16 Sample Number Search Mazes

Large Print

With Instructions and Solutions

MK Eidson

Eposic

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Eposic is proud to introduce *16 Sample Number Search Mazes*. Our search mazes are constructed of symbols (letters, numbers, etc.) in a grid, where you trace out an unbroken solution path connecting a series of grid cells according to some set of rules. In this booklet of number search mazes, the goal is to start at either of two highlighted cells and draw a solution path through a series of cells ending at the other highlighted cell according to the following three rules:

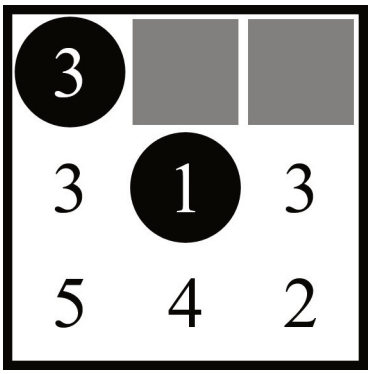
Rule One, from any given cell on the solution path, you can only continue the path by connecting to an *adjacent* cell, whether *horizontally, vertically, or diagonally*.

Rule Two, from any given cell on the solution path, you may only connect to a cell with a numeric value that is *one less than, equal to, or one more than* the numeric value of the current cell.

Rule Three, the solution path *may not revisit any cell*.

Note that these rules don't prevent the solution path from crossing itself, which is possible on the diagonal, as we'll soon see. Also note that these puzzles only use the numbers 1 through 9.

In the back of the book, we show a solution path for each of the book's 200 puzzles. Our solutions are included to prove there is at least one solution for each puzzle, and we believe the solutions we provide are unique. However, it's *possible* you might find other solutions, and it's great if you do, but please double check that any different solution you find follows all the three rules above.



Let's look at a simple 3x3 example. The puzzles in this book are full-page, 20x14 grids with many dead ends, but the concepts are the same. Here our two highlighted cells contain the values 3 and 1, and it's our job to connect them while abiding by our three rules. Note that two cells in the grid are blocked out, which means the solution path can't include them.

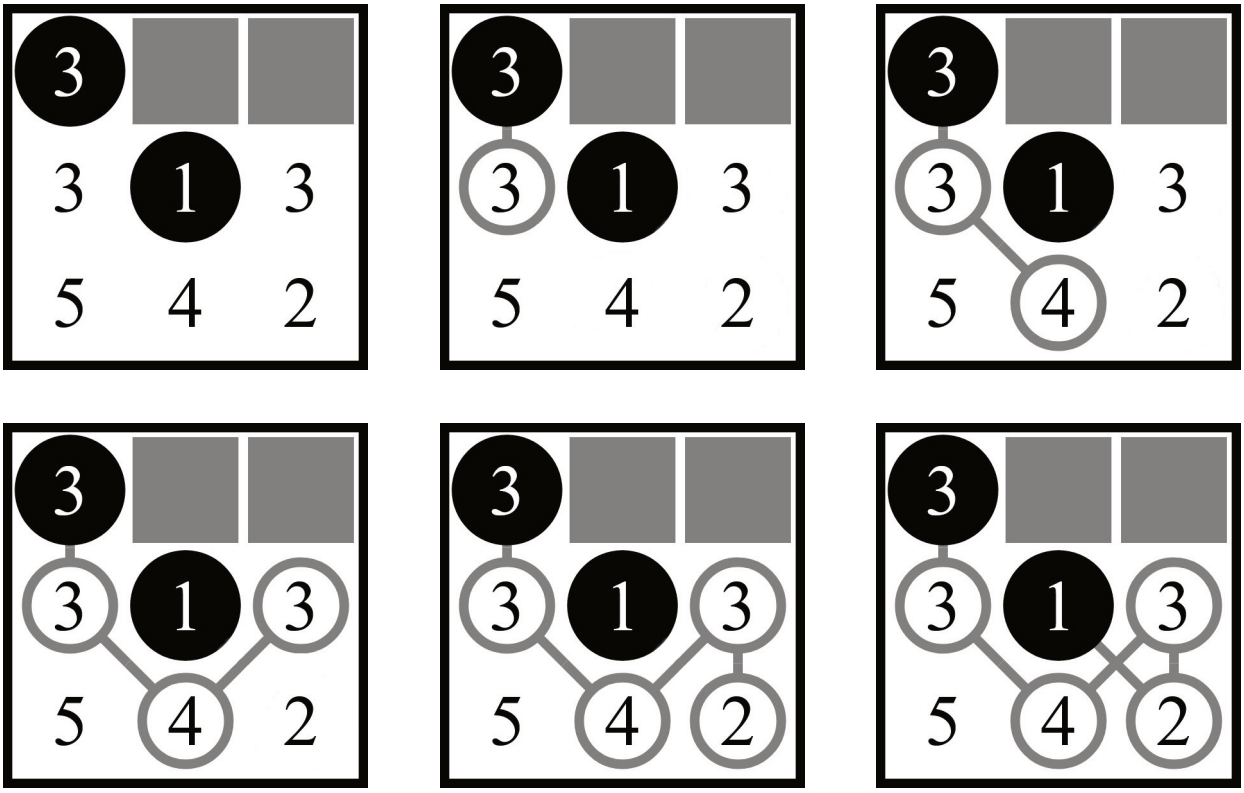
We can start drawing our solution path from either highlighted number. If a solution path works in one direction, it will work in the reverse direction just as well. Let's select the highlighted 3 to start with, and after we work through the puzzle from there, we'll work it in reverse from the highlighted 1.

