

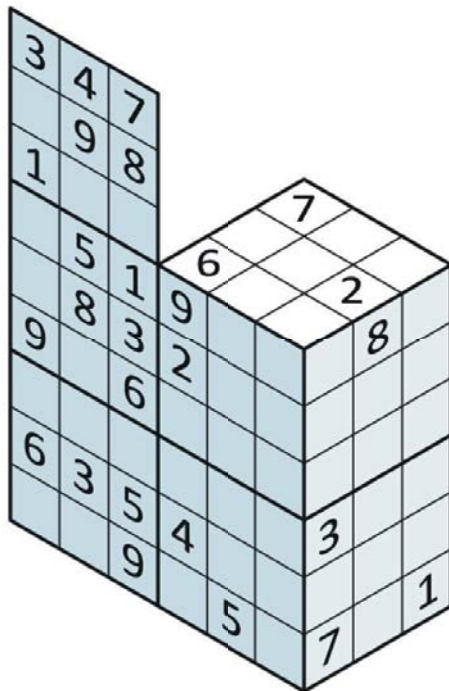
Samurai Sudoku No 920 — Medium

8		2	7				7	5	1				
	1		6		2		1		6	2			
	9		1		3	4			2	8		3	
5	7		3				6	1	3		4	2	9
9			1	2		5		3	2	4	6		1
1	4	8	7					2	1				
			4				6	8				6	
7	4				8	7						1	7
8				6					4			5	
			6	2			9						
			5		9	8		7					
				4			5	1					
2			5					8					5
7	1						4	9			4	7	
	4				7	8			1				
			9	6					2	8	1	4	
3			4	5	8	7		5	8	4			6
5	1	9			7		4	2		6	5	3	
8		9	2					5	1	8	6		
	7			4				6	4		2		
		7		2	9				7	9		4	

Tredoku

No 1834 — Hard

Tredoku is similar to Sudoku: the digits 1 to 9 must appear once only in each 3x3 box and in each line of nine consecutive cells. However, since the puzzle is three-dimensional, the lines may be straight or bent around angles. Follow each line's direction in search of clues.



Square Routes®

No 267 — Medium

Ian Simpson & Richard Heald

		*	*	
*	*			*
		*		
*			*	*
	*		*	

ATLANTIS
AVALON
ISLA
NUBLAR
LILLIPUT
SULA
UTOPIA

Put one letter in each cell so that each word on the right can be spelt out by moving from cell to cell without using diagonal moves. You can use a cell more than once in a word (including backtracking into a cell you've just used), but double letters (eg. the LL in ALL) must use two adjacent cells. The words start in the coloured cells and the vowels are shown by asterisks.

Sudoku No 14,852 — Fiendish

				2	1
		6	2	9	
			4	7	6
				8	7
	1		4		5
	5	2			9
6	8	1	7		
		3		5	
2		8	9		3

How to solve Sudoku. Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9

Stuck on KenKen, Killer or Sudoku?

Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Killer No 9427 — Deadly

38	19			23		26		
		24				20		8
			20					
				22		15		
		32						
	15			23			18	
					27			17
18				9			6	
15		10						

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated. **For solutions to KenKen, Sudoku & Killer see Times2 on Monday**

KenKen No 6186 — Medium

2÷		12+	3+		15×
3-			3-		
	60×		3÷	1-	
12+				17+	
		8+			2÷
	1-		1-		

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Cryptic Quintagram®

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Flex is firm, by the way (4)

2 Surly individual at the end lagging behind (5)

3 Struggle as doctor gets into jacket (6)

4 Attempt to possess silver ring (4,1,2)

5 Trendy saying we hear wears thin after earlier excitement (4,6)

—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
A	A	A	A	B	B	C	C
D	E	E	G	G	H	H	M
M	O	O	O	P	P	R	R
R	S	T	U	U	V	Z	Z

Word Watch

David Parfitt

Diuturnal

- a. Long-lasting
- b. Occurring in daytime
- c. Having two uses

Moxie

- a. To baffle or confuse
- b. A clumsy oaf
- c. Energy, vigour

Oviposit

- a. To assert as fact
- b. To lay an egg
- c. A venomous snake

Crassamentum

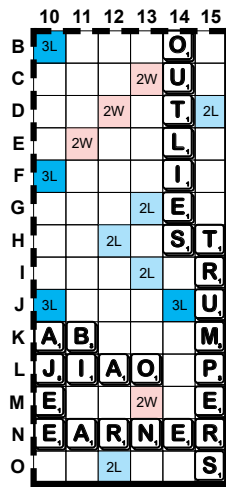
- a. A blood clot
- b. A sanctified ritual
- c. A hoard of riches

Scrabble® Paul Gallen

Last week's announcement concerning the release of Scrabble Together garnered considerable publicity. For those who missed the media coverage, an alternative version of Scrabble will be playable when one purchases a physical set. The new double-sided Scrabble board will still feature the original game for those who want to play the traditional version. The new game will include "helper" cards, use a simpler scoring system and be quicker to play as well as allowing people to compete in teams.

