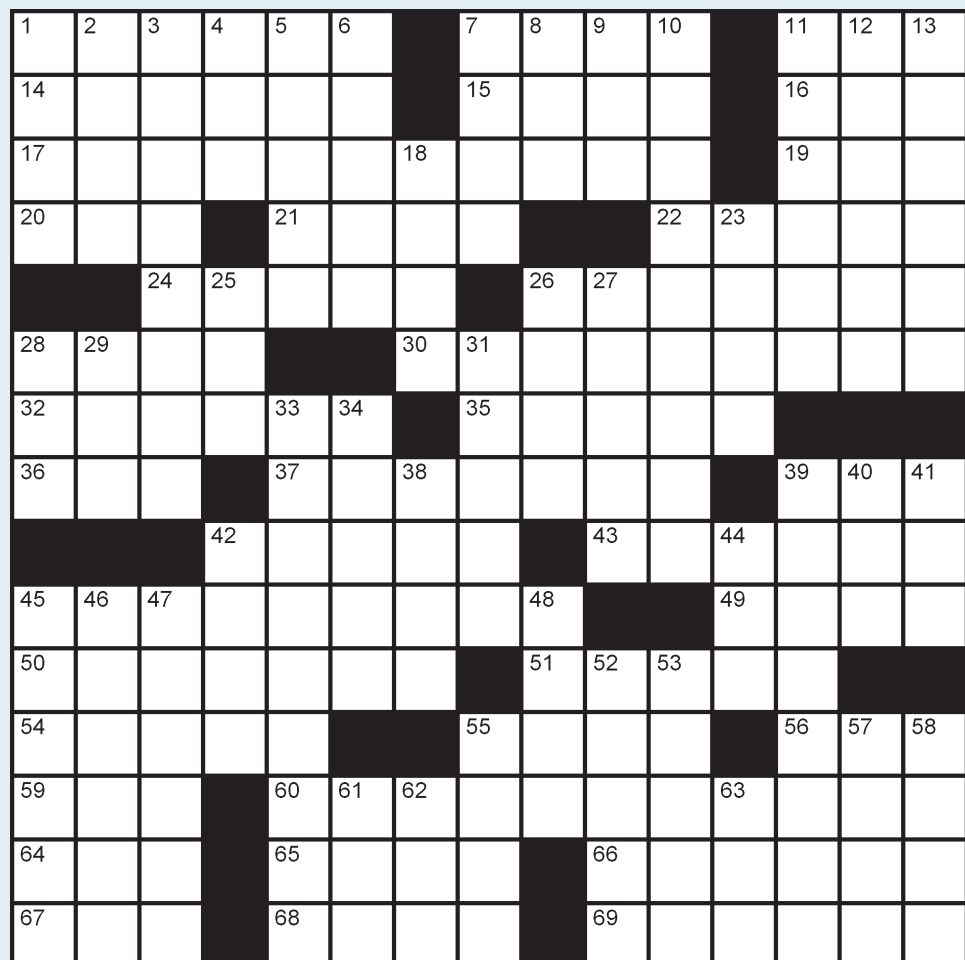


Give This Puzzle a Shot! by Ross Trudeau & Malaika Handa

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS
1 'So close!'
7 Promotion on a podcast, say
11 Rx from Dr. Mom
14 One may devour 'Chocolat'
15 Flight-related prefix
16 Snicker syllable
17 When to sample wedding desserts
19 Night before a holiday
20 Pronoun for Rihanna
21 Sitter'shandfuls
22 Bert's foil on 'Sesame Street'
24 Know by intuition
26 Exams scored from 1-5
28 ___ gobi (Indian dish)
30 When to present a case
32 Like a trampoline
35 They're capped above two feet
36 Snip
37 Tracking device
39 Fir fluid
42 Suspicious
43 Lead-in to 'intellectual'
45 When to test an app
49 Exchange of cross words
50 Common autobiography subtitle
51 Arrange, as a shawl
54 Like proofed dough
55 Mask or cloak
56 Softball stat
59 '___ get over it'
60 Taxing periods, and a hint to 17-, 30- and 45-Across
64 'Boyz n the Hood' actress Long
65 Tablet some take to bed
66 Gloria Estefan's Cuban birthplace
67 What an electric car doesn't use
68 They may be stroked or inflated
69 In, now
DOWN
1 Story trajectories
2 Rachel's biblical sister
3 Gets to first base
4 Reverent poem
5 Take effect
6 Streetcars
7 Rewards for 'good boys'
8 Floral garland
9 Decorative vase
10 Very enterprising people
11 Cryptography org.
12 Actor Joseph Gordon-___
13 Nacho topping
18 Design detail, for short
23 Some lipstick shades
25 For-ev-er
26 Julia Roberts, to Emma Roberts
27 Before surgery, informally
28 Jackson 5 hit with an alphabetical title
29 'Skip to My ___'
31 Gives the green light
33 Grade school semiformal accessory
34 Nintendo dinosaur
38 Blacken
39 Powerful DC figure?
40 Computing pioneer Lovelace
41 Drum for a toddler, maybe
42 Renown
44 Clairvoyance, e.g., briefly
45 Revealing, as one's soul
46 Clarke who played Mother of Dragons
47 Certain electric cars
48 Perfect garden
52 This way: --->
53 Place to exchange rings
55 TikTok content, casually
57 Stretch, as the truth
58 'My word!'
61 D&D, e.g.
62 NBA legend Ming
63 '___ been drinkin' ...' (Beyonce lyric)

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2021 Uranus Poses a Question



Given the way the world works, it would be absurd to feel entitled to a life without adversity. To have all of what you need and most of what you want, though ideal, is certainly not the norm. The precarious Uranus position asks, 'Could we at least have a chance to work hard for the option?'

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There is no shortcut to becoming. The stages are often extremely awkward. It will feel scary and false to pretend to be something you're not, which is precisely why transformation is only for the brave (which you are!)