Note that Rule One, requiring us to connect cells to adjacent cells, if taken by itself, would make for a very quick solution to this puzzle, since the highlighted 3 is adjacent to the highlighted 1. But Rule Two only allows connecting one cell to another if the cell we're connecting to has a numeric value that's one less than, equal to, or one more than the value in the cell we're connecting from. That means we must connect the highlighted 3 to an adjacent cell with a value of 2, 3, or 4. That rules out connecting the highlighted 3 directly to the highlighted 1.

Before turning the page, take a moment to try solving the above puzzle, applying the three rules. Then you can check to see how well you did.

Below, from left to right, are the steps taken to connect the highlighted 3 to the highlighted 1. Note that in our solutions, for the sake of clarity, we circle each

cell on the solution path and connect the circles. Please feel free to draw the connections between numbers in whatever manner suits you.



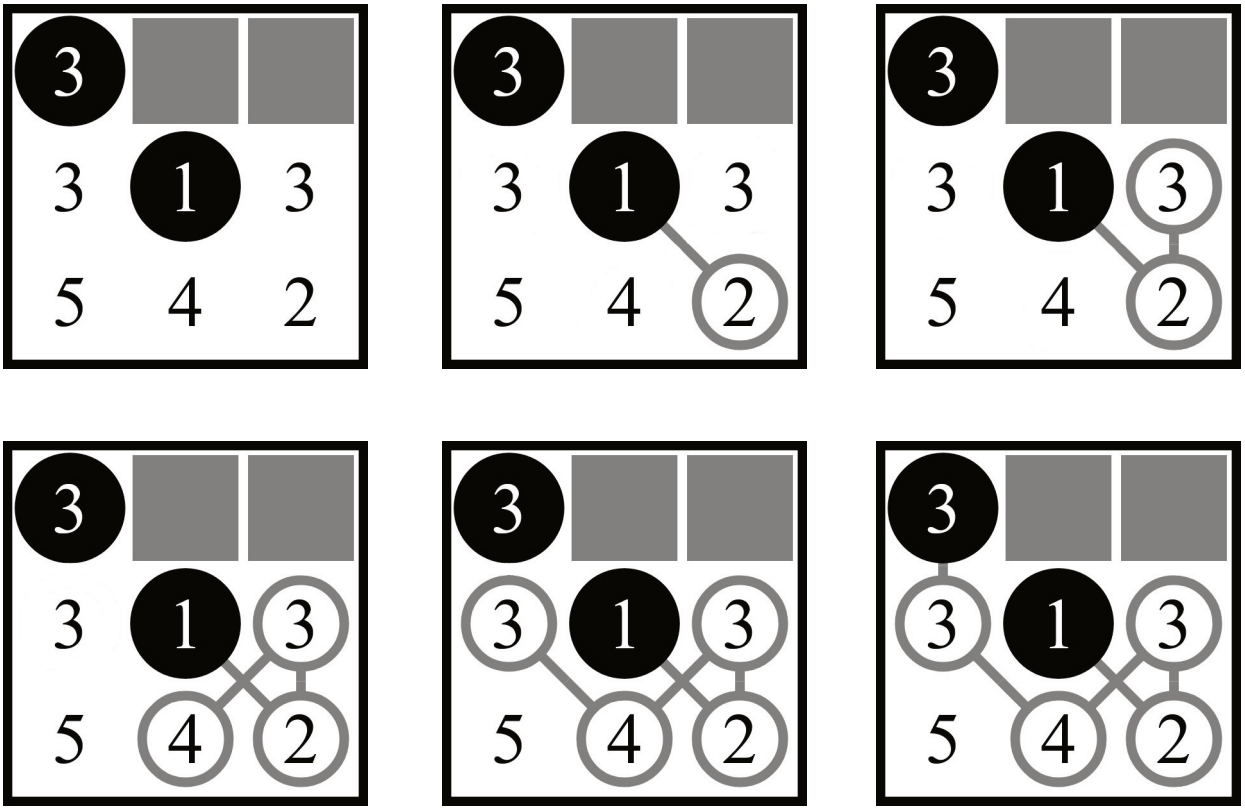
The first connection is from the value 3 to another cell with the value 3, as allowed by our rules. From there, we connect to a cell with the value 4, again in accordance with our rules, as is each step afterwards, with each new cell we connect to always having a value one less than, equal to, or one more than the value of the cell we connect from.