Ray Adler, the vice-president and global head of games at Mattel, was widely quoted as saying that the new version provides an alternative for those who feel intimidated by the classic game. Are there ways that the traditional game could be made less intimidating?

One area that can daunt players is the act of challenging an opponent's word. In a recent tournament game involving last year's Wespa Championship runner-up, Harshan Lamabadusuriya, his opponent did not challenge an invalid move of TRUMPERS*, as shown on the board extract opposite. The play scored 185 points, but Lamabadusuriya's opponent was possibly afraid to question the word recall



of one of the world's best players even though the move all but ended the game as a contest.

The challenge penalty itself can also be daunting. For example, US events generally play to a "double-challenge" rule whereby a failed challenge results in missing a turn. This often leads to a number of invalid words remaining on the board, with players afraid of losing their turn.

Consider the board below, which is from a recent US game. Which words would you challenge? There are two words on the board which do not feature in Collins Official Scrabble Words.

Collins Official Scrabble Words is the word authority used. Word positions use the grid reference plus (a)cross or (d)own.

2L double letter square (dl) 3L triple letter square (tl) 2W double word square (dw) 3W triple word square (tw)

Letter values
 1 point: A E I O U L N R S T
 2 points: D G
 3 points: B C M P
 4 points: F H V W Y
 K = 5
 J X = 8
 Q Z = 10

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Chess David Howell

Glorious Gukesh

Whatever the denouement of this year's Candidates Tournament, the event will be remembered for years to come as a historic clash of generations.

So far, blood has been spilled in almost every round. Indeed, at the time of writing this column, the 2024 edition of the Candidates Tournament has surpassed all of its predecessors in number of decisive results at the same stage. Ahead of the concluding rounds in Toronto this weekend, it is still unclear who will emerge triumphant and qualify to challenge for the world title.

Of the more experienced players, Ian Nepomniachtchi has been the most consistent. The 33-year-old excels under pressure, and he has added layers of solidity to his game in recent years. Having twice previously won the Candidates, he possesses the know-how to get the job done.

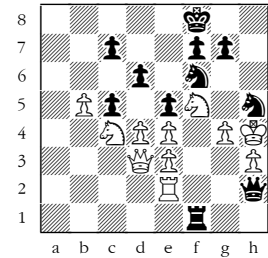
On the other side of the age range, India's Dommaraju Gukesh has also made a big impact. The 17-year-old has confounded many of the pre-tournament predictions, displaying the energy and hunger of youth combined with a psychological toughness that belies his years.

It would send shockwaves around the world if a teenager were to become world champion. A powerful Round 8 masterclass was proof that Gukesh believes he is ready.

White: Santosh Gujrathi Vidit
Black: Dommaraju Gukesh
FIDE Candidates Tournament, Toronto 2024
Italian Game

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 d3 a6 5 0-0 The aggressive 5 Ng5 is well met by 5...d5 6 exd5 Na5. 5...h6 These provocative pawn pushes are usually too slow. However, here White lacks sufficient resources to punish the opponent. 6 d4 exd4 7 e5 d5 8 exf6 dxc4 is fully acceptable for Black. 6 a4 Bc5 7 Be3 d6 8 Nbd2 Black does not mind 8 Bxc5 dxc5, when control over the d4-square fully compensates for the doubled c-pawns. 8...0-0 9 c3 Re8 10 b4 Bxe3 11 fxe3 Be6 12 b5 Impatient. This allows Gukesh to later open the a-file on his terms. 12 Bxe6 Rxe6 13 Qc2, keeping options open, gives an equal middlegame. 12...Nb8 13 Bxe6 Rxe6 14 Qc2 Nbd7 15 d4 Qe8 16 Rael? Feeling the pressure building on his e4-pawn, Vidit forfeits the fight for the a-file. 16 d5 looks strategically undesirable as Black gets the c5-outpost, but after 16...Re7 17 c4 Nc5 18 Nh4 White creates counterplay on the kingside. 16...axb5 17 axb5 Ra5 18 c4 Qa8 19 h3 Re8 Gukesh calmly regroups his major pieces to infiltrate via the a-file. Already running low on the clock and lacking a productive plan, Vidit starts to buckle. 20 Kh2 b6 21 Rf2 Ra2 22 Qd3 Ra3 Such is Black's dominance, even 22...Qa3 would give a winning advantage. White's pawn structure will soon collapse. 23 Qb1 Qa4 24 Nh4 Ra8 25 Nf5 Kf8! An emphatic defensive move, pre-

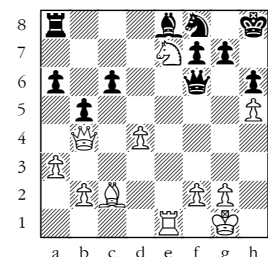
venting a check on e7. White's temporary activity is sadly going nowhere. 26 Rf1 Ra1 27 Qd3 Qb4 28 Rxa1 Rxa1 29 c5? A desperate attempt to muddy the waters. This loses immediately, though 29 Nf3 Ra3 30 Qc2 g6 sees White's central pawn mass start to creak. 29...bxc5 30 Nc4? Qe1! The iceberg hits, and Vidit's ship sinks. Checkmate or massive material losses are inevitable as the White king gets chased up the board. 31 Re2 Qg1+ 32 Kg3 Nh5+ 33 Kh4 Ndf6 34 Nxf6 Preventing 34...g5 mate. 34...Qh2 35 Nf5 Rf1 36 g4



Black's pieces have swarmed towards the enemy king. Gukesh finishes in style. 36...Rxf5! Showing off an impressive killer instinct. 37 exf5 Alas 37 Rxb2 g5 is a brutal pawn checkmate. 37...Qg3+ 38 Kg5 Nh7+ White resigns 39 Kh5 Qxh3 mate is the end of the white king's journey.

