

Sudoku strategy cheat sheet

11 technique reminders | English | Sudoku a Day

Solving order: singles > pairs and box-line patterns > larger patterns.
After every elimination, look for singles again.

Unit: row, column or box. **See:** share a unit. **Candidate:** a digit still possible.
Keep complete, up-to-date notes before applying candidate patterns.

Cross-hatching

Choose a digit and a box. Use its placements in intersecting rows and columns to rule out cells. If only one position remains in the box, place it.

Naked single

A cell has just one remaining candidate after checking its row, column and box. Place that digit.

Hidden single

A missing digit has only one possible cell in a row, column or box. Place it, even if the cell has other candidates.

Naked pair

Two cells in one unit each contain exactly the same two candidates. Remove those digits from every other cell in that unit.

Naked triple

Three unsolved cells in one unit have a combined set of exactly three candidates. Remove those digits from other cells in the unit. Each cell need not contain all three.

Hidden pair

Two digits can appear only in the same two cells of one unit. Keep those two digits in those cells and remove their other candidates.

Pointing pair or triple

Within a box, all candidates for a digit lie in one row or column. Remove that digit from the rest of that line outside the box.

X-Wing

A digit has exactly two candidate positions in each of two rows, in the same two columns. Remove it from other cells in those columns. Rows and columns can be swapped.

Swordfish

In three rows, a digit has two or three positions per row, all confined to the same three columns. Remove it from those columns outside the three rows. The pattern also works with columns as the base.

XY-Wing

A cell with exactly XY sees cells with exactly XZ and YZ, where X, Y and Z are distinct digits. Remove Z from other cells that see both wings. Seeing just the pivot is not enough.

Simple coloring: color trap

For one digit, alternate two colors along one connected network of strong links: units with exactly two positions for that digit. Remove an uncolored candidate that sees both colors.