Note the 5 is not included in the solution path. In the full-page grids, it's likely more cells won't be a part of the solution than what are. The 5 in this example represents a dead end, since we legally could have connected to it from the 4, but if we had, there would have been no other cell to connect to from there. You'll have plenty of dead ends to contend with in the full-page puzzles and may need to do a bit of backtracking. Dead ends branching off the solution path may contain several cells and still not allow you to connect to your desired destination. Solutions presented in the back of this book do not include any dead end branches.

Note how in the last step, the solution path crosses itself. If two cells are adjacent when the solution path hasn't yet been drawn, they remain adjacent after the path is drawn, even if the path goes between them. What matters is that the values of the adjacent cells are within 1 of each other, which is why we're allowed to connect the 2 in the bottom right corner to the 1 in the center of the grid in the last step. Moreover, such a move doesn't revisit any cells, and so we haven't violated Rule Three.

As promised, let's look at the steps for solving the puzzle in reverse, starting at the highlighted 1 and trying to reach the highlighted 3. The steps are

presented below, from left to right. Compare this set of steps with the previous set. They're a bit different, but result in the same solution path.

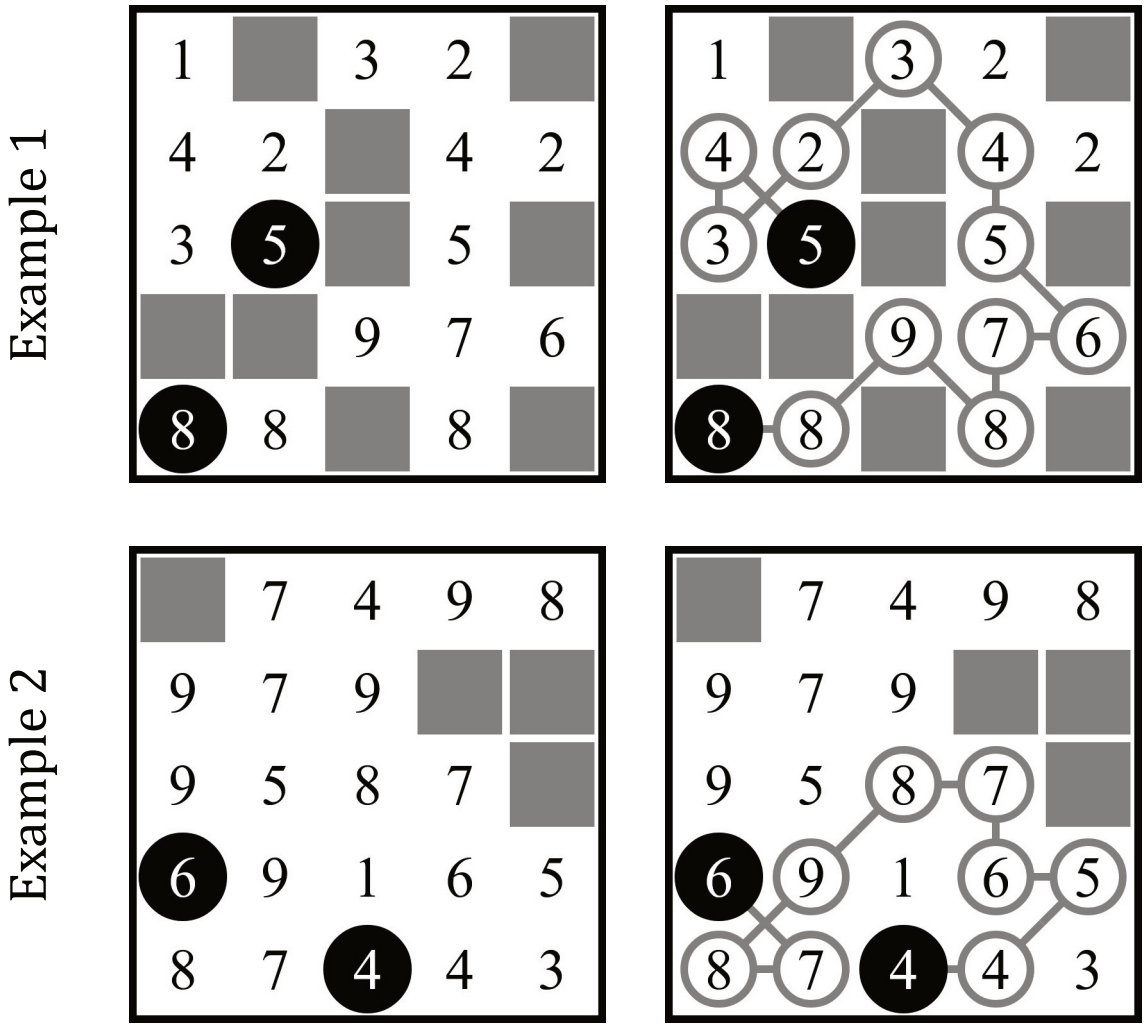


Once again, we could have connected the 4 to the 5, but it would still have resulted in being a dead end and thus not helpful to the solution. When solving the full-page puzzles, when you encounter a dead end, it won't always be obvious at first. You may need to trace a potential path some distance to discover whether it's a dead end. But be careful if you think you've hit a dead end. Remember that the solution path may cross itself. It might also double back on you, heading back in the direction from which you've come, away from your final destination, only to later double back again. The solution paths for the larger puzzles may lead you in all sorts of unexpected directions.