Winning Move

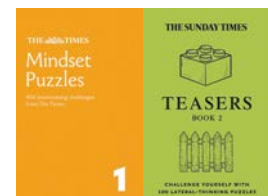
White to play. Nakamura-Caruaena, Toronto 2024. Black's pieces have been pushed back. Which killer blow did Hikaru Nakamura now land against his American rival?



The first correct entry drawn on Thursday wins The Times Mindset Puzzles Book 1 and The Sunday Times Teasers Book 2. Two runners-up will receive a book prize. Answers on a postcard to: The Times Winning Move, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or email to: winningmove@thetimes.co.uk. Open to 18+, UK and ROI residents only. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's puzzle: 1 Nxb7+! wins: 1...Bxg7 2 Qh5+ Kf8 3 Qf7 mate

The winner is Edward Clutton of Stotfold, Bedfordshire. The runners-up are Mike Fell of Stockton-on-Tees, Co Durham, and Tony Mackintosh of London N6.



Codeword No 5194

25	19	25	15	7	19		25	7	5	22	26	19	
23		5		5				19		12		3	
5	4	2	15	14			15	10	7	15	14	15	17
15		5		17			21		19		12		19
9	12	4	25	24	20	21		14	19	4	18	19	
6		2					10		13			22	
		25	13	15	13	19	4	12	12	7			
7				4			16				12		12
5	18	5	10	15			15	7	12	4	12	5	25
4		21		2			17		22		4		21
7	20	25	6	20	17	6		12	13	24	19	4	
5		19		17				5		19		19	
4	15	13	13	15	14		1	4	19	14	11	8	

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid. Proper nouns are excluded.

Stuck on Codeword? To receive four random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

times2 Crossword No 9510

1	2		3		4		5		6		7	
	8											
9					10		11					
12	13						14		15			
16			17						18		19	
20							21					
							22			23		

Across

- 1 Large medical establishment (8)
- 6 --- anglais, woodwind instrument (3)
- 8 Hill combining several health supplements (12)
- 9 US "Buckeye" state (4)
- 10 Learn by heart (8)
- 12 Rector, vicar (6)
- 14 Burrowing rodent of North America (6)

Down

- 16 Vowed (8)
- 18 Burden of responsibility (4)
- 20 Go ---, fail to be comprehended (4,4,4)
- 22 Use a 6D (3)
- 23 Codes denoting food additives (1-7)
- 2 Extra force (5)
- 3 Bed cushions (7)
- 4 Traditional accompaniments (9)
- 5 Hawaiian floral garland (3)
- 6 Piece of furniture (5)
- 7 Publish again (7)
- 11 Capital city of Somalia (9)
- 13 Reaches a destination (7)
- 15 Common saying (7)
- 17 Above-average exam mark (5)
- 19 Below (5)
- 21 Word used to indicate a maiden name (3)

Solution to Crossword 9509

B	E	L	F	R	Y	P	U	R	E			
U	O	U	W	E	U							
A	L	S	O	L	E	A	R	N	I	N	G	
L	S	E	T	D	I							
D	I	G	E	S	T	C	H	A	I	N		
S	H	H	N									
C	H	A	N	G	E	O	F	S	T	A	T	E
O	R	U										
T	A	N	G	O	L	A	T	E	S	T		
I	A	O	N	A	T							
L	A	R	G	E	S	S	E	M	A	I	L	
R	O	T	S	A	F							
R	A	I	N	A	S	T	R	A	I			

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Mindset by 700

1. Decode, answer and encode to obtain four related words:

- a) GDNALSI GHTRON GFO GAILARTSUA (6)
- b) MOREASURE OORF SORPEED (5)
- c) SWHA RGHOST ND (5)
- d) AUSTRALIBT MARSUPIBR (7)

2. My glass of water was full to the brim, but I decided not to drink any until all of the ice had melted. "You'll need to mop up the excess that spills over as it melts." said the Mindset intern. **Were they right?**

3. Put in a different logical order:

CAP, COCKATOO, FINCH, HAMMER, OWL, START, TIT

Literary Quiz

The Times Literary Desk

Throw 'em a bone

Name the book (and its author) from the dog that appears in it

- 1 Bull's-eye (1838)
- 2 Buck (1903)
- 3 Toto (1900)
- 4 Six-Thirty (2022)

The Listener Crossword No 4812 **Six Seconds** by Kruger

Senders of the first three correct entries drawn will receive *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* or may choose from a selection of other books (see below). Send your entry with contact details completed to: Listener Crossword 4812, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, to arrive by May 2.

