



**Sudoku** No 15,428 — Fiendish

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

**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 9811 — Deadly

19			21			12	
20	22		30		8		18
		15		24		14	12
						16	
19							
	18		22		13		23
				21			
		8		10	8		
23							9

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 6378 — Medium

6×		15+			7+
	3	11+			
2÷		2÷		9+	
9+		1-		6×	
2-	1-	5+	7+	1-	
					3

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  
15 training with the French (4)

— — — —  
25 confused and untidy, do we hear? (5)

— — — — —  
35 is one laying track? (5)

— — — — —  
45 on a drama broadcast (8)

— — — — — — — —  
5 Player smashed floor with table (10)

—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
A	A	A	A	B	D	E	E
E	E	E	F	H	I	L	L
L	M	M	N	N	O	O	O
P	R	R	R	S	S	T	Y

**Word Watch**

David Parfitt

**Saxatile**

- a. Rock-dwelling
- b. Hexagonal
- c. Salty

**Carceral**

- a. Made of charcoal
- b. A wild feline mammal
- c. Pertaining to prisons

**Reg**

- a. A monarch's sword
- b. A salmon's spawning area
- c. A stony desert

**Sawder**

- a. Riotous behaviour
- b. Wood chippings
- c. Flattery

Scrabble® Paul Gallen

Despite having won multiple English-language Scrabble world championships, the world No 1 Nigel Richards is often remembered primarily for his victories in the French equivalents in 2015 and 2018. As reported in my column of October 19, Richards entered the 2024 Spanish World Scrabble Championship in a bid to win another world title in a different language.

The event concluded earlier this month, and Richards did not disappoint as he won the championship with three rounds to spare. Incredibly, Richards only lost one game across the 24-game event. Following this victory, the New Zealander has now achieved the unprecedented feat of having won Scrabble world championships in three different languages.

So how can Richards, who cannot speak French or Spanish, win world championships against native speakers? Richards is not particularly interested in the meanings of the words and will instead learn those that are mathematically most likely to appear in Scrabble regardless of the language. He has also acquired over 30 years of experience honing his Scrabble strategy, and the key principles are very similar across languages.

Richards won the French and Spanish championships at

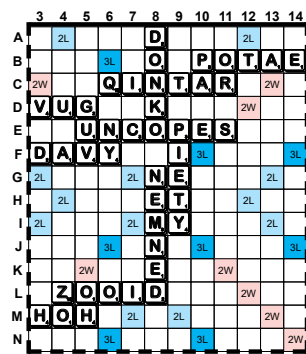
his first attempt, but it took him much longer to win his first English edition. He finally achieved this in 2007 and followed up in 2011 with a second title, defeating Andrew Fisher of Australia in the final. Here are two positions from that 2011 final.

Can you find Richards's 72-point bonus word from the third game, declaring the blank as D, using the following rack and the main board diagram underneath the column?

A E I O I R S

The final went to a decider. Richards's deployment of a bonus on the board extract below led to victory. Can you find his play using the following rack?

A G N R R R S T



**Definition**  
QINTAR an Albanian monetary unit

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
- 4 points: F H V W Y
- 2 points: D G
- 3 points: B C M P
- 3 points: L N R S T
- 4 points: J X = 8
- Q Z = 10
- K = 5

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Chess David Howell

Appetiser

On the eve of the Ding Liren versus Gukesh World Championship match, Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana travelled to Singapore for two games of Freestyle chess. While the entertainment value was high, this warm-up act was also a tacit reminder that the FIDE title bout would be missing the world's top two ranked players.

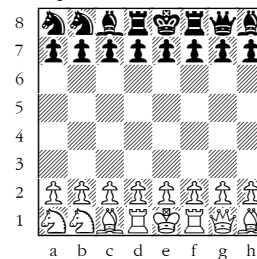
The Carlsen and Caruana clash was organised by the German entrepreneur Jan-Henric Buettner as an advertisement for his upcoming 2025 Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour. Amid media razzmatazz, the two rivals appeared in a James Bond-style photoshoot, playing chess shirtless in the iconic Marina Bay Sands infinity pool and later in an exclusive underground vault housing some of the world's most expensive art.

Carlsen has wholeheartedly embraced Freestyle chess, also known as Fischer Random or Chess 960. The shuffling of pieces on each side's back rank quickly leads to unique positions that bypass modern opening preparation and emphasise a player's creativity.

