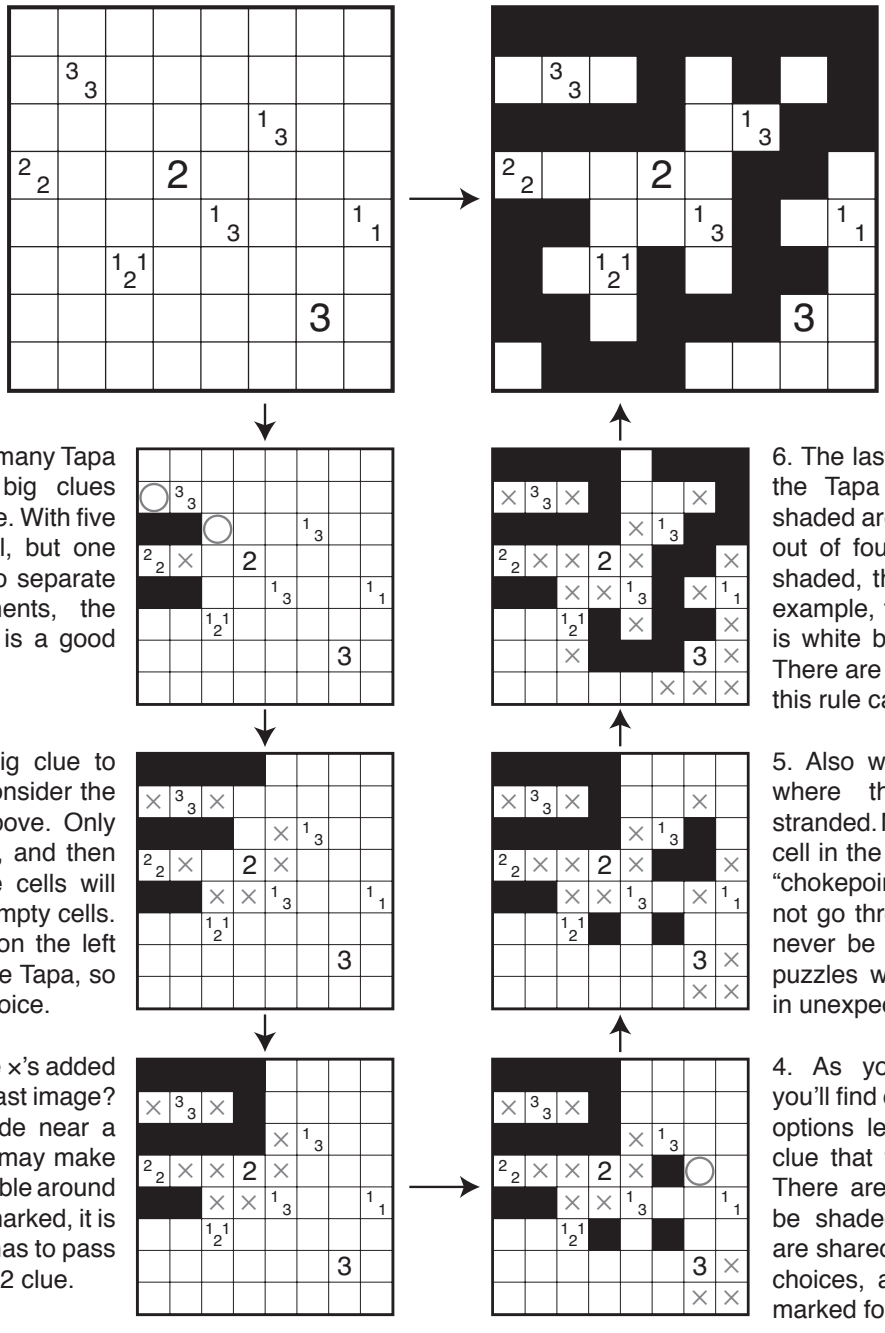
Tapa

Rules: Blacken some cells to create a single connected wall called the “Tapa”. Numbers in a cell indicate the length of consecutive shaded blocks in the neighboring cells. If there is more than one number in a cell, then there must be at least one white (unshaded) cell between the black cell groups. Cells with numbers must remain white. Also, the shaded cells cannot form a 2×2 square anywhere in the grid.



1. To get started on many Tapa puzzles, look for big clues without a lot of space. With five cells around it total, but one white cell needed to separate the shaded segments, the 22 on the left side is a good example.

2. 33 is another big clue to get familiar with. Consider the two circled cells above. Only one will be shaded, and then that group of three cells will be surrounded by empty cells. Shading the circle on the left border will strand the Tapa, so go with the other choice.

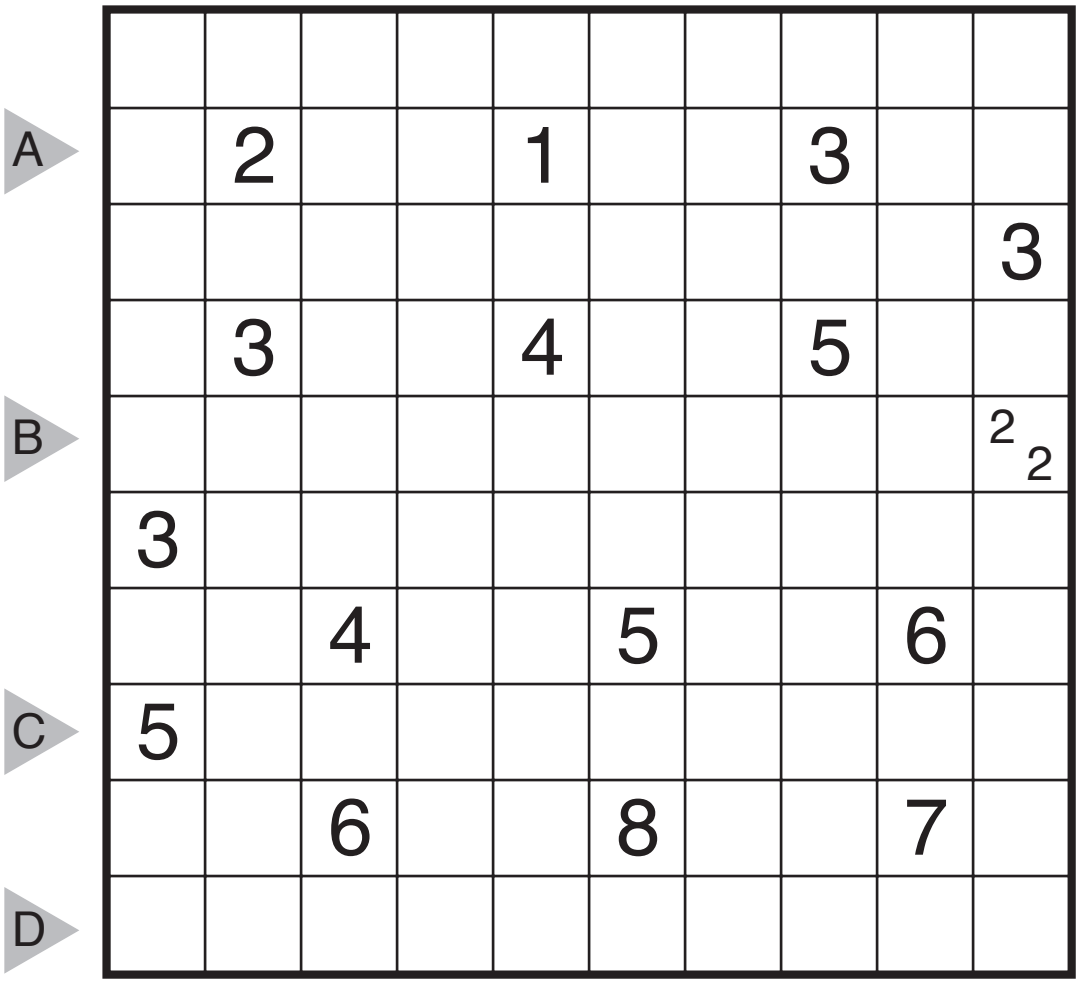
3. Did you notice the ×’s added around the 2 in the last image? Whenever you shade near a singleton clue, you may make other cells unreachable around it. With those cells marked, it is clear that the Tapa has to pass along the top of the 2 clue.