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11
		12						13			14	
15						16						
17												
18	19				20		21					
22							23	24				25
			26							27		
28						29		30				
31				32						33		
34		35			36	37	38					39
40										41		
42					43							
44							45					

Prize options and more at listencrossword.com

More information about Chambers books can be found at chambers.co.uk

Extra:

Name.....
 Address.....
 Postcode..... Phone/email.....

Clues are given in alphabetical order of their answers, which must be entered where they fit. In each clue the wordplay leads to the answer with an extra letter that is not entered in the grid; in normal grid order, these letters describe the extra item that must be entered below the grid. Six entries are unclued and must be completed according to their entry numbers; the combined Scrabble value of their unchecked letters is 28. *The Chambers Dictionary* (2016) is the primary reference; one answer is an abbreviation.

Clues

- Trouble concealing pig on base (6)
- Enthusiastically supports preposterous swindle involving miner's land (8)
- Handle taken? That's unfortunate (4)
- During most of month, seeks out fun times in Chamonix? (8)
- Military's stock back channels not prepared (7)
- With reduced leisure, I start to appreciate many lands in the east (4)
- Representation online advanced very essential oil (6)
- Political faction regularly ensures entrance (6)
- Corbett's funny story, timeless but endlessly twisted (4)
- Bidding system to examine amateur games (6)
- Unobstructed vehicle outside under control (5)
- Religious institution set up in Lancashire town (7)
- Last Burmese title to be adopted by Europe shortly (8)
- Tyrant with case of illegal plunder (7)
- Falsify small article in *Charlie Hebdo* (6)
- Czech Republic stops English team circulating complaint (6)
- At one time, senility affected ladies, before being ignored (4)
- Old master taken in by Brussels bird (4)
- Revolutionary characters necessary to unleash nefarious wartime entertainers (4)
- Diminutive person supporting ROI recluse (7)

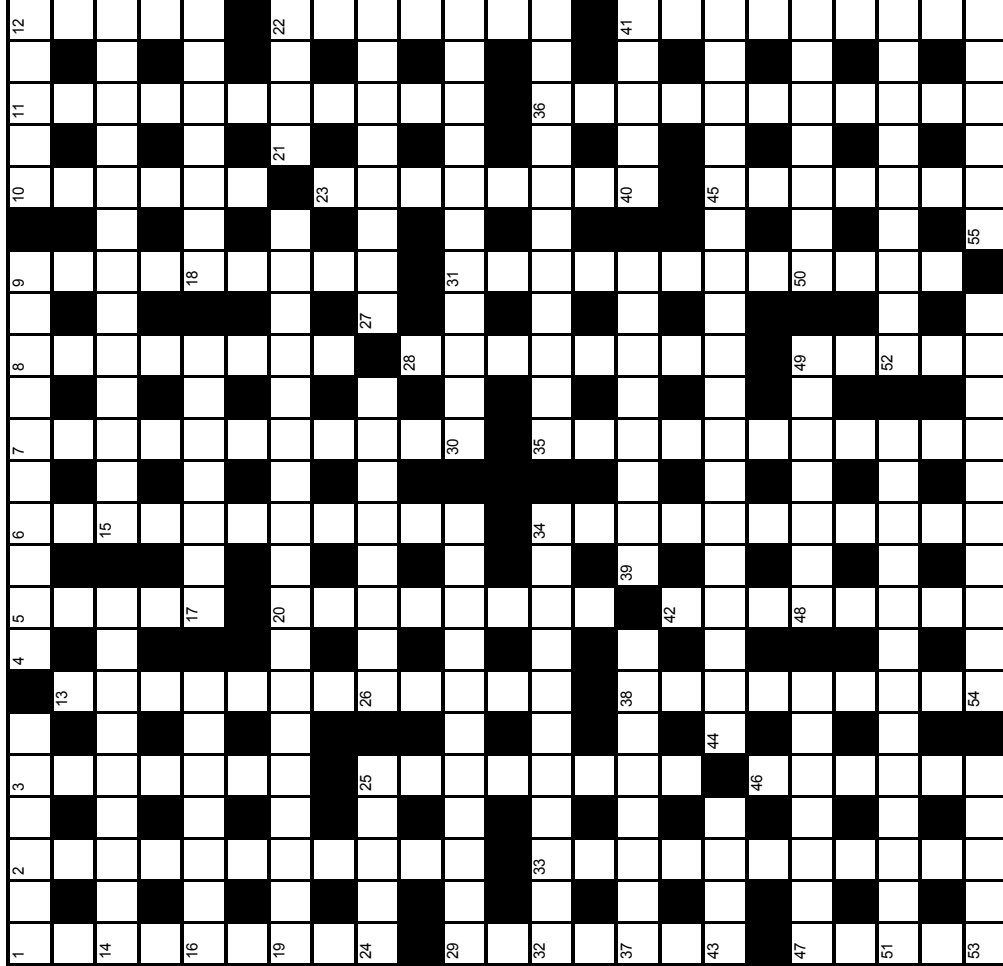
- Ghanaian without any name forgets an adult, Phoebe's mother (4)
- One to influence waders (4)
- Fool papers into erring (5)
- Current charge upset hero (4)
- United research originally modified egg inside the womb (7, two words)
- Fly commercial placed in supplement (4)
- Milky loaf, not half cold — that's not right (6)
- Worker, for one, wears dull cloak (5)
- Lambert fed ram rotten fruit (6)
- Rising marker-buoy containing pretty useless beacons finally helps for shipping (7)
- Dark blue vehicle going west to New York (4)
- False denial concerning nest (5)
- Something possibly recognised by taste, soft and perfect after cooking (7)
- Plant tissue blite developed in wavy style (8)
- French car maker changed get-up, installing member backwards (7)
- Oppose the lady backing band with no tenor (5)
- Length of old Egyptian precious metal pieces (5)
- Take back dodgy caterer with regret in the end (7)
- Forward pass (4)
- Southern sandpiper bears anterior stripe (6)
- "Odd marks in there", I monotonously repeat (8)
- Once a hustler, tense governor's left for base (5)
- Religious adherent isn't hit with a ban (7)

