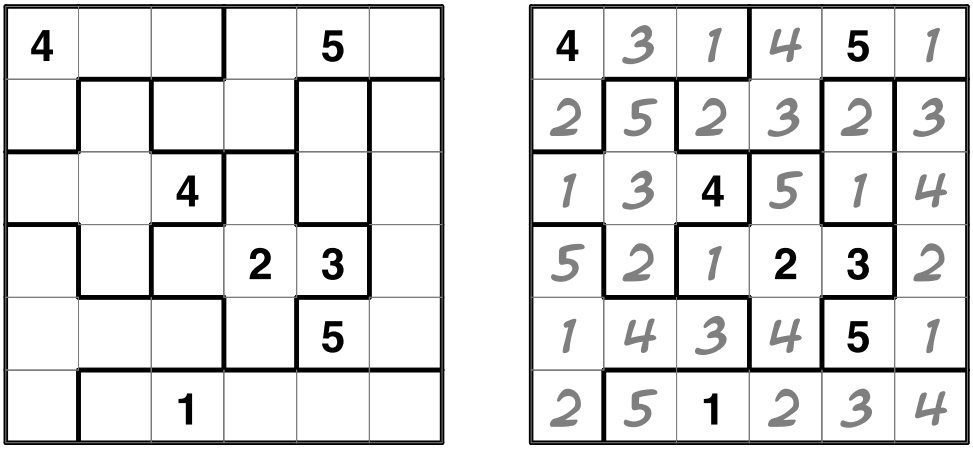
ABOUT THESE PUZZLES

Suguru, also known as Tectonics, Number Blocks, or ナンバーブロック (Nanba Burokku), were first created in Japan by prolific puzzle designer Naoki Inaba. While the rules of Suguru are extremely simple, the spectrum of puzzle difficulties is extremely wide – from super easy to crazy-insane-impossible, which makes for an unusually deep puzzle.

In this book, all the Suguru are subdivided into a grid of 6 by 6 cells (a cell is an individual square which holds a single digit). The cells are grouped into containers, with thicker borders, each of which is one to five cells in size (most are five). You need to fill each container with unique digits, counting up from 1. So, for example, a two-cell container always contains the numbers 1 and 2. A five-cell container contains each of the numbers 1 through 5. Adjacent (touching) cells may never contain the same number, and this includes diagonally adjacent cells. That's it for the rules!



Like all my puzzles, every puzzle in this book has only one unique solution. I've arranged the puzzles in this book roughly in order of difficulty so that the first page contains the easiest puzzles, and the last page the hardest. If you've never tried these puzzles before, you should definitely try them in order.

SUGURU TUTORIAL

In this tutorial, we'll start solving the puzzle on the previous page, and learn the basic rules-of-thumb you can use to solve these puzzles. First, some nomenclature.

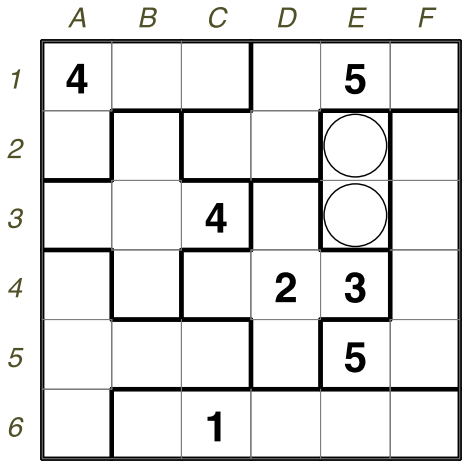
When I say *cell* I mean an individual square in the puzzle. In the diagrams below, I've labeled the rows and columns, so that I can use "battleship notation" to refer to individual cells. For example, *A1* refers to the cell on the upper left, and *F6* refers to the cell on the lower right.

When I say *container,* I mean a group of cells that are enclosed in a thick line. The puzzles below have a four-cell container that includes the cells *A1*, *B1*, *C1*, and *A2*.