4. As you make progress, you’ll find clues with only a few options left. Consider the 13 clue that touches the 2 clue. There are two ways this can be shaded now. Three cells are shared between these two choices, and they can all be marked for sure.

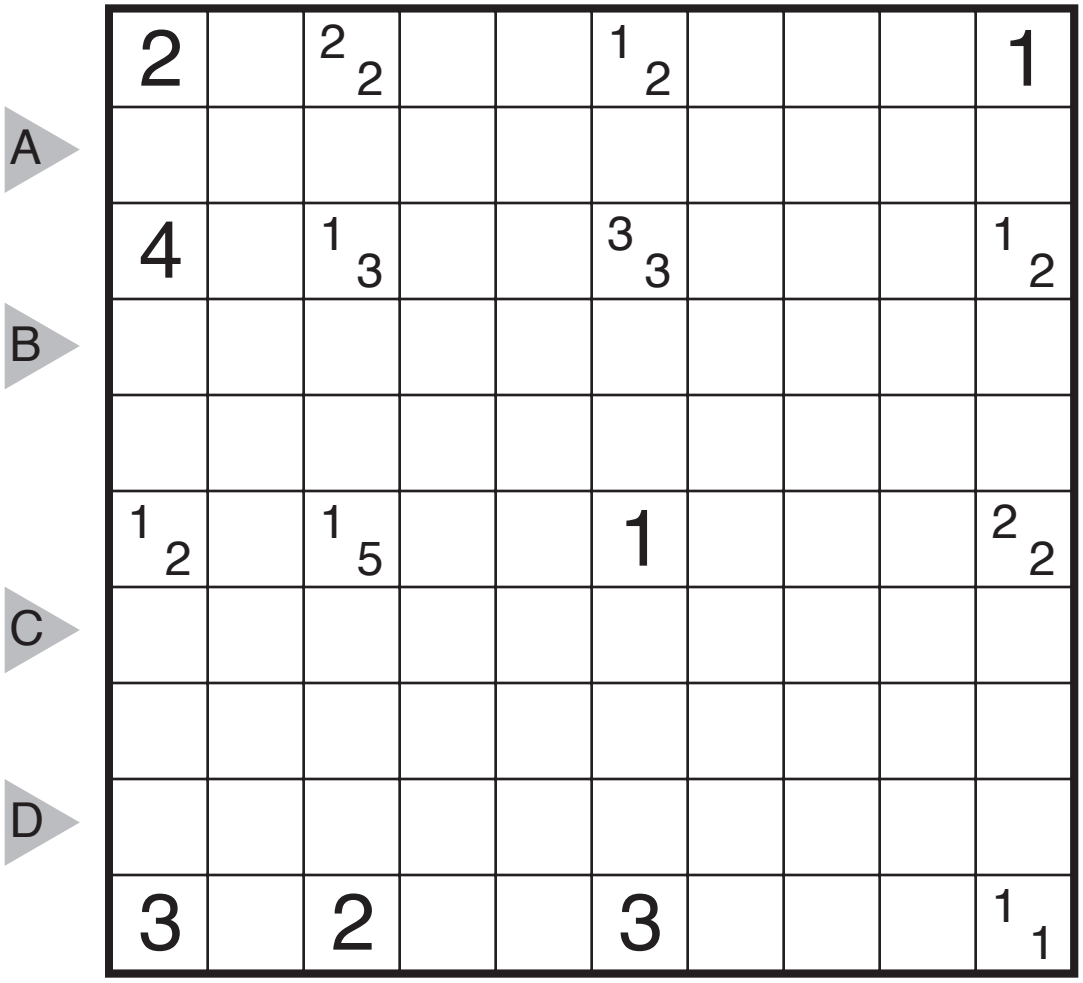
5. Also watch out for places where the Tapa can be stranded. Notice that the circled cell in the previous image is a “chokepoint”. If the Tapa does not go through this cell, it will never be connected. Harder puzzles will hide chokepoints in unexpected spots.

6. The last rule to learn is that the Tapa never has a 2×2 shaded area. When three cells out of four in a 2×2 box are shaded, the last is white. For example, the lower-left corner is white because of this rule. There are many different ways this rule can come into play.