Jumbo crossword No 1669

Cryptic clues

Across

- 1 Too old? True, about fifty (6)
- 4 European, before spring, mainly trained in rosy footwear (10)
- 10 One emperor backed follower of another (5)
- 14 With stiff upper lip, there's nothing I demand, squallidly housed (9)
- 15 Innocence not so much seen in barrister's first feeble point (13)
- 16 Imagined odds of perfect finish (7)
- 17 Get around or above it at sea (7)
- 18 Fit singular form of Buddhist mystical text, you might think (7)
- 19 Strangely, read and act no play after Chekhov? That's a tragedy (6,3,9)
- 21 Scottish group's contribution to Gaelic language (4)
- 24 Fool one by one in strike (5)
- 26 Clear stuff from what we hear at church and pass on (8)
- 27 Two possibilities for movement found in recreational space (8)
- 29 Half-hearted pledge about favourite I have that's on a par with rivals (11)
- 30 Don't leave religious group for what looks like just another branch (5,6)
- 32 Doctor clad a rich infant cutely, initially, in what's fashionable and pink? (7,4)
- 35 Bring in vino in part of house for this activity? (4,7)
- 37 Hypothesis initially dropped by the firm, open to checking (8)
- 39 Yearly cost of accommodation in relation to older pair (8)
- 40 Gather after a celebration in church (5)
- 43 Order to dismiss or fire all but the last (4)
- 44 Reverse a fixed routine in killing, destroy our violent disruption of society (8,10)
- 47 A version of Bible included in set for Cambridge University (7)
- 48 What may be taken innocently with unknown treatment (7)
- 50 Part of poetic line appearing ahead of time in film part (7)
- 51 Absurdly, he preselects a competitor in race (13)
- 52 Some cut is altogether peculiar to tailor (9)
- 53 Nincompoop concealing past that's deeply alarming (5)
- 54 Therapist stole gripping film (6-4)
- 55 Silly damn emergency — totally evacuated state capital (6)
- 1 Food routes Osage and Hopi interchanged (9)
- 2 Personality problem exemplified by Gregory? (11)
- 3 With no leaders, elect her in speaker's position (7)
- 5 Authority to pronounce part of essay's OK (3-2)
- 6 Feel divided about values — not half, producing this? (11)
- 7 Financial doctrine having Americans go round the bend? (11)
- 8 Call set up including one who gave noble service (8)
- 9 English learner getting shock treatment before exam in this kind of college (9)
- 10 Revolting kind of behaviour on the increase (6)
- 11 I blunder in transaction with a part of Africa (6,5)
- 12 A state in Eastern US, in short, upset another in East (5)
- 13 Over an ordeal about love, happy one is combative (12)
- 20 Highly dangerous conflict appropriate for boxer? (8)
- 22 Security worker turned over this ID (7)
- 23 James, say — name used on continent for European schools (8)
- 25 In which monarch no longer detains old Conservative government minister? (8)
- 28 Brief struggle to secure grand after deductions (8)
- 29 Selectively arranges some of the cloth? Doesn't sound like it (7)
- 31 Confine as in protest, unfriendly state of affairs (6,2,4)
- 33 It's awful 'cos it's rude and tacky, ultimately? (11)
- 34 President having enough academic jobs for all the boys (11)
- 35 Awed comment about football facility, right? One can move things along with it (11)
- 36 Creativity of gifted travellers in one country (11)
- 38 She washes area surrounding Hollywood strip (9)
- 41 In honest fashion on account of being with bank (9)
- 42 Series about small person — one finishing up in the theatre? (8)
- 45 Guy upset about crazy fools' study of mysterious visitors (7)
- 46 French author securing power in university position (6)
- 47 Stocking article and book (5)
- 49 From what we hear, this is why you seize a desert plant (5)



Prizes

The prize for each of the first correct solutions to the Cryptic and times2 Jumbo clues to be opened will be a collection of Times reference books including *The Times Reference Atlas of the World*, *Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus*, and *Bradford's Crossword Solver's Dictionary* published by HarperCollins. Entries should be marked "Cryptic" or "times2" and sent to: The Times Jumbo Crossword 1669, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or emailed to: jumbo@thetimes.co.uk with "Cryptic 1669" or "times2 1669" in the subject line, to arrive by May 2. Open to 18+ UK & ROI residents only. The winners and the solutions will be published on May 4.