The first game featured Carlsen at his most ambitious, taking significant risks to win in daredevil style. He then hung on tenaciously to draw a difficult endgame in the second encounter to clinch the match by a score of 1.5 to 0.5.

Game 1 illustrated the defining challenge of Freestyle Chess: how to create order in a seemingly chaotic universe.

**White:** Magnus Carlsen  
**Black:** Fabiano Caruana  
**Freestyle Exhibition Match, Singapore 2024**  
Start position 87

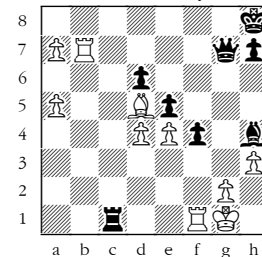


Among the peculiarities of this initial position, both sides begin with clumsy knights in the corner. 1 f4 Opening a diagonal for the queen and already creating a threat against the a7-pawn. 1...Nb6 2 Nc3 f5 3 Nb3 Na6 4 d3 e6 5 Be3 Carlsen remains consistent, this time hitting b6. Caruana responds energetically in wing gambit style. 5...g5 6 fxg5 e5 7 g4 Classic Carlsen, aiming for a recognisable pattern where he gains control over the light squares. 7...f4 8 axb6 9 Qxb6 9 Qxg5 10 Na5 Carlsen later confessed he "loved the sheer stupidity of just grabbing the pawn on b7". 10...O-O Castling can be confusing in Freestyle Chess, but essentially the pieces end up on the same squares as in traditional chess. In this case, the black king lands on g8 while the f8-rook

stays where it is. 11 Be4 Qh4+ Depriving the opponent of castling rights looks logical, but in fact the white king feels perfectly comfortable. 12 Kd2 Qe7 13 Bf5 Nc5 14 Ne4 Ne6 If 14...Nxe4+ 15 dxe4 Carlsen would have achieved everything he has been aiming for, as the bishop is untouchable on f5. 15 Bxe6+ Objectively a slight misstep. 15 Nxb7 Bxb7 16 Qxb7 Rb8 17 Bxe6+ Qxe6 18 Qc7 transposes to the game while reducing Caruana's options. 15...Qxe6 16 Nxb7 Bxb7 17 Qxb7 Rb8 Losing was 17...d5? due to 18 Qxh7+! Kxh7 19 Ng5+. However, the patient 18...Bg7! would have given Black the chance to strike next with ...d5. 18 Qc7 Rxb2? Opening the b-file proves disastrous. Activating the bishop with 18...Bf6 was better: 19 Nxf6+ Qxf6 20 Qxd7 e4 with counter-chances. 19 Rb1! Qxa2 Carlsen had calculated that 19...Rxa2 20 Rb7 Qxg4 21 Qxd7 Qxd7 22 Rxd7 leaves White winning thanks to his dominant knight and active rooks. 20 Rxb2 Qxb2 21 Qxd7 Qb4+ 22 c3 Qb2+ 23 Ke1 Bg7 We have reached a textbook example of good knight against bad bishop. White's knight rules the roost and supports a light-square bind. 23...Qc1+ 24 Kf2 Qe3+ 25 Kg2 Qxe2+ 26 Rf2 f3+ 27 Kg3 Bg7 28 Ng5 also favoured White. 24 Qe6+ Kh8 25 Rf3 Qc1+ 26 Kf2 Qh1 27 Rh3 f3 28 exf3 Rb8 29 g5! The definition of calm. Room is made for the white king's elegant march up the board. 29...Rb2+ 30 Kg3 Qg1+ 31 Kh4 Rb8 32 Nd6 Black resigns It is the black monarch that will soon perish.

Winning Move

Black to play. Caruana-Carlsen, Moscow 2013. White's a-pawn is on the brink of promotion. How did Carlsen save the day?



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 Rxd5! wins (not 1 Ke2? Bc4+ 2 Kxd2 Rxa7!). 1...exd5 2 Ke2. The h-pawn will serve as a decoy, for example: 2...Kf6 3 Kxd2 Kg6 4 Kd3 Kh5 5 Kd4 Kh4 6 Kxd5 The winner is Steven Bush of Edinburgh. The runners-up are Reg Chaplin of Woodford Green, Essex, and Gerhardt Ogbeide of Smethwick, West Midlands.