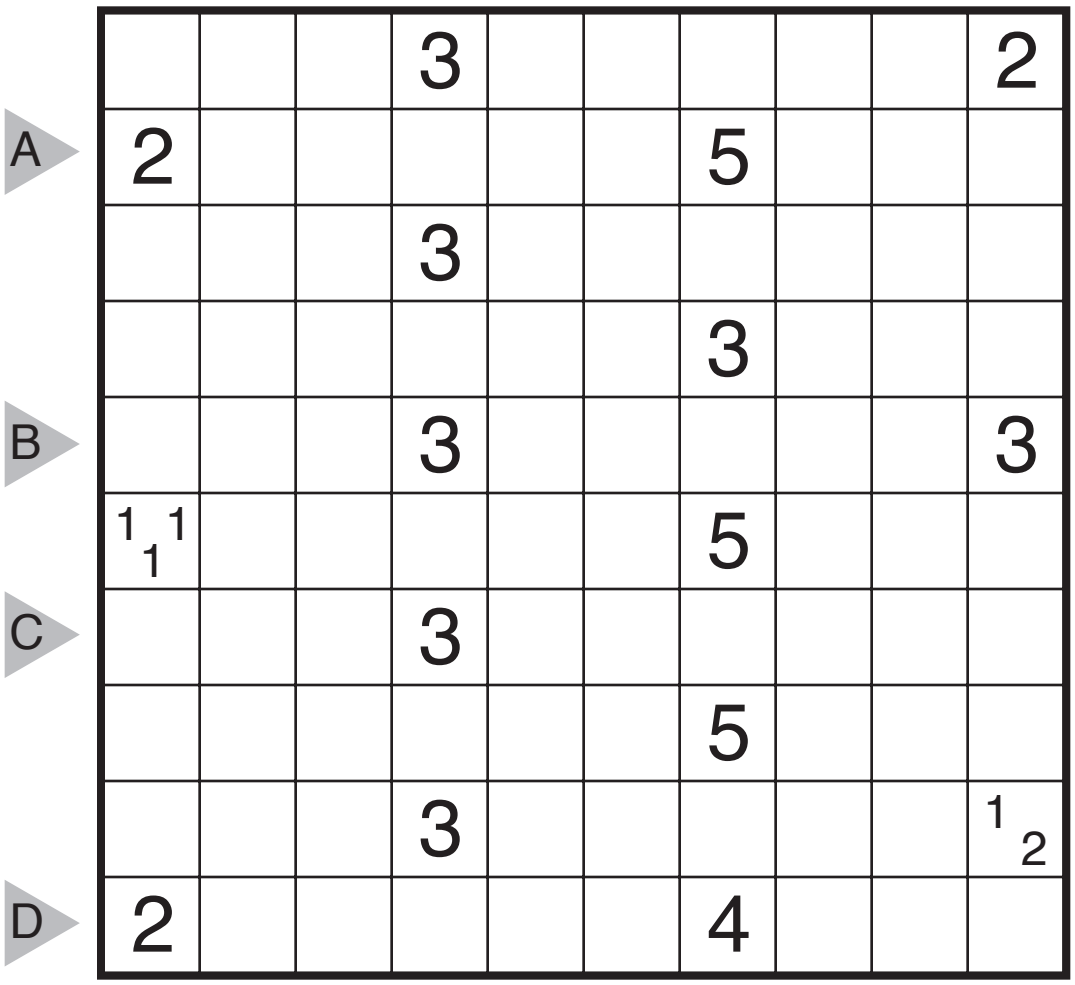
13/02/11:
Tapa by Thomas Snyder
Theme: A Little Of Everything



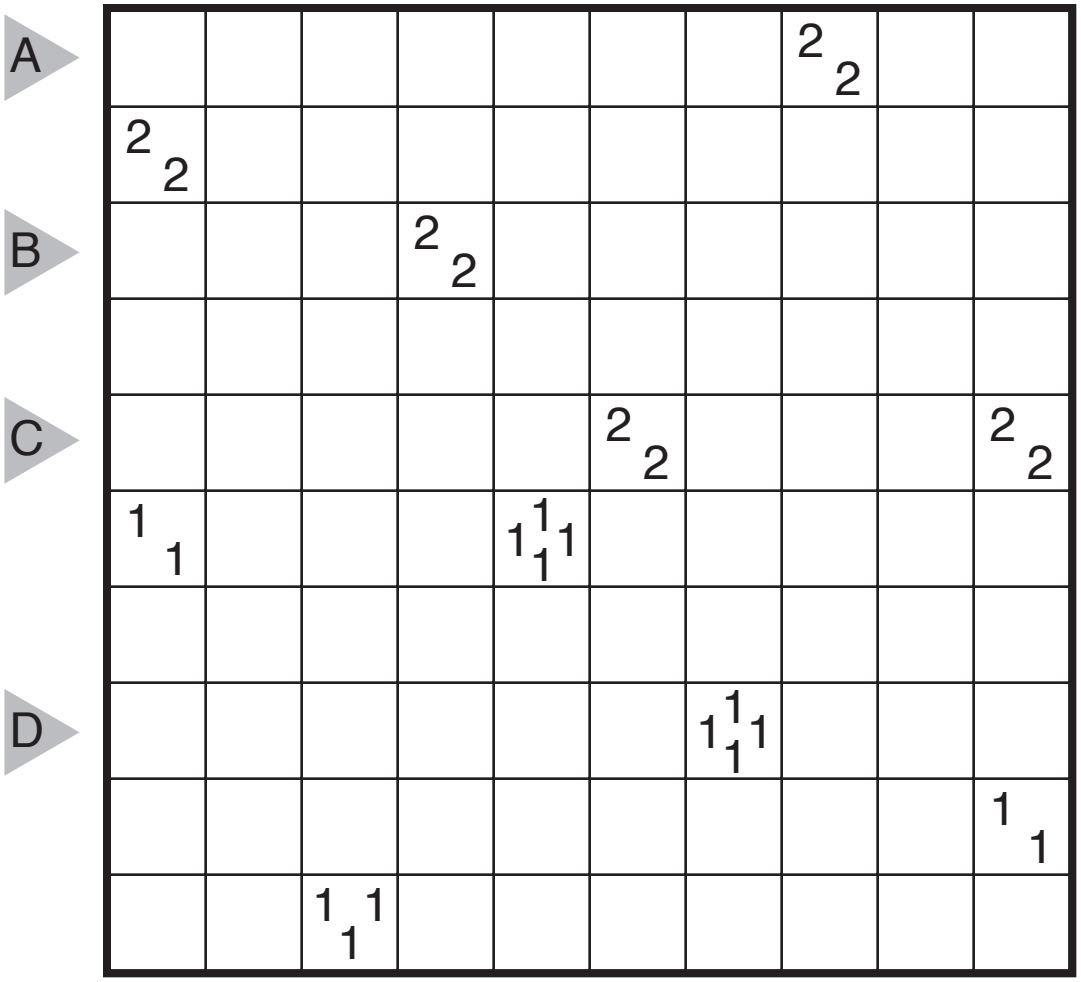
14/08/19:
Tapa by Grant Fikes
Theme: Six Empty Rows and Columns