Name.....

Address.....

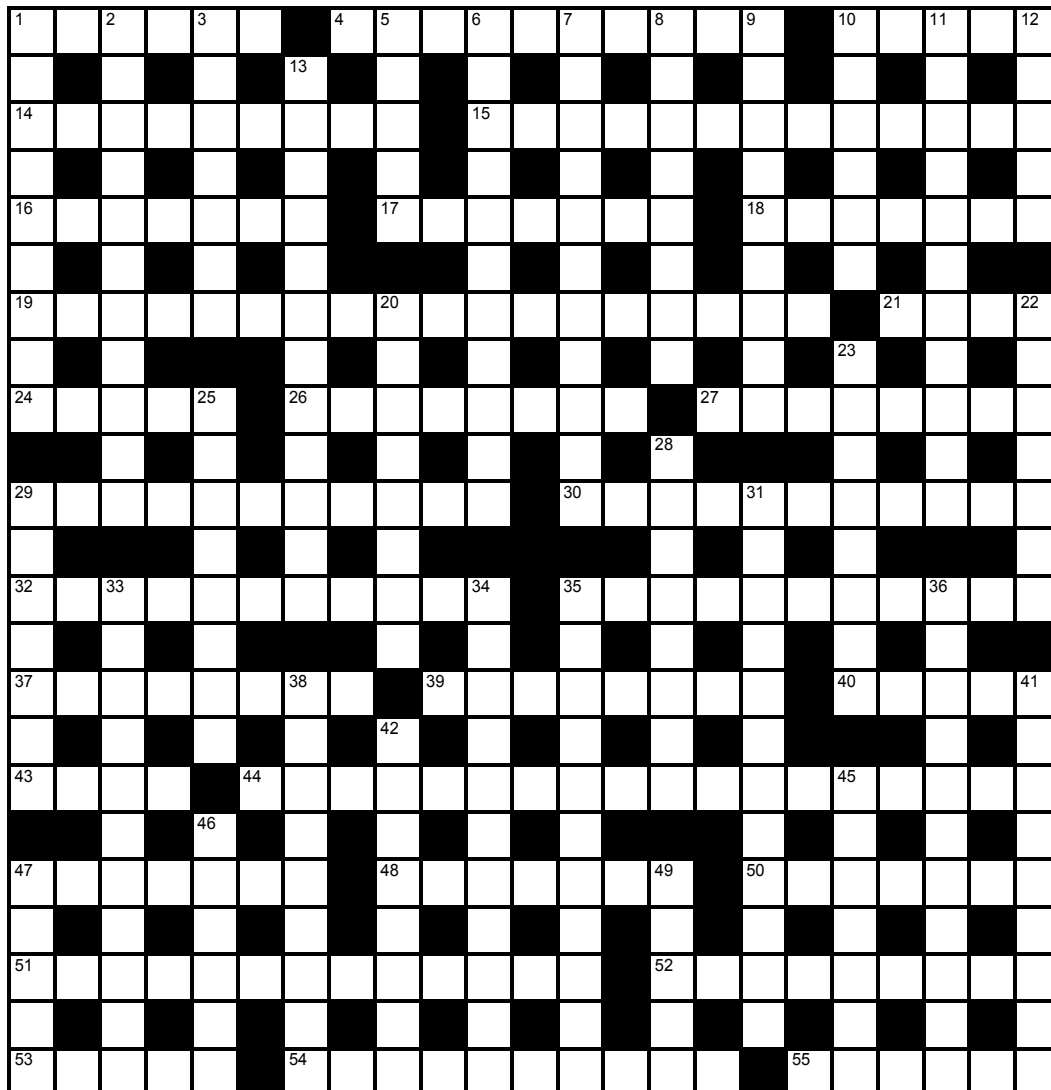
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..... Postcode.....

Phone number.....

Jumbo crossword No 1669



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Name.....
 Address.....

 Postcode.....
 Phone number.....

Across

- 1 Symbolic device or badge (6)
- 4 Rearing, training, education (10)
- 10 Go to see (5)
- 14 Organisation's staff members (9)
- 15 Acting in opposition (13)
- 16 Item used to pull a vehicle (7)
- 17 Large jug (7)
- 18 Lavish meal (7)
- 19 Ice-covered region to the south of South America (9,9)
- 21 Hairless (4)
- 24 Characteristic spirit of a culture or era (5)
- 26 Component of military force (3,5)
- 27 Quotation (8)
- 29 Difficult problem to be solved (7,4)
- 30 Producer of a powerful beam (11)
- 32 Opposing political union (11)
- 35 Small bird of prey (11)
- 37 Have an effect on each other (8)
- 39 Paid worker (8)
- 40 Man's name (5)
- 43 Benefit (4)

