

How to play Nonogram

A nonogram is a picture logic puzzle. The numbers beside each row and above each column tell you how many cells in a row are filled, in that order, with at least one empty cell between groups. Use the numbers to fill the right cells and mark the empty ones until the hidden picture appears.

Goal

Fill exactly the cells that the clues describe. When every row and column matches its numbers, the hidden picture is complete.

Setup

- You start with an empty grid, for example 10 by 10.
- Each row has numbers on its left, and each column has numbers above it.
- A number is a run of filled cells next to each other. Several numbers mean several runs, in the same order.

How to play

1. Read the clues of a row or a column.
2. Start with big numbers: a run that fills most of a line must cover its middle cells.
3. Fill the cells you are sure of with the Fill tool.
4. Mark cells you know are empty with an X using the Mark tool.
5. Use the new filled and marked cells to solve the crossing lines.
6. Repeat across rows and columns until every clue is satisfied.
7. Watch the picture appear when the last cell is filled.

Key rules

What do the numbers in a nonogram mean?

Each number is the length of one run of filled cells in that row or column. A clue of 3 1 means a run of three filled cells, then at least one empty cell, then one filled cell, in that order from left to right or from top to bottom.

Do runs have to be separated?

Yes. Two runs in the same line always have at least one empty cell between them. That is why a row clued 2 2 can never show four filled cells side by side: there must be a gap of one or more empty cells between the two pairs.

What is the X mark for?

An X marks a cell you know is empty. It is not part of the picture, it is a note for you. Marking empty cells is how you narrow down where the remaining runs can go, so marking is just as important as filling.

Can you solve a nonogram without guessing?

A well-made nonogram can always be solved by logic alone. Every puzzle in Pixtide is checked by a solver before it ships, so there is always a next cell you can be sure of. If you feel stuck, look for a line whose clues almost fill it.

What does a 0 or an empty clue mean?

A row or column with a 0, or with no number at all, has no filled cells. Every cell in it is empty, so you can mark the whole line with X straight away. It is one of the easiest first moves on a new board.

How do you know a line is finished?

A line is finished when its filled cells match all of its numbers. In Pixtide, a finished line crosses itself out automatically with Auto-cross, so its remaining cells are marked empty and you can move on.

Winning and scoring

There are no points to chase. You finish a picture when every cell matches the clues. Pixtide records your time, mistakes and hints for each picture, and you choose how mistakes are handled: shown at once, counted only, or not checked.

Tips

- Overlap trick: in a line of 10, a run of 7 must cover the middle 4 cells, wherever it starts.
- Start with the biggest numbers and with lines whose clues plus gaps nearly fill the line.
- Add up a clue: 3 2 4 needs 3 + 2 + 4 cells plus 2 gaps, so 11 cells. In a line of 11 it is solved at once.
- Work from the edges: a filled cell next to the border must belong to the first run.
- When a run is complete, put an X on both of its ends.
- Switch between rows and columns often: each new cell gives the crossing line more to work with.

Avoid these mistakes

- Filling a cell because it looks right for the picture instead of what the clues prove.
- Forgetting the gap between two runs.
- Never marking empty cells, so the same line has to be worked out again and again.
- Solving only rows and forgetting the columns that cross them.

Words to know

Clue: The numbers beside a row or above a column.

Run: A group of filled cells next to each other in one line.

X (cross): A mark for a cell you know is empty.

Picross, Griddlers, Hanjie: Other names for nonograms.