15/03/16:
Tapa by Prasanna Seshadri
Theme: Columns



14/02/03:
Tapa by Grant Fikes
Theme: Ones and Twos



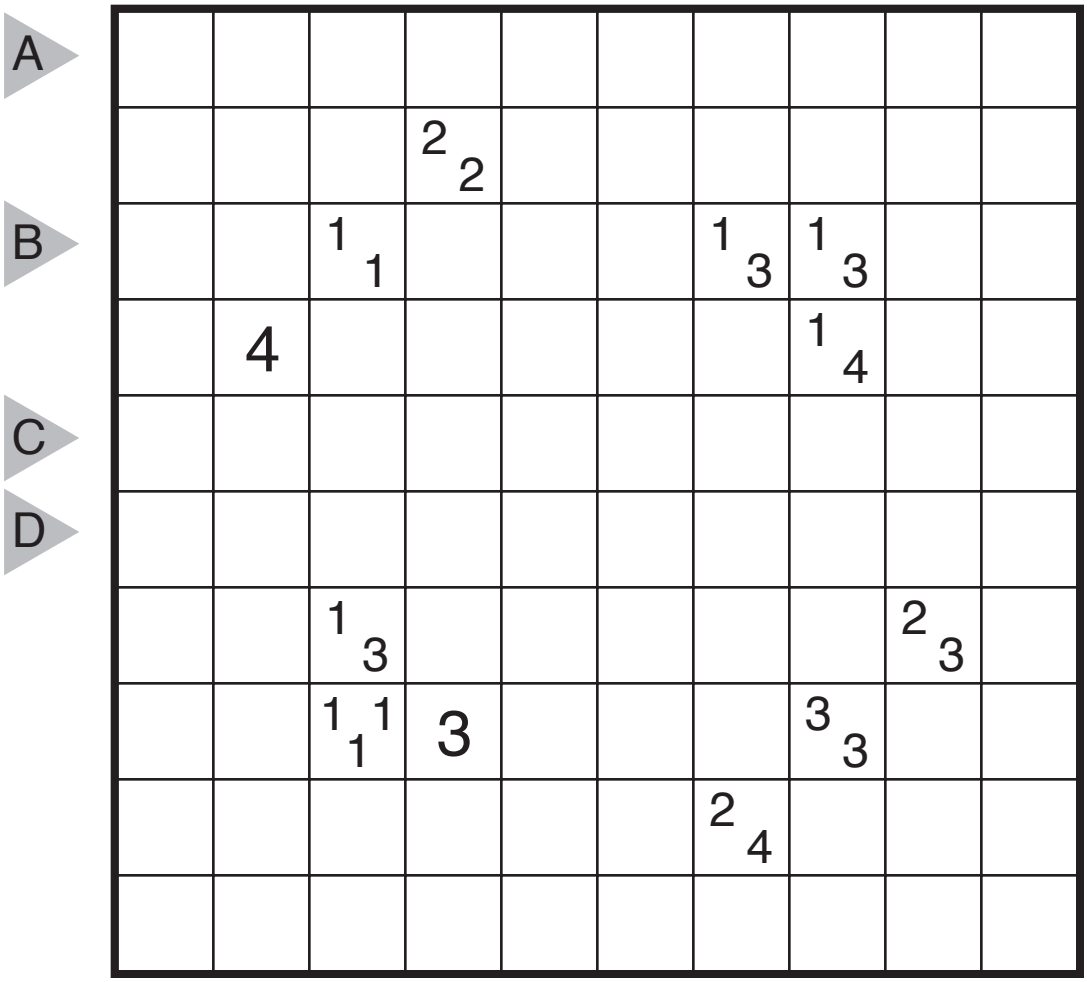
13/12/16:

Tapa by Palmer Mebane

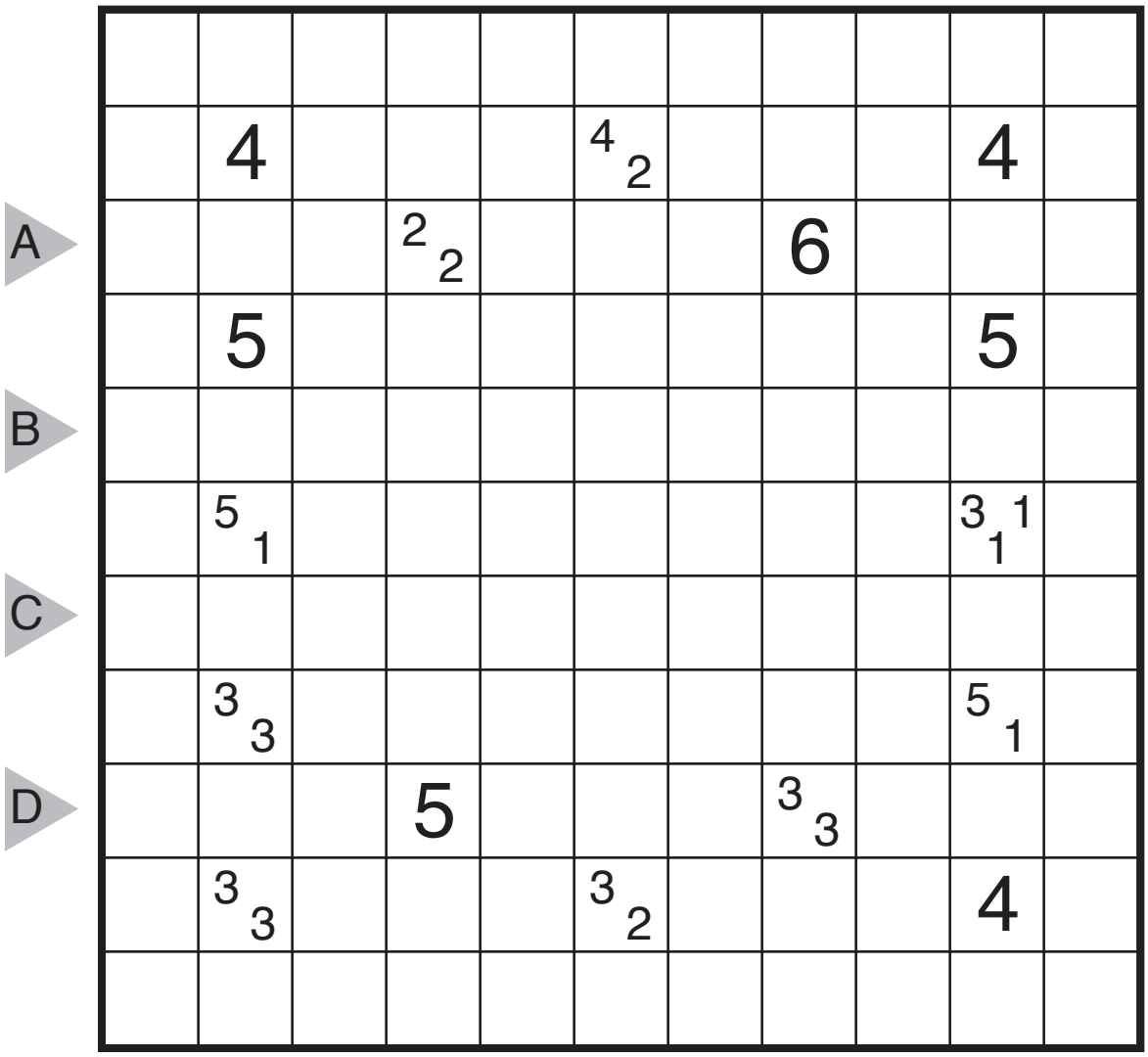
Theme: Threes

A					3					
B	3								3	
								3		
			3							
					3 3					3
	3					3 3				
								3 3		
			3 3							
C		3 3								3
D						3				

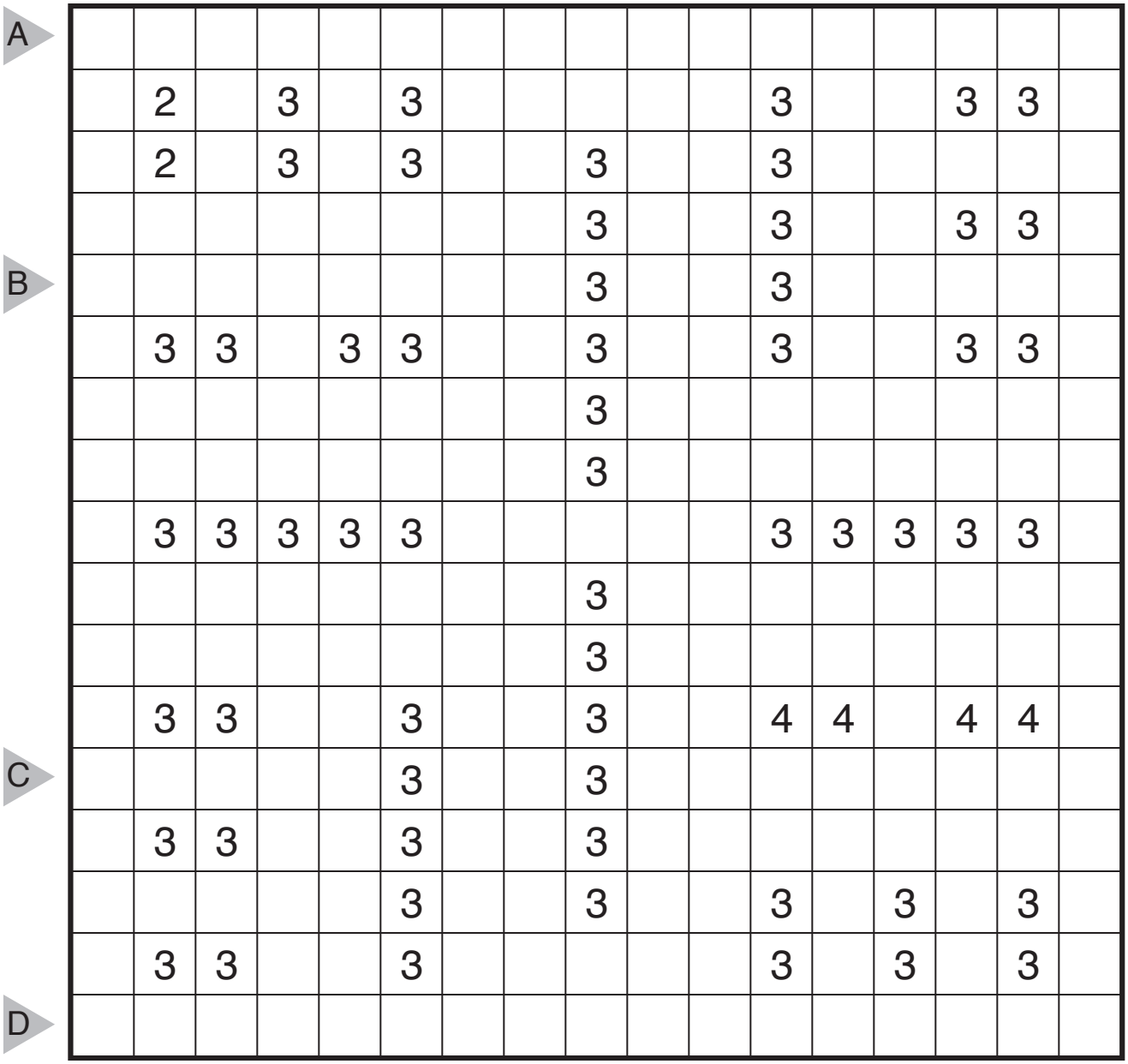
13/09/05:
Tapa by Serkan Yürekli
Theme: Clueless middle (4x4)