On the next page, we present two more examples, with unsolved puzzle grids to the left and their solutions to the right. We don't present each step like above, but we're hoping at this point it will be easy enough to figure out the individual steps from seeing the full solution paths. These two examples use 5x5 grids to give you a slightly better feel for how the larger, full-page puzzles will work.

In Example 1 on the next page, pay particular attention to how the solution path passes on the diagonal between two neighboring blocked cells. It can't be emphasized enough, if two cells are adjacent and their values differ at most by 1, then they can be connected, regardless of any conditions arising in their proximity, as long as you aren't revisiting a cell.

In Example 2 on the next page, note how some of the cells containing numbers can't possibly be reached from any of their adjacent cells. The 1 in the middle of the fourth row is like this, as is the 4 in the middle of the top row. Moreover, the 8 in the top row can be reached, but then has no way out, and so



can't possibly be part of the solution. All three of these cells could just as easily have been blocked out without affecting the solving of the puzzle, though it could affect how one initially assesses the puzzle's difficulty. Example 1 appears to have more than twice the number of blocked cells than Example 2, when it really only has two more, when you take into consideration the cells virtually blocked due to values and placements.

As you work these puzzles, you may recognize patterns, making them easier to solve, and yet any puzzle might break from pattern, too, throwing you off track. It's all part of the fun.

MK Eidson invented his first number search mazes in the 1980s, but only now has found the opportunity to make them available to the puzzle-loving public. We hope you enjoy working them as much as we enjoy bringing them to you now.

Visit https://eposic.com/pub/number-search-mazes to sign up for future announcements or to download the latest version of this booklet. On that page, you can also find the link to our 8.5x11-inch large print paperback, *200 Number Search Mazes*, available on Amazon. Here's the direct link to the product page:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/1936075075.

Happy number searching!