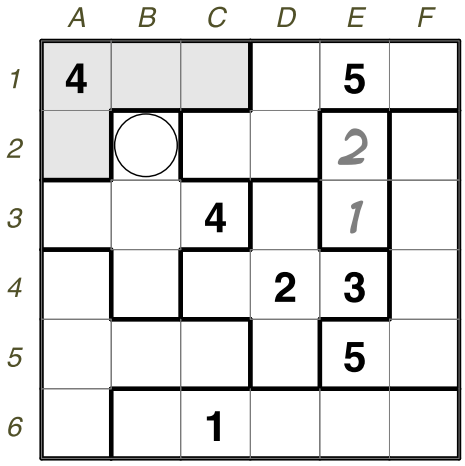
When I say *enclosed cells* I am referring to cells that occupy the same container, such as *A1*, *B1*, *C1*, and *A2*.

When I say *E3*=1, I mean you should write a 1 into the cell *E3*.

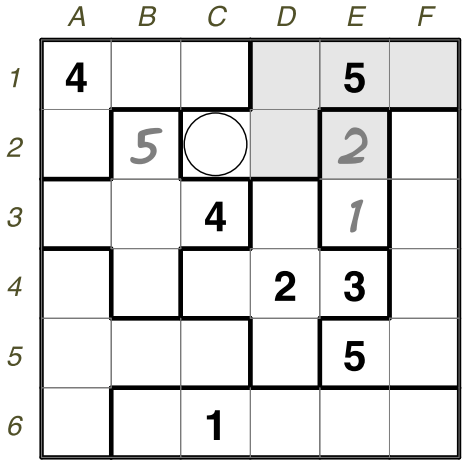
Okay, enough nomenclature, let's solve the puzzle!



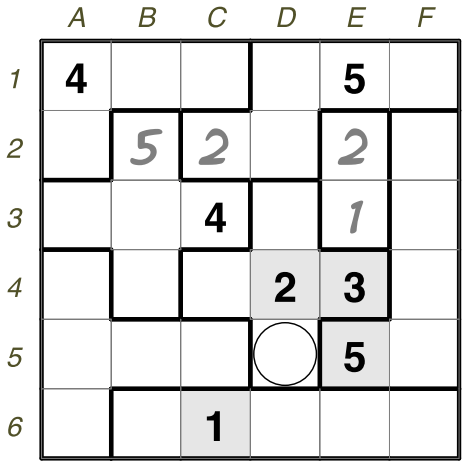
One of the first things I do when starting Suguru is to look for the smallest containers to exploit. We can see a short one (*E2, E3*) which must contain only the digits 1 and 2. One of those cells, *E3*, is diagonally adjacent to the 2 in *D4*, so it can't be 2, so *E3*=1, and *E2*=2.



There's another short container on the upper left (containing the cells *A1*, *B1*, *C1*, and *A2*). Since it contains four cells, it must contain the digits 1 to 4, and cannot contain a 5. All four of its cells are adjacent to the cell *B2*, which means that *B2* cannot contain any of the digits 1 to 4 that will be used in that four-cell container. Therefore, B2=5.



On the upper right, there are four enclosed cells (*D1*, *E1*, *F1*, and *D2*) which are adjacent to the 2 in *E2*. None of these four enclosed cells, therefore, may contain a 2. But, a 2 must go in that container! C2 is the only place to put it, so *C2*=2. This is a common pattern, and you'll find it useful to look for containers in which all but one cell are adjacent to the same digit.