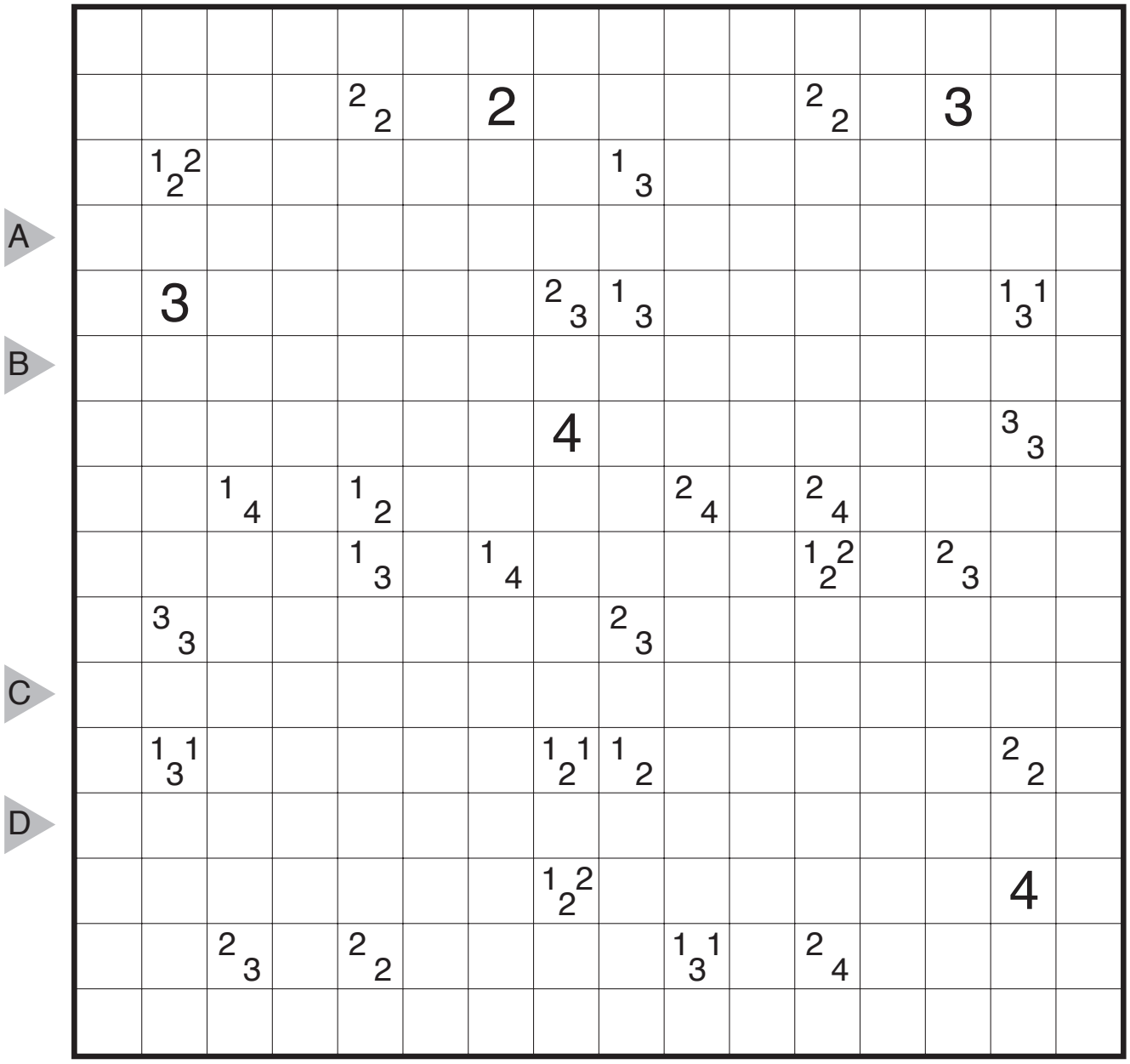
14/10/08:
Tapa by John Bulten
Theme: White Hole



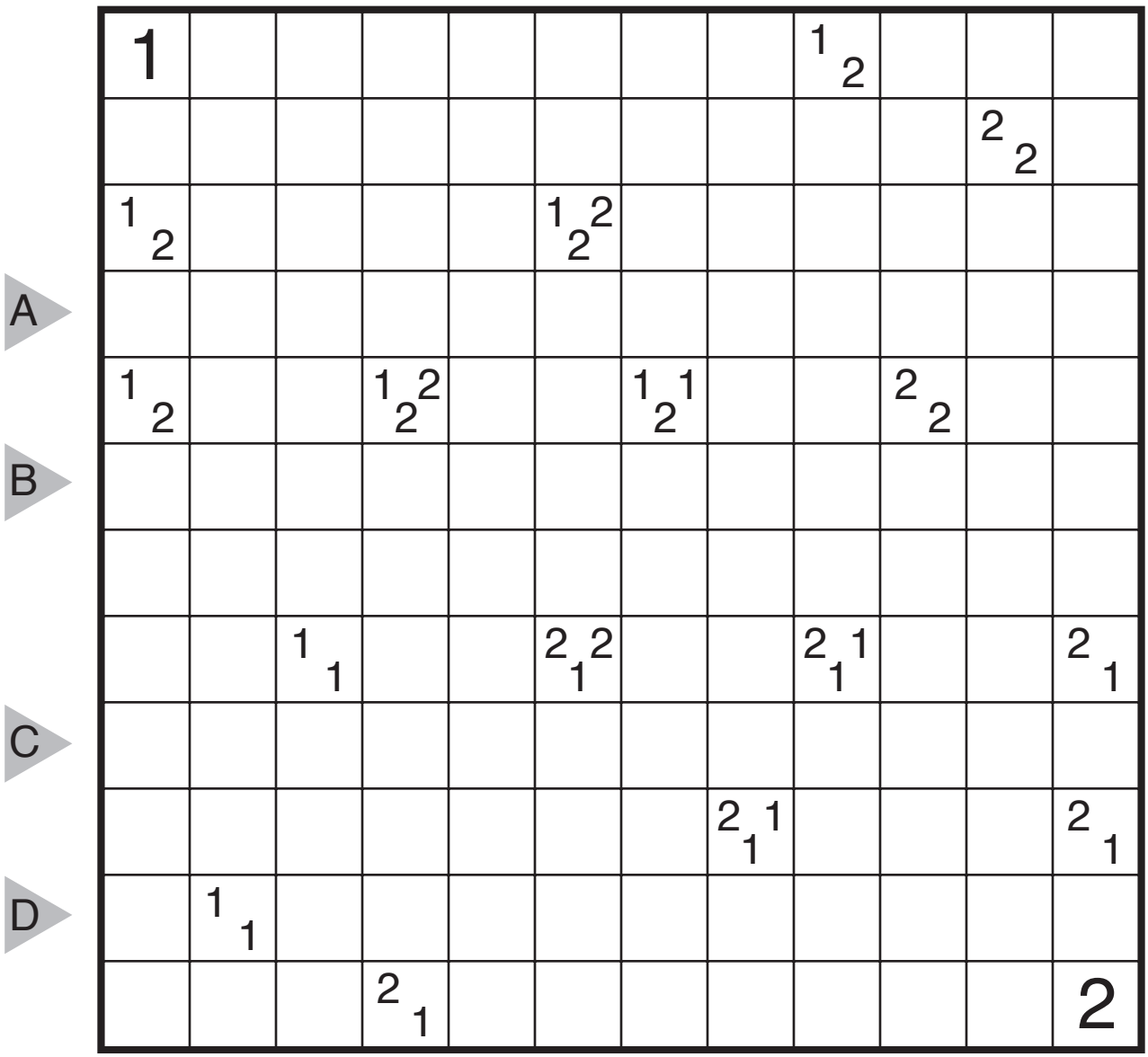
13/09/21:
Tapa by Serkan Yürekli
Theme: Group Think



