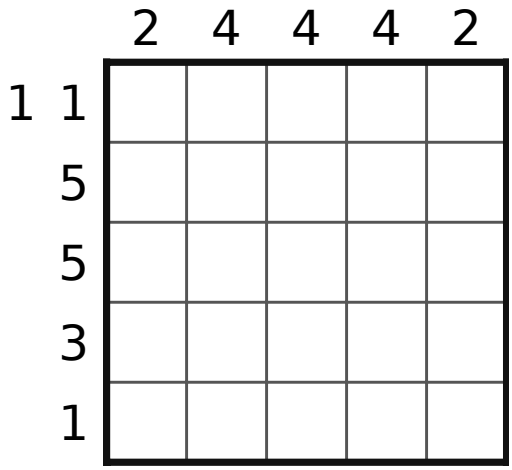
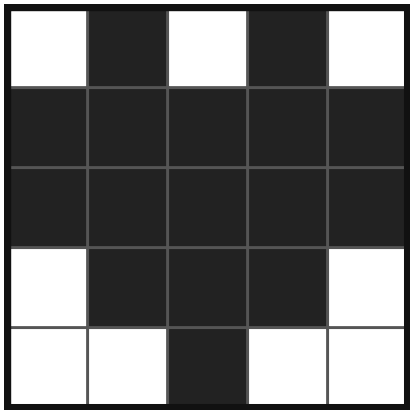
How to Solve Nonograms

Tips for beginners

A nonogram is a picture hidden in a grid. The numbers beside each row and above each column tell you the **blocks of filled squares** in that line, in order. A clue of **3 1** means: somewhere in the line there are 3 filled squares in a row, then at least one empty square, then 1 filled square. Fill in every square the numbers allow, and the picture appears.



A small example. The top row says 1 1: two single squares with a gap. The second and third rows say 5: the whole row is filled. Columns read from top to bottom.



Solved: a heart. Every row and column now has exactly the blocks its numbers ask for.

What you need

- A pencil with an eraser.
- Two marks: fill a square when it must be filled, and put a small dot in a square when it must stay empty. The dots matter as much as the filled squares.
- No guessing: every puzzle on PuzzleKick can be solved one step at a time with the ideas on the next page.

Six Ideas That Solve Most Lines

New squares in green

Big numbers overlap

8



A block of 8 in a row of 10 can start in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd square. Wherever it starts, the middle six squares are always covered, so fill them in now.

Lines that add up exactly

3 1 4



3, 1 and 4 with one gap between each need 3 + 1 + 4 + 2 = 10 squares: the whole row. There is only one way, so fill it all in.

Two blocks, the same idea

4 3



4 and 3 need 8 of the 10 squares, leaving 2 to spare. Each block can move only 2 squares, so the last 2 squares of the 4 and the last square of the 3 are always filled.

Edges push the block

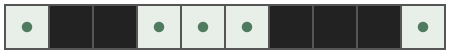
3 2



The first square is filled, so the block of 3 must start there: fill the next two squares and put a dot after them.

A finished line gets dots

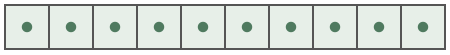
2 3



Both blocks, 2 and 3, are already there, so every other square in the row is empty. Mark them with dots so you do not fill them by mistake.

Zero means empty

0



A 0 means the whole line stays empty: dot every square.

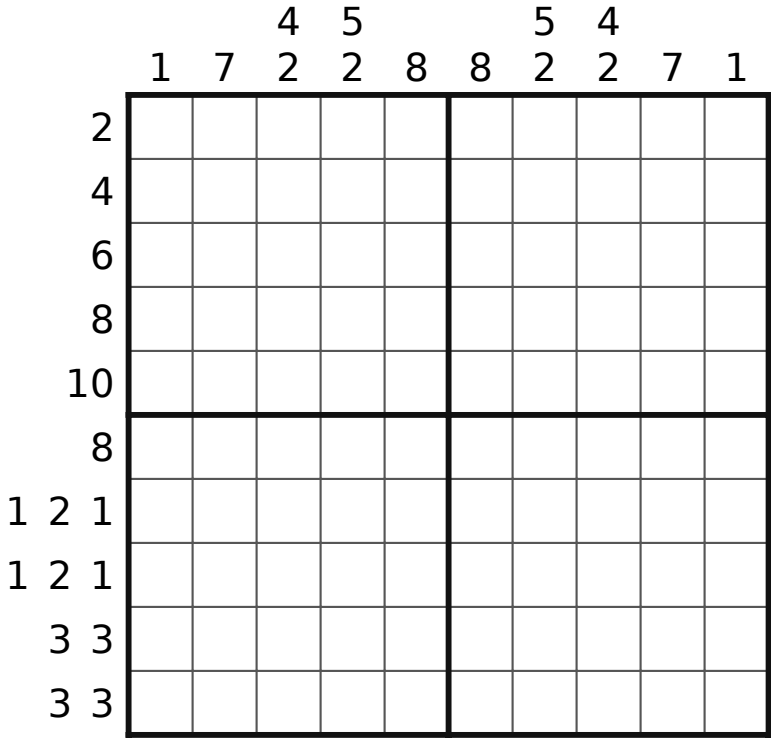
Then go back and forth

Each square you fill in a row is also a square in a column. Work through all the rows, then all the columns, and repeat: every pass gives the other direction something new. When you are stuck, look for the line with the fewest unknown squares.