Puzzle 1

7	7	8	6	4	8	5	9	5	3	6	7	7	4	2	4	3
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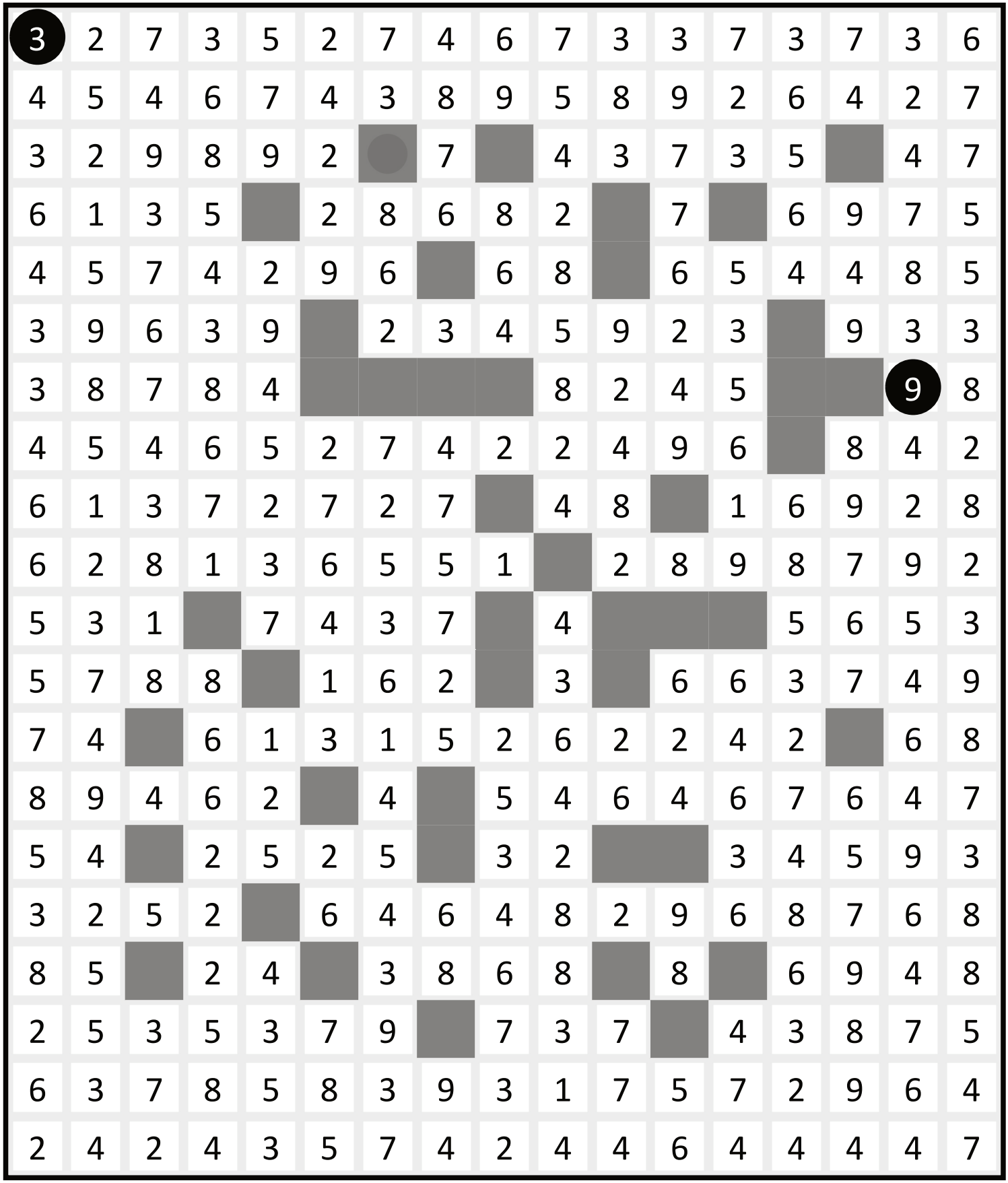
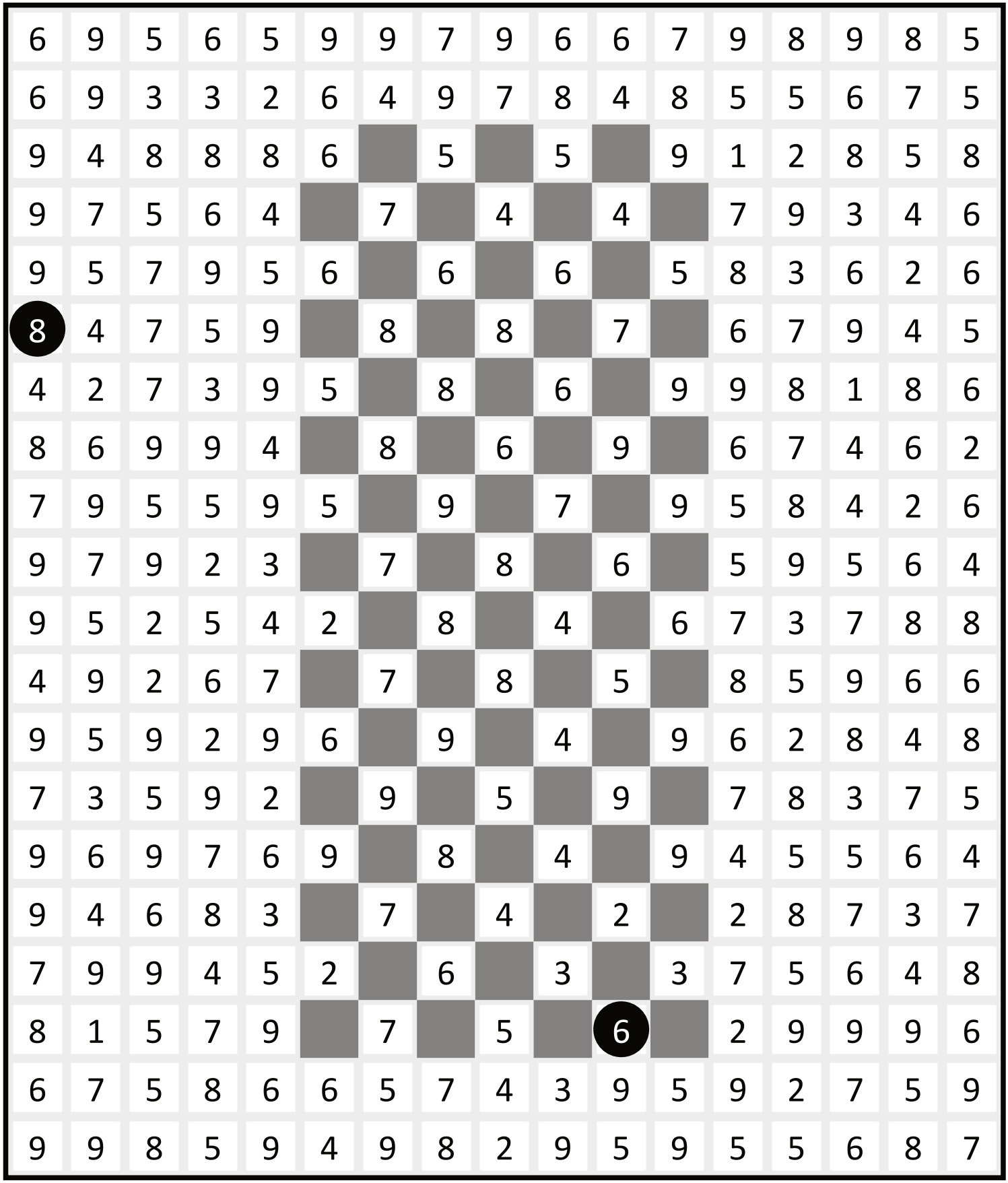
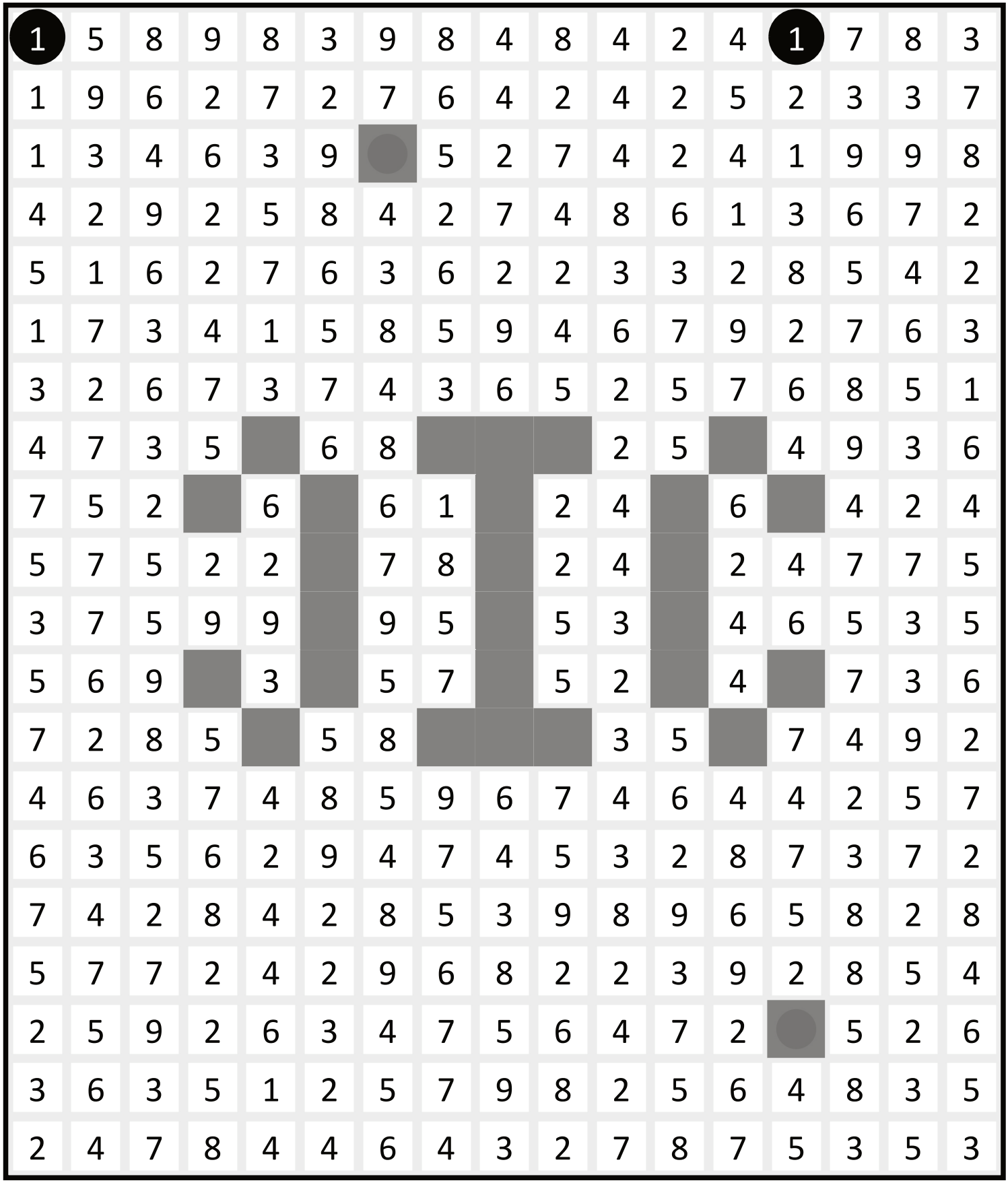
Puzzle 2



