



# Can You Solve My Problems?: A Casebook of Ingenious, Perplexing and Totally Satisfying Puzzles

*Alex Bellos*

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## Can You Solve My Problems?: A Casebook of Ingenious, Perplexing and Totally Satisfying Puzzles

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*Are you smarter than a Singaporean ten-year-old? Can you beat Sherlock Holmes? If you think the answer is yes - I challenge you to solve my problems.*

Here is the story of the puzzle, one of mankind's oldest and greatest forms of entertainment and enlightenment, told through 125 of the world's best brainteasers from the last two millennia. It takes us from ancient China to medieval Europe, Victorian England to modern-day Japan, with stories of espionage, mathematical breakthroughs and puzzling rivalries along the way.

You'll pit your wits against logic puzzles and kinship riddles, pangrams and river-crossing conundrums. Some solutions rely on a touch of cunning, others call for creativity, others need mercilessly logical thought. Some can only be solved by 2% of the population. All are guaranteed to sharpen your mind.

Let's get puzzling...

## Can You Solve My Problems?: A Casebook of Ingenious, Perplexing and Totally Satisfying Puzzles Details

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# **From Reader Review Can You Solve My Problems?: A Casebook of Ingenious, Perplexing and Totally Satisfying Puzzles for online ebook**

## **Deke says**

A great collection of puzzles, many very fresh, in an array of styles and topics that call upon your numerical, linguistic and logical skills.

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## **Paul says**

Puzzles of all sort have fascinated people for ages, they have varied from riddles, counting challenges, crosswords, logic puzzles and mathematical conundrums. Spending 20 minutes or so on a puzzle is not wasted time; it has been shown that they can in some instances improve cognitive ability. It is not fully conclusive, but the main draw for doing all sorts of puzzle is that they are fun. Some of our greatest minds including codebreakers and Nobel Prize winners have used puzzles to keep their minds sharp and as a distraction from normal life.

The popular maths guru, Alex Bellos has bought together all sort of different puzzles into one book. These 125 different puzzles have been grouped together into broad categories, like logic, geometry and of course the mathematical ones. Each puzzle has an introduction and a little history about it which makes for fascinating reading. Some of the puzzles that Bellos has found for us to stretch our grey matter are deceptively simple and there are some in here that are fiendishly difficult!

Some of these puzzles date back millennia; Bellos has bought them right up to date with this collection. Most fascinating is the history and evolution of these puzzles. As brilliant minds solved one they then dreamt up even more complex ways to torment us. There is something for everyone in here, not just for fans of Sudoku, and the different levels of puzzles mean that you have some that intrigue, other that need a little more effort and some that may make your head hurt. It is an excellent book for encouraging mathematical exploration without out frightening some people.

Thank goodness though, the answers are in the back...

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## **Sara Durst says**

I liked this book. If your really into math and logic puzzles you will recognize several of the problems in this book. Where it shines isn't just in the collection of puzzles but in the explaining. You can tell the author really does enjoy puzzles and teaching. He makes a book on math fun to read. It's solutions are easy to understand. This book is perfect gift to had over to my budding mathematician. It kept my kid busy for hours and in this video game world that says a lot.

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## **P.e. lolo says**

This is a fantastic book and one that I think everyone should have just to keep our minds working on something different than whatever you're normal activity is during the day. There are many different types of puzzles, brain teasers, riddles, logic puzzles, and all types. These are from ancient times, medieval, Victorian, to modern day. Some when you get into the book you have heard or solved at one time or another. Others I must say I never heard and I had a father you used to use some of these riddles when I and my sisters were younger as a form entertainment. It was not until I got older that I realized he was getting us used to critical thinking and that is what a lot of these puzzles do. In a time when we all get attached to electronics sometimes we forget that we need to stimulate our minds in other ways to help us to continue to grow and learn. I of course am still going through this book but felt it was time to do the review because if I wait it would not get done for another year or so. This is a very good book and worth every penny. I got this book from Netgalley.com I gave it 4 stars. Follow us at [www.1rad-readerreviews.com](http://www.1rad-readerreviews.com)

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## **Kallen White says**

A very fine mix of classics and forgotten gems...does exactly what it says on the tin!

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## **Simon Yoong says**

i love puzzles and this is the best book on the subject that I've ever read.

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## **Paul Fulcher says**

Alex Bellos writes an excellent column in the Guardian with weekly maths puzzles, and one in particular, the Cheryl's birthday problem (<https://www.theguardian.com/science/a...>) led to a fascinating discussion with readers as the logic puzzle, interesting enough in its own right, turned out to have two different solutions depending on how one interpreted the information given, and that in turn led Bellos to write this book.

This made for an excellent stocking filler and prompt for family discussion over Christmas / New Year, suitable for children (from say upper KS2 age) and adults alike, and will be one to dip into over 2017 (perhaps in the loo!).

The book has a number of qualities that, combined, set this apart from, the usual books of this type:

- Bellos provides a history of the puzzles origins where available, presenting puzzles in each section in roughly chronological order
- there is a range of puzzle types (logic, geometrical, numerical etc) and of difficulty, although Bellos deliberately doesn't rank them by difficulty as that is subjective and personal
- the book has answers to all of the puzzles, which don't just give the solution but instead explain it in detail, including ambiguities in the interpretation and crucially what strategies one might have used to solve

both it and other similar problems. To give an example "if in a puzzle there is a single solution from a choice of three, where two of the three are interchangeable, then the solution must be a consequence of choosing the odd one out."

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### **Ben Judge says**

I've read it, but doing all the puzzles is going to take some time

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### **Benjamin says**

Intriguing and puzzling and informative

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### **Rory Parle says**

Not bad, but pitched quite low. I would have preferred more puzzles that can be solved without paper or props. Many were easy to find the right approach but too complex to fully solve in my head.

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### **Jessi says**

I really enjoyed most of this book. I did a lot of logic puzzles when I was younger and this reminded me of them. Most of these were puzzles I hadn't read before and I enjoyed that there were all levels of puzzles and the explanations were clear and coherent.

After awhile it did get a bit boring so it might be good to portion the puzzles out. I also would not recommend getting the ebook. It was really annoying to try and flip back and forth between the front and back on a digital version, so much easier with a physical book.

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### **Maurizio Codogno says**

Mi sono fatto regalare questo libro con un po' di timore, perché trovo che Bellos spesso si perda in digressioni che con la matematica hanno davvero poco a che fare. Per fortuna mi sono dovuto ricredere. Scrivere di problemi matematici è ormai diventato quasi mainstream, e non è facile uscirsene con qualcosa di nuovo; ma Bellos ha varie frecce al suo arco. Innanzitutto la ricerca per quanto possibile della fonte originale dei problemi; in genere essi si tramandano di bocca in bocca, e sono stato molto contento di sapere chi fu il primo a tirare fuori le idee che avevo sfruttato biecamente. Inoltre il suo stile di scrittura si attaglia bene a questo tipo di lavoro, e l'ordine di presentazione dei problemi è studiato per ottenere un flusso piacevole. Come lui stesso scrive, era inutile metterli in ordine di complessità, perché è una cosa troppo soggettiva; tanto vale allora trovare un filo conduttore. Alcune soluzioni sono spiegate direttamente nel testo, per dare un'idea di come ci si muove; le altre ci sono, ma alla fine del libro come da prassi; non preoccupatevi. Se vi

piacciono i quizzini matematici, compratevelo senza esitazione.

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