

What Is Sudoku?

Sudoku is a puzzle game that is taking the world by storm. The name *Sudoku* comes from the Japanese word (shown in Figure 1-1) that means “number place.” The first Sudoku puzzle was published in the United States, but Sudoku initially became popular in Japan, in 1986, and did not attain international popularity until 2005.

数独

Figure 1-1. *The word Sudoku in Japanese*

The rules of Sudoku are extremely simple, yet solving a Sudoku puzzle is an intellectual challenge. A Sudoku puzzle contains a 9×9 grid, which is divided into nine smaller 3×3 grids (known as minigrids). Figure 1-2 shows a Sudoku grid with its nine minigrids.

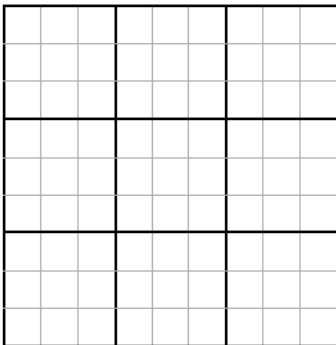


Figure 1-2. *A Sudoku grid*