

long and varied as his catalog — he is the founder and editor of the magazine Puzzle Fun, which published 36 issues between 1994 and 2022; the author of six books, including "Mesmerizing Math Puzzles"; and the organizer of the annual Festival del Ingenio in Argentina, where hundreds of people participate in talks and activities such as puzzles, games, magic, origami and Rubik's Cube. His puzzles have also appeared in Games World of Puzzles (where he's been a regular contributor since 2020), the Journal of Recreational Mathematics and other publications.

Kurchan's favorite kinds of puzzles — both to solve and to make — are those based on original ideas that have clean, uncomplicated instructions. "I try to make puzzles that make *me* want to solve them," he says. That's a high standard indeed.