- 44 Unambiguously (2,2,9,5)
- 47 North American reindeer (7)
- 48 Sports venue (7)
- 50 Coarse fabric (7)
- 51 Approved, definitive (13)
- 52 Very chatty (9)
- 53 Supporting bandage (5)
- 54 Lack of movement (10)
- 55 Altitude (6)

Down

- 1 Speak or write in detail (on) (9)
- 2 One interested in ornithology (4-7)
- 3 Green holiday activity (7)
- 5 Small growth (5)
- 6 Create trouble (4,3,4)
- 7 Disobedient behaviour (11)
- 8 Engage the attention of (8)
- 9 Italian patriot; biscuit (9)
- 10 Llama relative (6)
- 11 Animating, exciting (11)
- 12 Give medical care to (5)
- 13 Not restricted (12)
- 20 Relating to the heart's arteries (8)
- 22 City of eastern Ukraine (7)
- 23 Consecrated (8)
- 25 Famous wartime RAF fighter (8)
- 28 Substance aiding a reaction (8)
- 29 Highly obvious; staring angrily (7)
- 31 Famous New York concert venue (8,4)
- 33 Variety of ice cream (5-6)
- 34 Passionate expression of grief (11)
- 35 Not needing to be explained (4-7)
- 36 Publicising (a product or event) (S, not Z) (11)
- 38 Chinese philosopher (9)
- 41 Treat to destroy bacteria (9)
- 42 Republic in southern Africa (8)
- 45 Having made a valid will (7)
- 46 Rectangular (6)
- 47 Form; category (5)
- 49 Underground railway system (5)

Bridge Andrew Robson

This was an exciting deal from the Young Chelsea Bridge Club Women's Swiss Teams.

Dealer South E-W Vul

♠ K 8 4 3
 ♥ 8 4 2
 ♦ 10 9 7 6 2
 ♣ 9
 ♠ -
 ♥ K J 6 5 3
 ♦ K Q 8 5
 ♣ 10 6 4 2
 N E
 W S
 ♠ Q 6 2
 ♥ A Q 10 9 7
 ♦ A 4 3
 ♣ K J
 ♠ A J 10 9 7 5
 ♥ -
 ♦ J
 ♣ A Q 8 7 5 3

Table One

S	W	N	E
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass(1)
4♠	end		

(1) You could say, "Too dangerous to bid." Or you could say, "Too dangerous to pass." I'd go the latter route.

West led the king of diamonds, winning, and switched to a heart. Declarer ruffed, cashed the ace of clubs, ruffed a club (bringing down East's king), cashed the king of spades (West discarding), finessed the jack and ruffed a third club. East overruffed with the queen and, with clubs established, declarer claimed 11 tricks. A quietish result and N-S +450.

Table Two

S	W	N	E
1♠	Pass	2♠	3♥
4♣(1)	4♥	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♥	Pass	Pass
Pass(2)			

(1) Natural second-suit bid to help partner to judge.
 (2) Shouldn't South keep on bidding — after all, "Six-Six, stay in the mix"?

Declarer (East) ruffed South's hopeful ace of spades lead in dummy, cashed the king of hearts (exposing the 3-0 split) and tried a club to the jack. South could win the queen and cash the ace, but declarer could ruff South's third club in hand, draw two more rounds of trumps, and enjoy the promoted ten of clubs and the three top diamonds. Eleven tricks and 5♠ made. E-W +650.

The real sparks flew at Table Three, when West made a sporting double of 1♠. The auction acquired momentum — lots of it.

Table Three

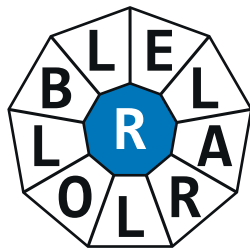
S	W	N	E
1♠	Dbf(1)	3♠(2)	6♥(3)
6♠	Pass	Pass	Dbf(4)
end			

(1) I like it — the perfect shape.
 (2) Bidding up after the double.
 (3) Bullish but knows partner is very short in spades. Give partner a suitable (sub)minimum such as ♠x ♥KJxx ♦xxx ♣AQxxx, and 6♥ is easy.
 (4) "I have 16 points and you doubled 1♠ ..."

Declarer at Table One made only 11 tricks in spades — but she could afford to. Not so here. West cashed the king of diamonds and switched to a heart. Declarer ruffed and played ace of clubs-ruff a club (as had declarer at Table One).

However, placing East with ♠Qxx, declarer now finessed the jack of spades (key play). West duly discarding. She could now ruff a club with the king of spades, finesse the ten, cash the ace felling East's queen, and run clubs. Doubled slam made and N-S +1,210.

Polygon Roger Phillips



Using the given letters no more than once, make as many words as possible of four or more letters, always including the central letter. Capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives are disallowed.

How you rate: 15 words average; 20, good; 28, very good; 36, excellent.