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You are more resolute and implacable than any opposition you could encounter. If they are stronger, wait until a moment of weakness. If they are faster, let them tire themselves out.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). People are serving their own interests as they cast you in a role, decide how to see you and predict who you are. Their opinions will be only very slightly useful in your crafting of who you want to be.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). If all the world is a stage, today you're the lighting director. You set a mood, direct attention by spotlighting important things and convey your expectations by bringing it brightly up or quietly down.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You have cultivated an ability to see yourself from a distance. This opens you to a wider range of possibilities than most others around you will ever know about. Objectivity is a cornerstone of sophistication and maturity.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Humor will accelerate relationships. Connection, trust and communication happen inside of a smiling breath. Everyone who laughs together is standing on common ground.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). When things start to go awry and the questions pour into your mind, let them. Don't bother answering, either -- there's no time. Get to work clearing the obstacles, and let the questions answer themselves.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There's no shortage of disagreeable ideas, though insulting their endorers with an opposing opinion holds no appeal. If you have nothing to prove, you'll forgo 100 arguments to save your energy for what matters.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You make people a little uncomfortable, and that's a good thing. Don't rush to ease the tension or you'll spoil the opportunity here for all to try harder, raise the level and be the best version of themselves.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The current obstacle between you and what you want is basically immaterial. Charge ahead. You'll be surprised how little force it takes to push through. Like a proper bully, this thing has no power beyond your fear of it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Between you and the next thing, there's a gap -- an invitation to a leap of faith. If you don't have faith, that's fine, too. Consider engineering, aeronautics, wire-walking... there's more than one way to bridge this.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You thought you'd learned from a mistake, but now you're back at a place that looks suspiciously similar, and with the urge to repeat the unfruitful actions of the past! It's a matter of the lesson being a little deeper than it looks.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 4). Life is good, not because it's problem-free but because it brings you your favorite types of problems -- the kind that pay you, introduce you to exciting people and places, and sharpen your talents. Your beautiful attitude bonds you with complementary companions. An investment ripens, allowing a dream purchase. Aries and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 44, 2, 27 and 10.