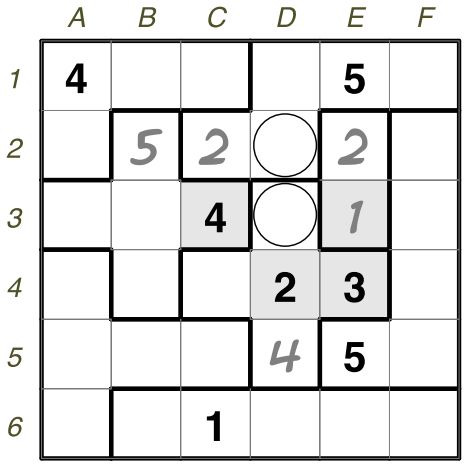


Now there are a few cells which have four unique solved numbers adjacent to them, leaving only one possibility. For example, *D5*, not yet solved, is adjacent to the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5. *D5* can't be any of those digits, so it must be the one that's missing: *D5*=4.

Can you find any other cells like this?

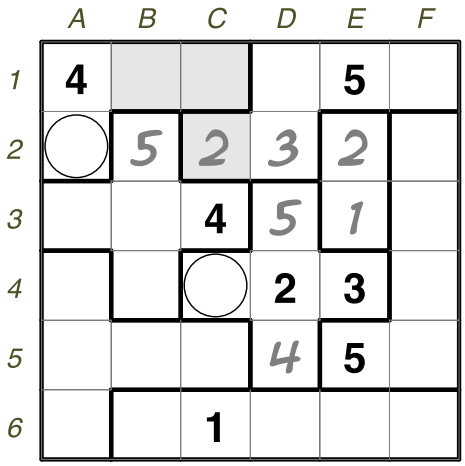
If you look closely, you'll see that *D3*=5, because of its neighbors. Once you've filled that in, you'll find that *D2*=3, using the same kind of logic.

In both cases there are 4 neighbors which eliminate all but one number as possibilities.

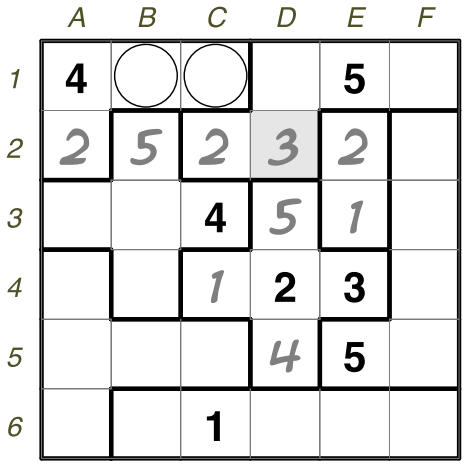


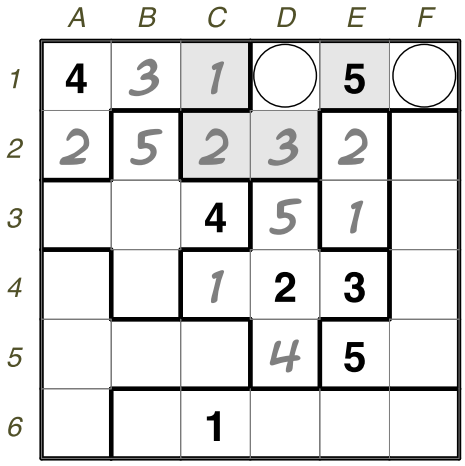
Now, since *C4* is the only unsolved cell in its container, *C4*=1. Easy!

Going back to the container on the upper left (*A1*, *B1*, *C1*, and *A2*) with only four cells, two of those cells, *B1* and *C1* are adjacent to a 2, which means there is only one space left to put a 2: *A2*=2.

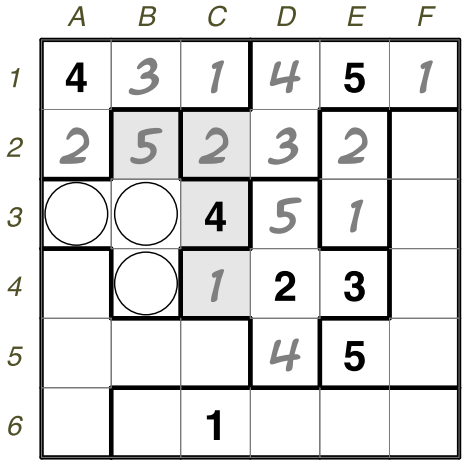


B1 and *C1*, the remaining unsolved cells in a four cell container, must contain the numbers 1 and 3. Since *C1* is adjacent to a 3, it must be 1. *C1*=1 and *B1*=3.