Cell Blocks 5077

2		4	2
			6
2			6 2
2			
2			3 4
			4
	6	2	2

Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Train Tracks
No 2224

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.
 Solution on Monday

	1	1	4	5	4	3	4	4
A								4
								2
								3
								1
								5
								5
								4
								2
							B	

Solutions

Solution to last week's Samurai Sudoku

4 2 7 6 9 3 1 5 8	3 7 9 8 2 4 1 6 5
9 5 1 2 8 7 4 6 3	6 4 5 1 7 9 2 3 8
8 3 6 5 1 4 7 9 2	8 1 2 3 5 6 9 4 7
1 8 3 7 5 6 9 2 4	5 6 1 4 9 8 7 2 3
2 6 5 3 4 9 8 1 7	7 9 3 6 1 2 5 8 4
7 4 9 8 2 1 6 3 5	2 8 4 7 3 5 6 9 1
3 1 4 9 7 5 2 8 6 3 1 9 4 5 7 2 6 3 8 1 9	9 2 4 6 8 1 3 7 5
6 7 8 1 3 2 5 4 9 8 7 2 1 3 6 9 8 7 4 5 2	1 5 8 7 9 3 2 6 4
5 9 2 4 6 8 3 7 1 5 4 6 9 2 8 5 4 1 3 7 6	6 3 7 2 5 4 8 9 1
2 5 1 6 4 8 7 9 3 4 6 8 5 1 2 3 7 4 8 9 6	3 8 9 5 1 7 4 6 2 1 3 5 7 8 9 6 2 5 4 1 3
7 6 4 9 2 3 8 1 5 9 2 7 6 4 3 8 1 9 2 7 5	4 1 6 8 5 2 9 3 7 3 7 5 4 9 2 1 6 8
8 3 2 1 7 9 6 5 4 2 6 1 7 8 3 9 5 4	9 7 5 3 6 4 2 8 1 8 9 4 5 6 1 3 2 7
5 9 7 4 8 1 3 2 6 6 2 3 7 9 5 1 4 8	1 3 6 2 4 7 5 8 9
1 4 8 2 3 6 5 7 9 4 2 7 9 5 8 6 3 1	9 5 8 1 3 6 7 4 2

Our five-grid Sudoku will test your powers of logic and deduction.

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length. The interlocking nature of the grid gives you more clues — and more complexity.

Remember — don't try to solve each Sudoku grid in turn; the puzzle has to be tackled as a whole.

Stuck? Call 0901 293 6263 to receive four clues for today's Samurai Sudoku. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm)

Times Crossword No 28,896

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9												10		
11								12						
						13								
		14								15				
16														
17		18										19		
														20
21				22					23					
								24						
25				26										
27								28						

Across

- 1 Rubbish celebrity almost securing a great deal (7)
- 5 Backsliding British publication went ahead and took risks (7)
- 9 Provide food, support and help with moving things? (11)
- 10 Drink in the bar regularly (3)
- 11 Silly Republican in daft clothing? (6)
- 12 Artist is corrupt and about to steal lead from churches (8)
- 14 So her fancy meal has scope for fungus (5,8)
- 17 Very insignificant thing featuring in terribly asinine film (13)
- 21 Again accept when to open an American's CV (8)
- 23 A number of houses close to collapse, say (6)
- 25 Bones from fish turned over (3)
- 26 Party guest leaving us to collect that lady (3-8)

- 27 Identical signatures always primarily included in TV intro music? (3,4)
- 28 Accomplished revolutionary ripped apart French philosopher (7)

Down

- 1 Gradually tire going round clubs after a show (6)
- 2 Huge tail of distinct, brightly coloured bird (7)
- 3 Empty container in a prison redesigned for waste material (5,4)
- 4 Head of state on the radio (4)
- 5 Sandwich possibly good, certainly with large filling (4,6)
- 6 Decent mark on exam (5)
- 7 Forget about that bird trapped among bricks! (3,2,2)
- 8 Plans to assist lifting some weight (8)
- 13 Measure beat in heart (10)
- 15 Paths made around an area of London (9)
- 16 Crim stirred up trouble over some LSD (8)
- 18 Money paid to host one political group in Pretoria, as intended (7)
- 19 Hide from everyone at first in state of agitation (7)
- 20 Media magnate tries acquiring Time (6)
- 22 Mark ignores final part of suspect letter from overseas (5)
- 24 School somehow managed with power cut (2-2)

Solution No 28,895

T	O	P	F	L	I	G	H	T	D	R	W	H	O	
W	A	O	A	O	R	H	U							
I	N	S	T	R	I	M	E	N	T	A	L	I	S	T
N	S	I	P	G	M	T	F							
E	U	R	E	K	A	S	U	L	A	W	E	S	I	
O	E	C	E	S	C	T								
H	O	U	S	E	P	A	R	T	Y	W	H	I	T	
A	N	T	D	I	M	A	E							
S	I	D	E	G	A	M	E	K	E	E	P	E	R	
D	T	A	V	D	D	E								
R	E	H	A	S	H	E	S	F	I	L	L	I	P	
U	E	H	R	I	O	R	O							
B	Y	H	O	O	K	O	R	B	Y	C	R	O	O	K
A	A	R	U	I	R	A	E							
L	I	T	H	E	S	U	S	P	E	N	D	E	R	