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Diabolical sudoku guide

One of the biggest aspects of Sudoku is that the game offers attractive challenges to both the rookie and the experienced puzzle player. Whenever they play puzzles considering their level of competence, both a beginner and an experienced sudoku solver will have to put a good amount of thought and technique into completing the task. Their approach, however, may not be the same. Solving sudok's tough puzzle will require a completely different set of methods compared to the easy one. This article introduces nine of the following methods; in increasing complexity. When using these techniques, as professionals prefer it to do to start with the main ones. Use the first few methods to insert as many numbers as you can. Then, when you can add no more numbers to the board using the basic methods, try more advanced ones. Do one at a time until you find out another number in a cell. Then start with the basic techniques again, and repeat the process. You should be able to solve almost any Sudoku puzzle using these techniques. If a specific cell can contain only one number, that number is the only candidate. This occurs whenever all other numbers except the candidate number exist in the current block, column, or row. In this example, a red cell can only contain 5 because the other eight numbers have been used in the corresponding block, column, and row. You know that each block, row, and column on the Sudok board must contain every number between 1 and 9. Therefore, if a number, say 4, can only be placed in one cell within a block/column/row, then this number is guaranteed to fit there. This example illustrates number 4 as a unique candidate for a cell marked in red. This method won't help you to pencil in any new numbers, but it will help you to nail the number down in a specific row or column. An example shows that the number 7 can only be inserted into red cells in the middle row. So you can remove 7 as a possible candidate from the rest of the series. This technique is best understood by looking at an example. In medium and middle left blocks, the number 8 must be placed in one of the red elements. This means that we can eliminate 8 from the top and bottom rows in the middle right column. The example shows that row number 1 and row number 5 have a cell in one column containing only candidate numbers 4 and 7. These two numbers appear as candidates in all other open cells in this column, but since they are the only two candidates in rows 1 and 5, these two numbers cannot appear anywhere in a row, so you can delete them. In the example, two pairs of candidates circled in red are the only candidates. Since 4 and 7 must be placed in either of these two cells, all pairs circled in blue can remove these numbers as candidates. In this puzzle, this means that 1 becomes the only candidate in the second row, 2 becomes the only candidate in line 6, and thus 6 is line number candidate You can also use this technique if you have more than two candidates. For example, let's say couples circled in red were instead triple candidates from numbers 1, 4, 7. This would mean that these three numbers would have to be placed in any row 1, 2 or 5. We could remove these three numbers as candidates in any of the remaining cells in the column. This technique even works with four candidate numbers, assuming you have 4 possible candidates in four different cells in a row/column. It's similar to a subset of Naked, but it affects the cells holding the candidates. In this example, we see that 5, 6, 7 can only be placed in cells 5 or 6 in the first column (marked with a red circle), and that the number 5 can only be inserted into cell No. 8 (indicated in blue circle). Since 6 and 7 should be placed in one of the cells with a red circle, it follows that the number 5 should be placed in cell No. 8, and thus we can remove any other candidates from the 8th cell; in this case 2 and 3. This method can work when you look at cells consisting of a rectangle, such as cells marked in red. In this example, say red and blue cells have number 5 as candidate numbers. Now imagine if the red cells are the only cells in column 2 and 8 that you can put 5 into. In this case, you obviously need to put 5 in two red cells, and you also know that they cannot be in the same row. Well, now, that means you can eliminate 5 as a candidate for all blue cells. This is because the top row, or the first or second red cell should have 5, and the same can be said of the bottom row. Swordfish is a more sophisticated version of X-Wing. In most cases, the technique may seem like a lot of work for very little pay, but some puzzles can only be solved with it. So if you want to be a sudok-solution master, read on! Example A In Example A, we have drawn in some cells of candidates to number 3. Now let's assume that in column 2, 4, 7 and 9, the only cells that can contain the number 3 are those marked in red. You know that each column must contain 3. Example B Look at Example B. We can eliminate 3 as a candidate in each cell marked in blue. The reason for this is that if you consider the possible locations of number 3 in red cells, we get two alternatives: either you have to put 3s in green cells, or in purple cells, as example C. In any case, each of the columns 2, 4, 7 and 9 should contain 3 in one of the colored cells, so no other cell in these rows can contain 3. Example C How do you recognize the pattern of swordfish? You look for cells with common candidate numbers that can be referenced together, as in example D. Then you draw the line vertically or horizontally until you reach another cell that the same candidate number. Then you repeat this pattern until you return to the original cell. If you reach the original cell, you have a swordfish pattern! Swordfish! D Forcing a chain can actually help you determine what number a certain cell should hold. Unfortunately, the technique is not the easiest to use. See the example below. Suppose that candidates in red cells are the only candidates for these cells. Forcing the chains to work as follows: Start on the red cell with the arrow pointing to it, and fill one of the two candidates, 3 or 6, for this cell. Then follow and fill the remaining red cells. Now take note of the values you enter along the way. Go back to the cell you started with and try another candidate number for this cell and fill other red cells. Compare the numbers you've got now with the first result. You may find that in both cases, a specific cell must contain a specific number. In this example, if you put the number 3 in the starting cell, you will see the above right neighboring cell should contain 9. Now try typing 6 in the starting cell, and then move the other path by entering the candidate values. When you reach the right adjacent cell again, you will find it should contain 9 this time. Therefore, this cell must contain 9. That's it. Hope this will help you break even the harshest Sudok puzzles out there. Success! This article is part of our Sudoku help section. Sudoku Epic is a free, premium quality Sudoku game and is available on most platforms: PC, Mac, iPhone, iPad, Android, Google Play Store and Amazon Appstore. Take it! Sudoku Epic on Google Play Sudoku Epic on iPhone / iPad Come back every day and see if you can solve our Sudoku day puzzle! Click on the puzzle to see the solution. We also have our archive of the latest daily puzzles. One of the biggest aspects of Sudoku is that the game offers attractive challenges to both the rookie and the experienced puzzle player. Whenever they play puzzles considering their level of competence, both a beginner and an experienced sudoku solver will have to put a good amount of thought and technique into completing the task. Their approach, however, may not be the same. Solving sudok's tough puzzle will require a completely different set of methods compared to the easy one. This article introduces nine of the following methods; in increasing complexity. When using these techniques, as professionals prefer it to do to start with the main ones. Use the first few methods to insert as many numbers as you can. Then, when you can add no more numbers to the board using the basic methods, try more advanced ones. Do one at a time until you find out another number in a cell. Then start with the basic techniques again, and repeat the process. 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