**Codeword No 5386**

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

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 9702**

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

**Across**

- 1 Subdivision of a diocese (6)
- 4 Country (6)
- 8 Risqué, suggestive (4)
- 9 Exhausted from working too hard (5,3)
- 10 Office employee (9)
- 13 Fruit of the oak (5)
- 15 Pretend to have (an injury, eg) (5)
- 16 Long narrow crest of rock (5)

**Down**

- 18 Large stewing dish (9)
- 21 Plastic bag inserted into a waste receptacle (3,5)
- 22 Spoken exam (4)
- 23 Thief (6)
- 24 Fast-swimming creature related to swordfish (6)

**Solution to Crossword 9701**

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

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. Divide into threes. What shall we never do?**  
AND BALL BOND BOW CHESTER COMB DRUMLIN HAT  
HUT IN KNOLL ROUND TOR VINE WAKE

**2. An amateur bricklayer likes to place every layer of 2x1 bricks in a 2 wide wall in a different arrangement. For example, in a 4 long wall he can place one layer of 4 lengthwise bricks, 2 lengthwise followed by 2 crosswise, 1 crosswise followed by 2 lengthwise followed by 1 crosswise, 2 crosswise followed by 2 lengthwise, or all 4 crosswise, for five possible layers. How many different layers can he put in an 11 long wall?**

**3. Pair, pair, pair:** CHESTER, DAR, FEN, ITERATE, KINGLY, PI, WINDOWS, YARD

**Literary Quiz**

The Times Literary Desk

**Women of substance**

Who wrote these female-titled books?

- 1 *A Woman of Substance*
- 2 *The Woman in Black*
- 3 *Little Women*
- 4 *Girl, Woman, Other*

**The Listener Crossword** No 4844 **S and T** by Aedites

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 4844, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, to arrive by December 12.

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			

Prize options and more at [listenercrossword.com](http://listenercrossword.com)

More information about Chambers books can be found at [chambers.co.uk](http://chambers.co.uk)

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode..... Phone/email.....

Some clues consist of wordplay only. *The Chambers Dictionary* (2016) is the primary reference.

**Across**

- 1 Adult chases phoney songbird (5)
- 5 Trader buying tickets returns grasping foreign currency (8)
- 10 Each family far off periodically (5)
- 11 Careless fool pursues long straight shoot (7)
- 13 Idiot is about to mention dropsy (7)
- 14 Children at orphanage exhibit this (6)
- 15 Metallic knocking noise not concerning on the way back (9)
- 18 Sneers caused by something hackneyed on board ship (6)
- 19 Adamites gambolling in natural space (8)
- 21 Maths instructors made immigrants appear in leading places (4)
- 23 Scots afraid opening sparkling white wine is so retrograde (11)
- 26 Verdi's villain is awful, garrotting others in the van (4)
- 27 Leafy hideaway in seaside promenade (8)
- 31 American mahogany genus being without some limbs (6)
- 34 Chief information officer repeatedly appending Japanese honorific (9)
- 35 Sequence of 12 blows while boxing (6)
- 36 Return one delicate ornamental prize after base falls off (7)
- 37 Mussels produced by neat teenager with defaced instrument (7)
- 38 Members of Ascot all given new positions (5)
- 39 With no women featured, why notice carved marble? (8)
- 40 Holds out corset (5)

**Down**

- 1 Decamped and got together without resistance (6)
- 2 Some sigh as I dictate about pious Jews (7)
- 3 Japanese apprentices running amok around island with spades (6)
- 4 In search of species etc, shortened net (8)
- 5 A service for Catholics a level above Anglicans (6)
- 6 Ferries marsupials across river (5)
- 7 Junior officers know agencies for steamships at the centre (7)
- 8 Frequently out for the entire night's openings (5)
- 9 Cord binds topless wellies for a child's foot (7)
- 12 Current increase concealed by young man flashily dressed in Melbourne in the past (8)
- 16 Small buffalo upset a sheep in grass (7)
- 17 The French strangely agreed to be camped in a circle (8)
- 20 Prisoners cheat winners out of gold (8)
- 22 Boiled magic duck egg (7)
- 24 Palm with convulsion flying about uncommonly (7)
- 25 Childhood by way of fantasy (7)
- 28 Small aperture in ragged coleus (6)
- 29 Dismiss books, lacking English building for pigeons further north (6)
- 30 At core, hotels denied cash for ribbons in Chicago (6)
- 32 Uncommissioned soldier willing to participate in an activity (5)
- 33 Constituent of Dubai olives in mayonnaise (5)

John Green is retiring from marking and record-keeping for the Listener Crossword and we are looking for a successor to start in January 2025. Please contact [marker@listenercrossword.com](mailto:marker@listenercrossword.com) if interested.