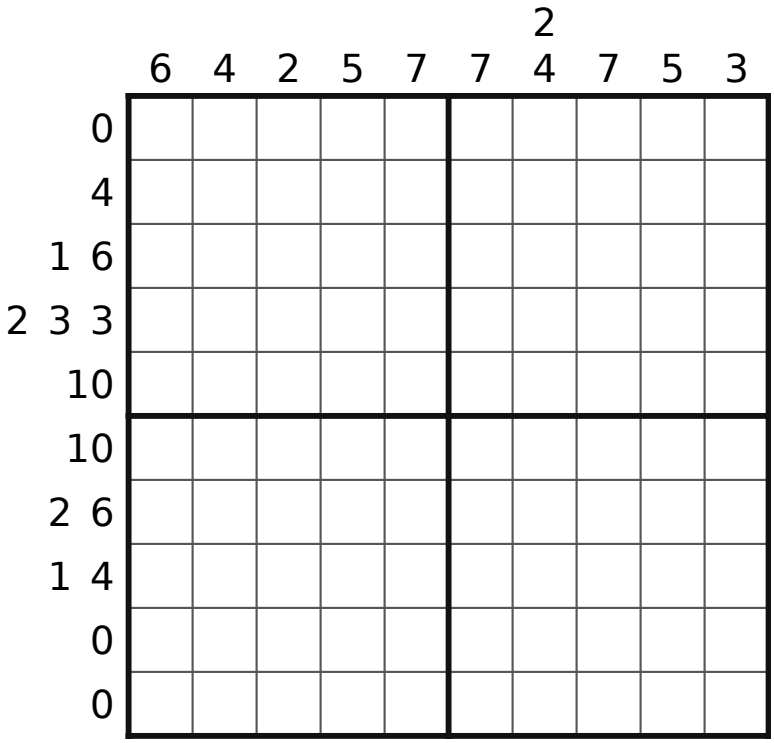
Practice Puzzles

Name _____

Practice 1 · 10×10

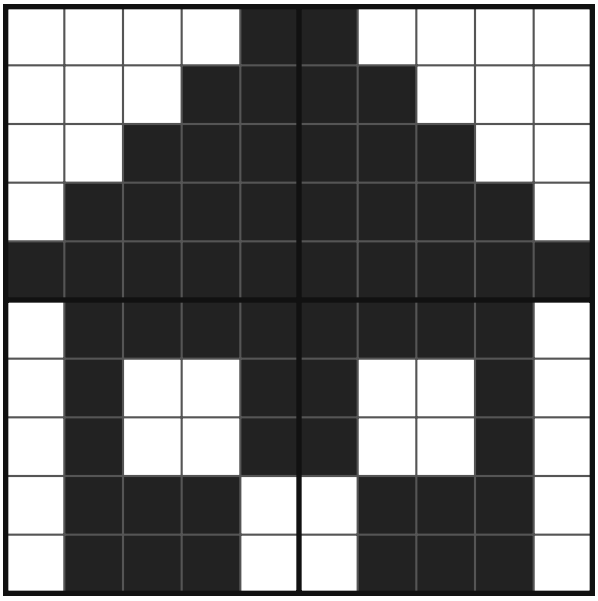


Practice 2 · 10×10

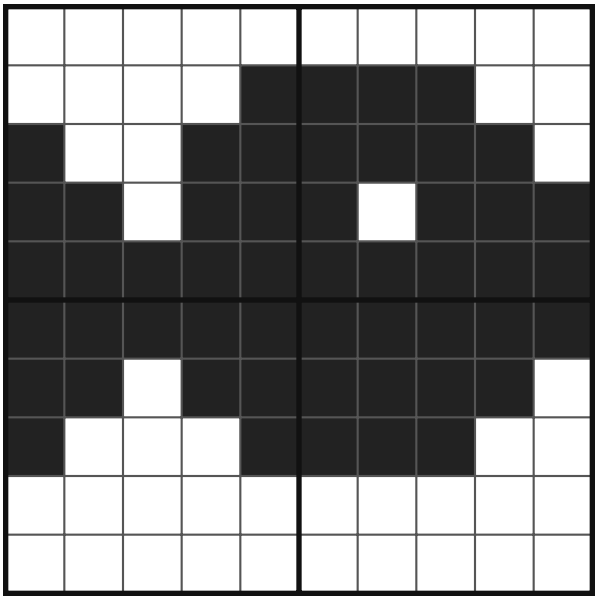


The Pictures

Practice 1. House



Practice 2. Fish



Next steps

Try the easy 10×10 puzzles, then medium (up to 16×16) and hard (20×20 and bigger), all free at puzzlekick.com/nonograms, with the pictures included.

Free for personal, classroom and group use