17/08/17:
Tapa by Murat Can Tonta
Theme: Four Squares

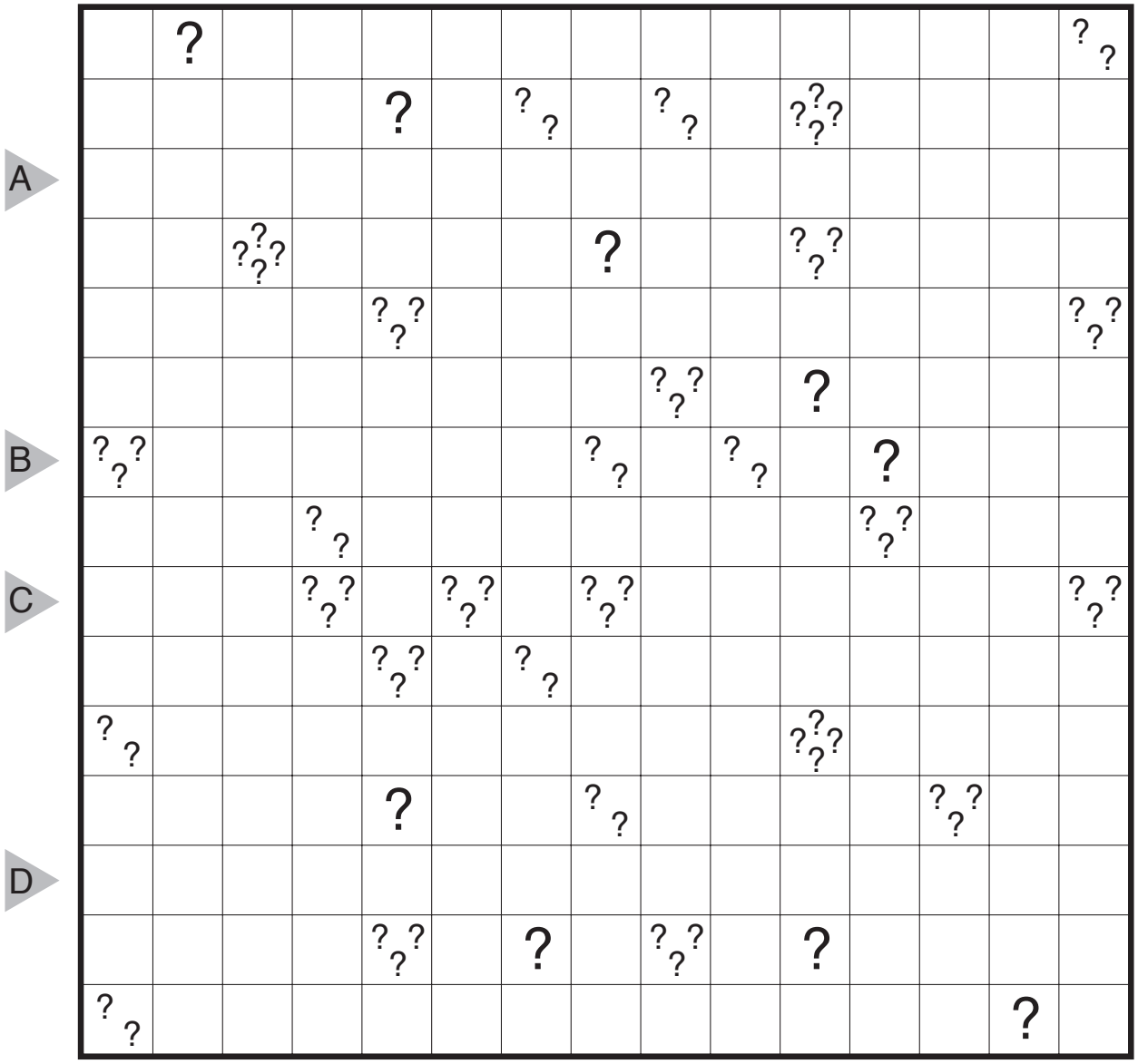


15/02/18:
Tapa by Tapio Saarinen
Theme: Antisymmetry



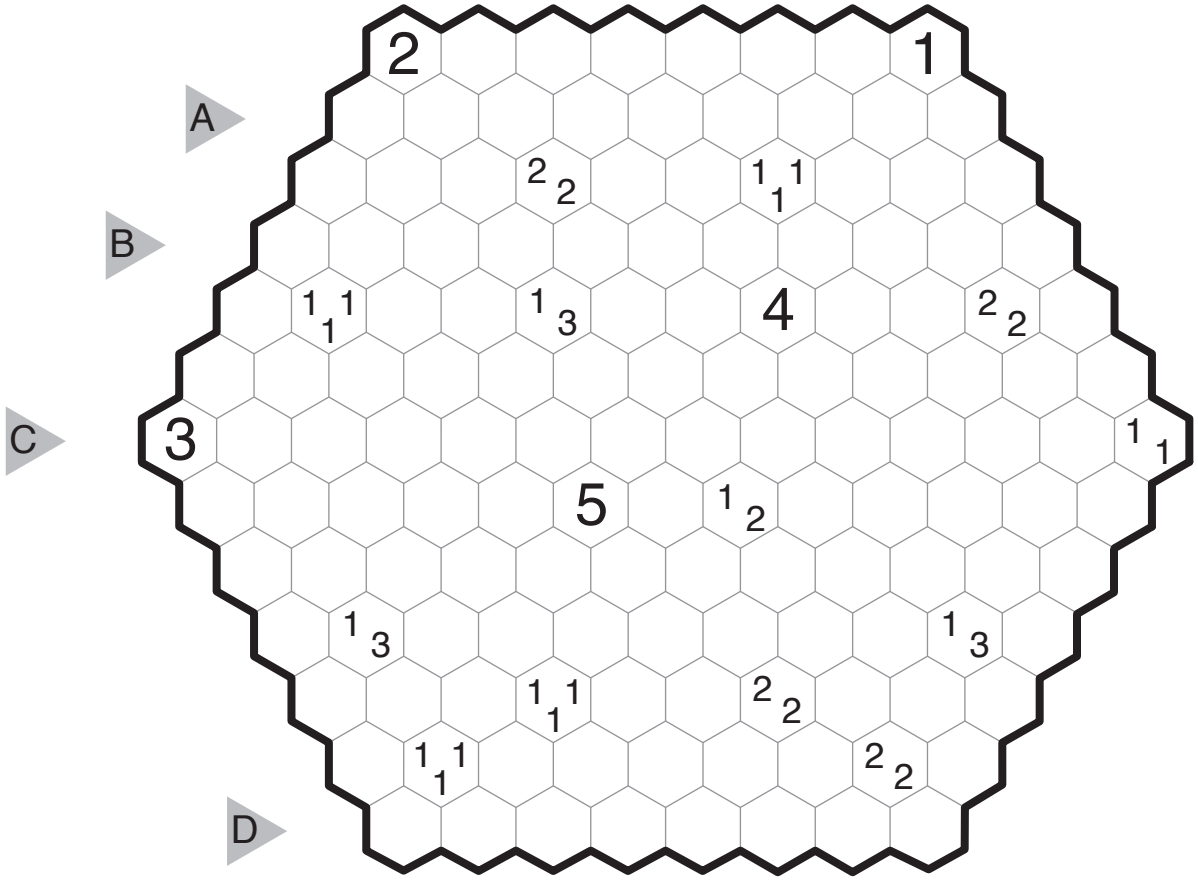
17/12/12:
Tapa by Serkan Yürekli
Theme: Question Marks