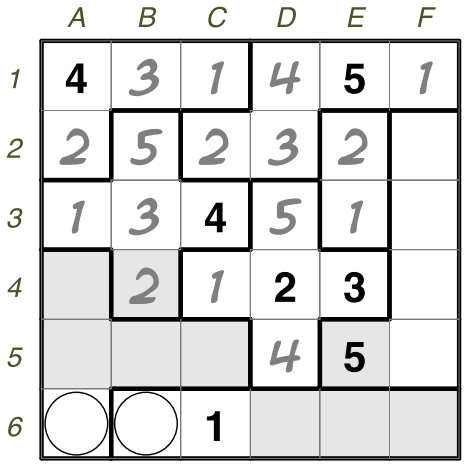


Once you've filled those in you'll find that *D1* has four unique adjacent digits (1, 2, 3, and 5), so we can put in the missing *D1*=4, and then fill in the last remaining cell in that cage with *F1*=1.



We can now complete the plus-shaped container which contains *B2*, *A3*, *B3*, *C3*, and *B4*. Its center cell, *B3*, is adjacent to all the numbers but 3, so *B3*=3.

Then you'll see that the container's bottom cell, *B4* (which must be 2 or 1) is adjacent to a 1, so *B4*=2, and *A3*=1.



Now we've put the 2 in *B4* adjacent to four enclosed cells (*A4*, *A5*, *B5*, and *C5*), so we can add a 2 to *A6*, the only cell in its container where a 2 is now possible. *A6*=2.

Similarly, the bottom right three squares (*D6*, *E6* and *F6*) are all adjacent to the 5 in *E5*, so the remaining cell in that container is the only place where you can put a 5. *B6*=5.

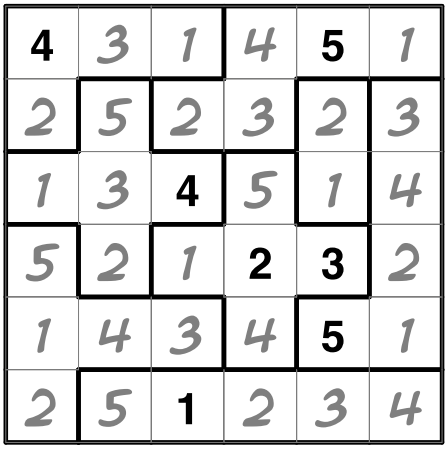
We can place the 4 in the same container using similar logic, *F6*=4.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	4	3	1	4	5	1
2	2	5	2	3	2	
3	1	3	4	5	1	
4		2	1	2	3	
5				4	5	
6	2	5	1			◯

If you continue using these techniques, you can complete the puzzle without too much trouble.

Give it a try! The answer is shown on the next page.

4	3	1	4	5	1
2	5	2	3	2	
1	3	4	5	1	
	2	1	2	3	
			4	5	
2	5	1			4



To recap:

1. Find small containers - they have fewer digit possibilities and can often be solved early.

2. Look for cells that are surrounded by all but one number. Either the numbers are explicitly filled out, or they are implicit (because they belong to the same container).

3. Look for containers in which all but one remaining cell are adjacent to the same number (the nonadjacent cell must be that number).

4. And of course, don't forget to look for cages in which all but one value are already filled.

These strategies will help you solve many of the puzzles in this book, but we've barely dipped into the tactics you can use to solve these puzzles.

When you get stuck on a more difficult puzzle, you'll probably find it useful to mark each unsolved cell with the possible numbers that it might contain. These markings can help you make further progress, and as you erase these numbers, you can solve cells using the process of elimination.

Over time, you'll develop more skills, as you encounter new challenges. Discovering how to effectively solve these puzzles is half the fun!

Happy Solving!

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