Universal SUDOKU

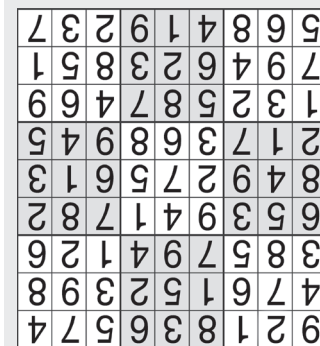
Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

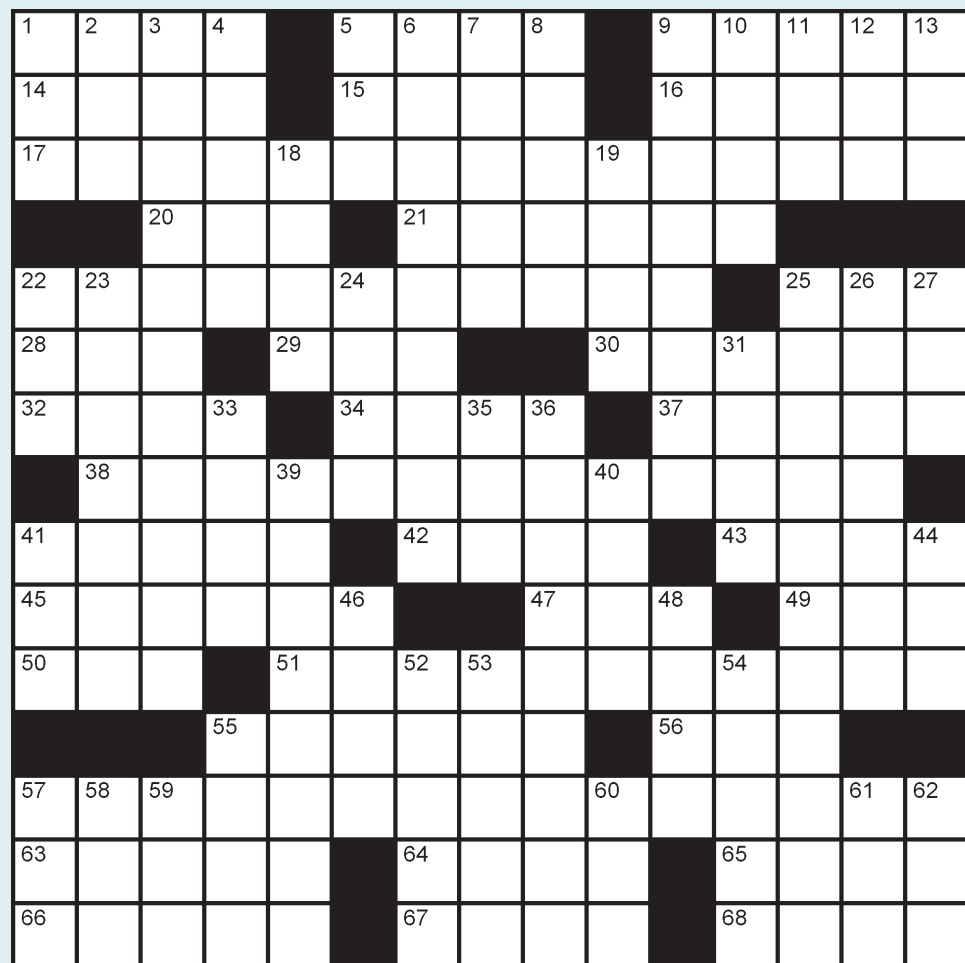


SOLUTIONS



Sports Center by Julian Lim

Universal Crossword edited by David Steinberg



- ACROSS
1 Artistic inspiration
5 Penne ___ vodka
9 Albacore and bluefin
14 Banded gem
15 Weaving device
16 Japanese port city
17 Dinosaur experts (Hint: Read this answer's last 3 letters first)
20 Head of state?
21 One who takes a vow, or a pledge
22 One-dollar chips at a high rollers' table, say (... last 4 letters first)
25 Roll of cash
28 Golden or brown brew
29 Trivia champion Jennings
30 Two-piece swimsuit
32 Piece of work
34 Oboe necessity
37 Burn slightly
38 Into many things? (... last 4 letters first)
41 Gadget
42 Garment such as an obi
43 Stock option?
45 '___ Eleven' (2001 heist comedy)
47 Compostable straws?
49 Fish eggs
50 Word after 'flower' or 'oyster'
51 Low-cost lodging (... last 3 letters first)
55 Like many restaurants
56 What skaters 'catch' after jumping
57 Those who stick together forever, or a theme hint
63 Rihanna wore one for a British Vogue cover
64 Draw in
65 Duct ___
66 Enjoys a newspaper
67 Church recess
68 Southern fried vegetable
DOWN
1 'The Simpsons' bartender
2 Game with Reverse cards
3 Produced electronically, as music
4 Bonus
5 '___ is well'
6 Rigidty's opposite
7 Deductive skill
8 Sect wary of technology
9 Belief with spirit animals
10 Russia, once: Abbr.
11 Siesta
12 Wanted poster letters
13 Nickname within 'Absalom'
18 Piglet's sound
19 Ticket tear-off
22 Touch on the back
23 'The Silence of the Lambs' protagonist
24 Spice Girl Halliwell
25 When a beach trip is especially nice
26 Poet Maya
27 Game cube
31 Rios and Sorentos
33 ___ Sutra
35 Texter's 'When will you be here?'

HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021 Leo Sun Checkpoint



It's like we're taking one step at a time down an enormous and eternal Archimedes' screw. No matter how familiar the scene, or how convinced you are you've done it before, you haven't. Each step is new. Stop thinking in terms of a destination, and warm yourself in this perfectly enjoyable moment of the Leo sun.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). One way to conquer fear is to learn all you can about what you are afraid of. Look at it; get involved with it; figure out its mechanics and preferences, what it needs and, most importantly, what it's afraid of.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). How you feel around people will make a huge difference. Ideally, you have people around you who help you stay loose, creative and solution-oriented.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Don't leave yourself an out. Go for the hike, not the treadmill, which can be abandoned on a whim at any moment. Once you commit to the hike, however far in you get, that's the distance you'll have to go to get back.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Praise is like food. A certain amount is required. The more nutrient-dense, the better. But praise too sweet, empty or overabundant may be gratifyingly useless or even treacherous. Be disciplined in your give and take.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). One simple principle will organize the rest. Decide what and who is important, and spend all your yeses there. Everything else is a no that you don't even have to say. Everyone will see you're busy!

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll see examples of ugly entitlement, an effective deterrent. How will you keep yourself from being spoiled? Humility, gratitude, charity, duty... no need to choose one. Take a teaspoon of each virtue, and mix it into your day.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you start comparing yourself to others, where will you stop? There are well over 7 billion people in the world, many of them with social media accounts. Minding your own business will pay off in healthy and productive ways.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There is no way to learn less. You can forget the lesson, rebel against it or even adopt its opposite belief, but the learning still happened, and you're still changed by it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll be challenged to difficult tasks, instructionless or unpopular, cryptically laid out, requiring of your courage and ingenuity. In other words, it's just another day at the office.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Steer away from the overglorification of the intangible magic you wield. Stick with the nuts and bolts of the job. All charmed outcomes will come together through the proficient execution of tasks.

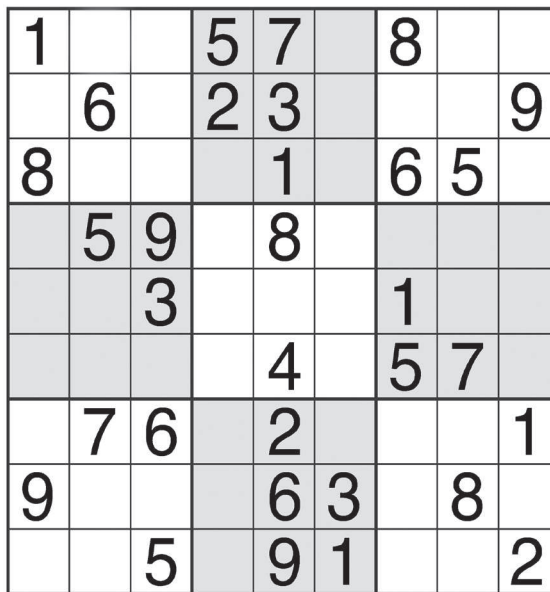
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your big heart cannot be contained. It will pump joy into everything you do, beat faster for someone special and stay in perfect rhythm with your highly choreographed world.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Everyone is great in a different way. With each person you meet, you make a habit of finding out just what kind of greatness you're dealing with so you can feature and enjoy it.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 5). You're needed! Not so much that you feel pressure, but enough to where you understand the difference you make. Helping others will be your pleasure and happiness. You become self-sufficient in new ways, too, which gives you freedoms you've been craving. A financial gain will allow you to explore a new interest. Cancer and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 30, 33, 21 and 18.

Universal SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆



SOLUTIONS