Rules: Standard Tapa rules. Each question mark must stand for some positive integer, and will combine with any other question marks in that cell to form a typical Tapa clue.



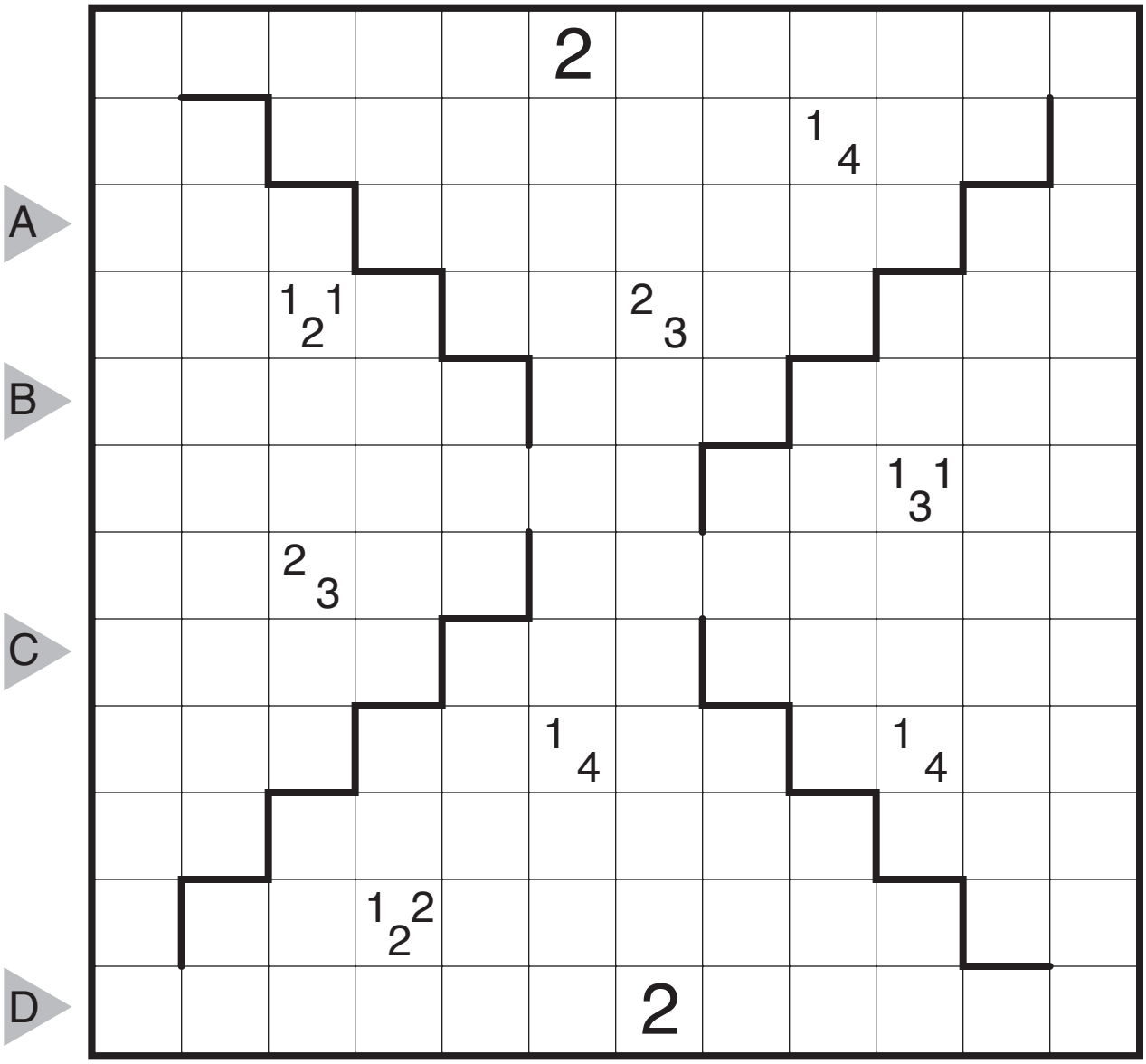
15/02/03:
Hex Tapa by Prasanna Seshadri
Theme: Clue Symmetry and Logic

Rules: Variation of Tapa. Instead of the normal 2×2 rule, on this hex grid no three cells in the connected Tapa can share a common vertex. All other rules still apply.



17/03/09:
Tapa (Borders) by Serkan Yürekli
Theme: The most popular puzzle of TVC XII

Rules: Standard Tapa Rules. Also, if two cells are separated by a thick border, this means that exactly one of those cells is shaded and the other is unshaded.



15/01/16:
Tapa (Unique Clues) by Tapio Saarinen
Theme: Logical

Rules: Variation of Tapa rules; all clues have been replaced by symbols, and each clue cell must be a unique value (e.g., 113 can appear at most once as a clue value). Each question mark stands for a nonzero number; each asterisk stands for a nonzero number of question marks.