**Bridge** Andrew Robson

I've played against Zia Mahmood a lot recently. It's always a rollercoaster ride, and frequently one or other of us comes off and gets hurt.

In the World Bridge Tour event last month, our set was looking good. Although partner Alex Allfrey and I had gone off in a dubious slam (one of many that went down that week), we had just made a doubled game on a misdefence, and 3♣ doubled after a take-out double was taken as penalties.

Zia and partner Zach Grossack, both fiery characters by nature, were fuming. This was the next board.

Dealer South N-S Vul

♠ A 10					
♥ 10 9 8 2					
♦ A 9 5					
♣ A J 9 5					
♠ 8 7 6					♥ 5 2
♥ J 6 4					♦ K 5 3
♦ 8 4 3 2					♣ 10 7 6
♣ K Q 10					♠ 8 7 4 3 2
					♥ A Q 7
					♦ K Q J
					♣ 6

S(Zia)	W(Allfrey)	N(Grossack)	E(AR)
2♣(1)	Pass	2♦(2)	Pass
3♠(3)	Pass	7♠(4)	end

(1) Zia loves to upgrade. Theoretically, a 2♣ opener shows 23 or more points, with some leeway for shape.

(2) Waiting bid.

(3) Apparently, this showed an old-fashioned Acol Two-type hand ie eight-playing tricks; so not quite forcing.

(4) Grossack adds eight (tricks) to his three, then adds one for his secondary values and one for Zia's declarer-play.

Allfrey led the king of clubs — plan the play.

It's a lousy grand slam and there was predictable criticism of Grossack's dummy by Zia. Play proceeded at a pace. At trick two, declarer ruffed a club (noting West's ten). He then crossed to the ace-ten of spades and ruffed a third club, bringing down West's queen.

"It's still not over," said Zia. "I need you to have the king of hearts." I ruefully showed him the card — grand slam made. [Zia would have drawn trumps, crossed to the ace of diamonds, discarded his low heart on the promoted jack of clubs, then finessed the queen of hearts.]

Zia and Grossack continued to bicker — naturellement. I smiled — there was no point in blaming Lady Luck.

Later, at the airport, Allfrey said something very interesting. "Say I'd led a spade versus that 7♠." Does declarer have the entries to ruff out the clubs?

He does, but he must guess. Say declarer wins the ace of spades and plays ace of clubs and ruffs a club. West plays the ten-then-queen (queen or king) but West would (should) also do that from ♣KQ10x(x). Declarer crosses to the ten of spades and is at the crossroads. Does he play to ruff out West's ♣KQ10 trebleton, or play for East to have both the king and jack of hearts — and run the ten (which he has to do right then)? We'll never know.

Alex and I mused. "Quick," he said suddenly, "or we'll miss our flight." We almost did.

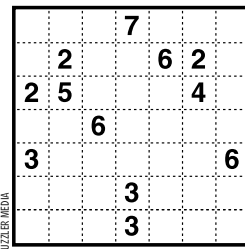
**Polygon** Roger Phillips



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.

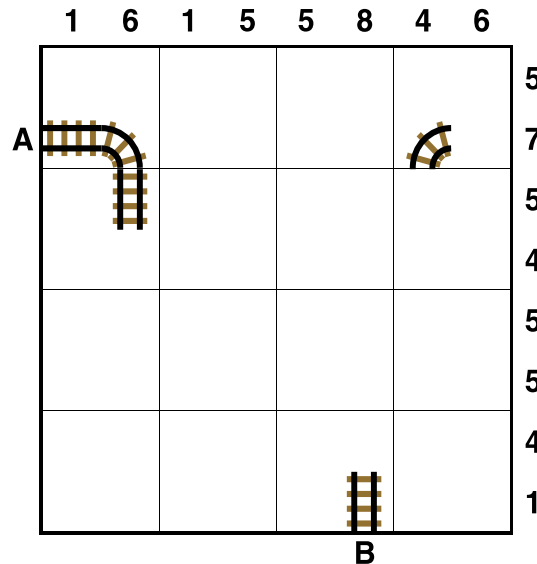
**How you rate:** 15 words average; 20, good; 26, very good; 32, excellent.

**Cell Blocks** 5269



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 2413**



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 and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself. **Solution on Monday**

**Solutions**

**Solution to last week's Samurai Sudoku**

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

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.

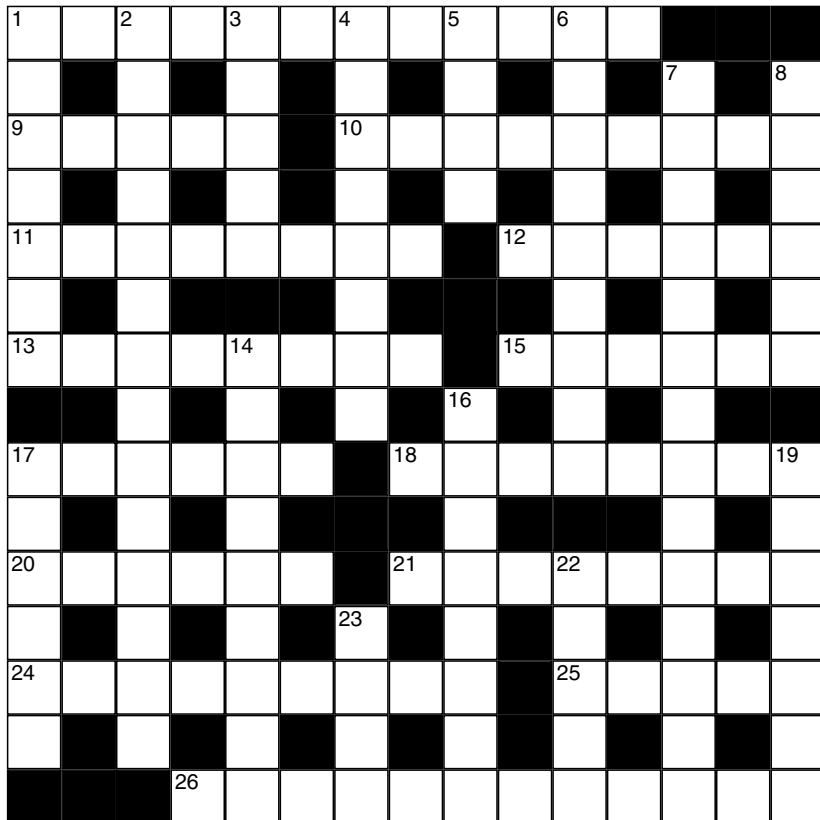
Remember — don't try to solve each Sudoku grid in turn; the puzzle has to be tackled as a whole.

**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 29,088



Across

- 1 Match day kit? (7,5)
- 9 Steel scratching face of John Hurt (5)
- 10 Penetrating entrance at the back of empty tower (9)
- 11 Is a tusk regularly filled with strange bulges at the front? (8)
- 12 Wham! wholly absorbed by western piece of music (6)
- 13 Chill current drink quickly (4,4)
- 15 Event with medium coverage vacuously introduced by Mr Bean on TV (6)
- 17 Logical businessman needing a break? (6)
- 18 Irrational guards love standing in front of banks in French town (8)
- 20 Remark's caught you shouldn't have to write down (6)
- 21 Deeply unhappy with minute quantity of ashes? (8)

- 24 Taking up arms — gun before it recoils in long shot (9)
- 25 Report of East End gangsters in Vogue (5)
- 26 My fault about hotel with dirty room limiting yearly turnover (7,5)

Down

- 1 Happening to stop wife saying something cutting (7)
- 2 *Spitting Image*, say, boring local, possibly not unexpectedly (6,8)
- 3 One parched runner near Grenoble (5)
- 4 Dress-wearing friend of Dorothy is to behave extravagantly (2,2,4)
- 5 Drug swallowed by official in bar, in the main (4)
- 6 Confirmation perhaps dispatched, packaging ace stuff (9)
- 7 Concerns after dodgy lad and a felon get no hearing (4,2,4,4)
- 8 Basic, poorly spelt article intrudes (6)
- 14 Renaissance man's gift — spinning toy, but not top (9)
- 16 Remark when leaving base with no cover provided (2,4,2)
- 17 In Washington, dismiss publicity about Republican's fake news item (6)
- 19 A lot of lustrous fabric, so shiny (7)
- 22 Poor grade omitted from MP's résumé (5)
- 23 Bearing north-east? This person's heading north (4)

Yesterday's solution 29,087