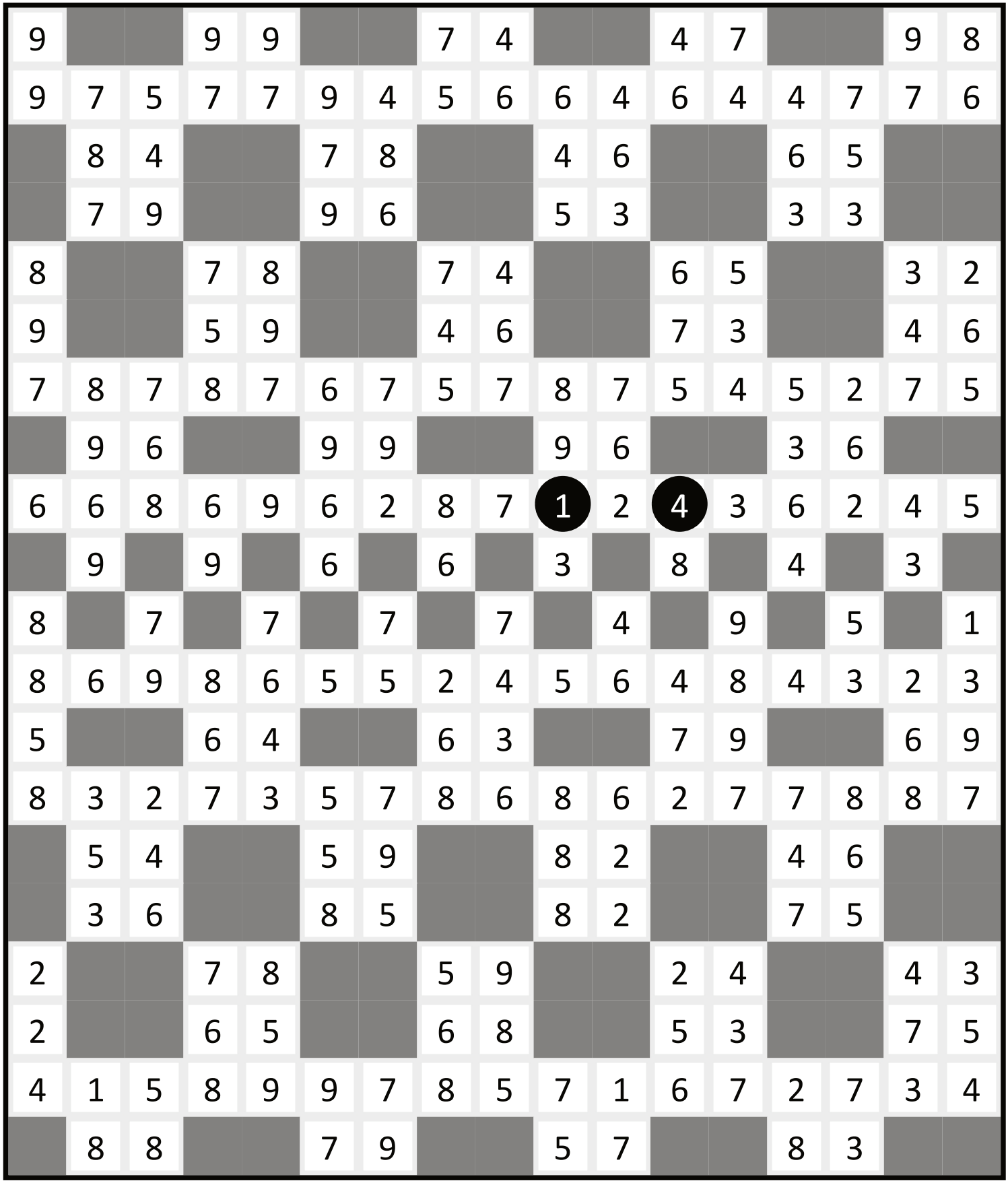
Puzzle 3



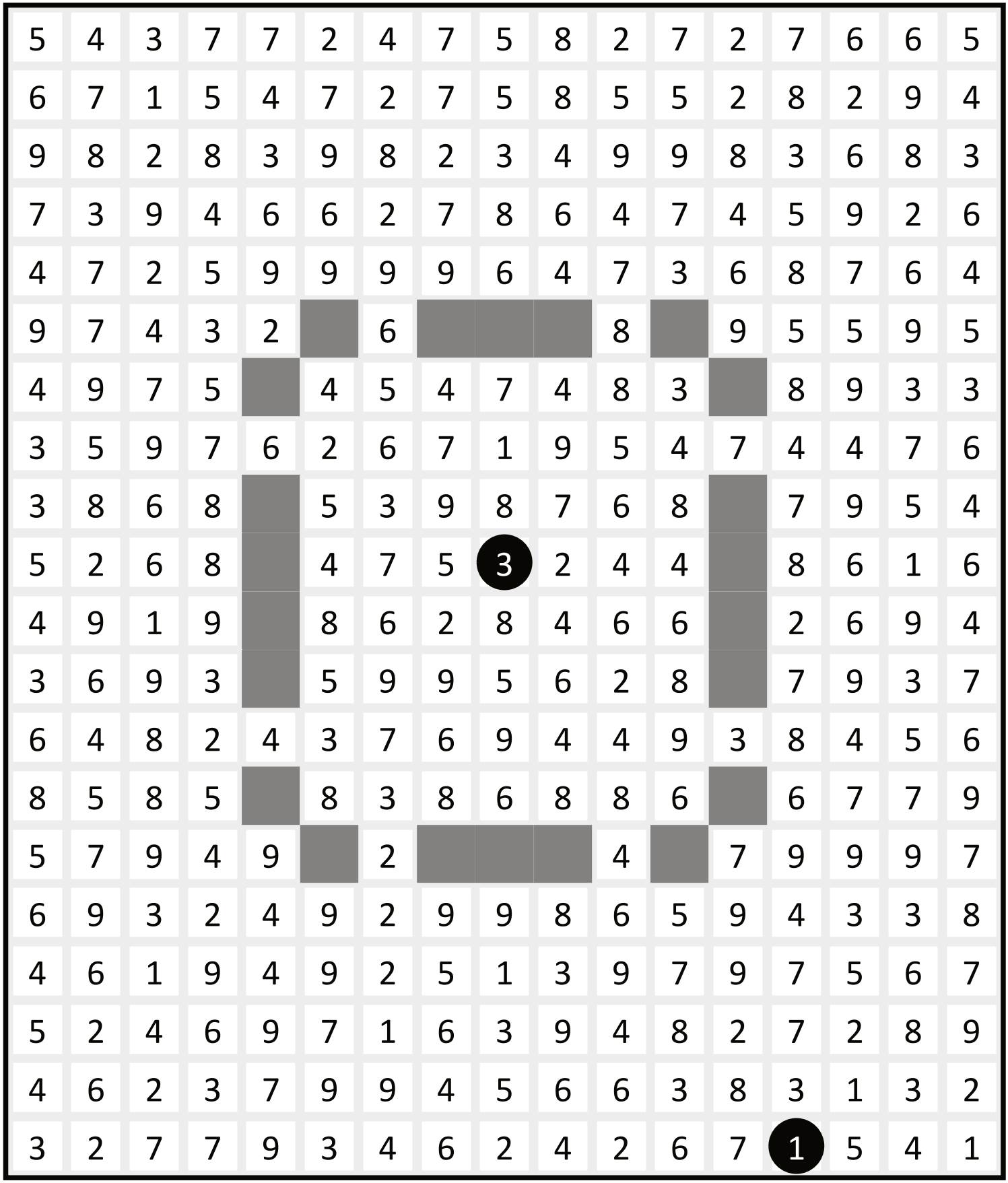
Puzzle 4



Puzzle 5



Puzzle 6



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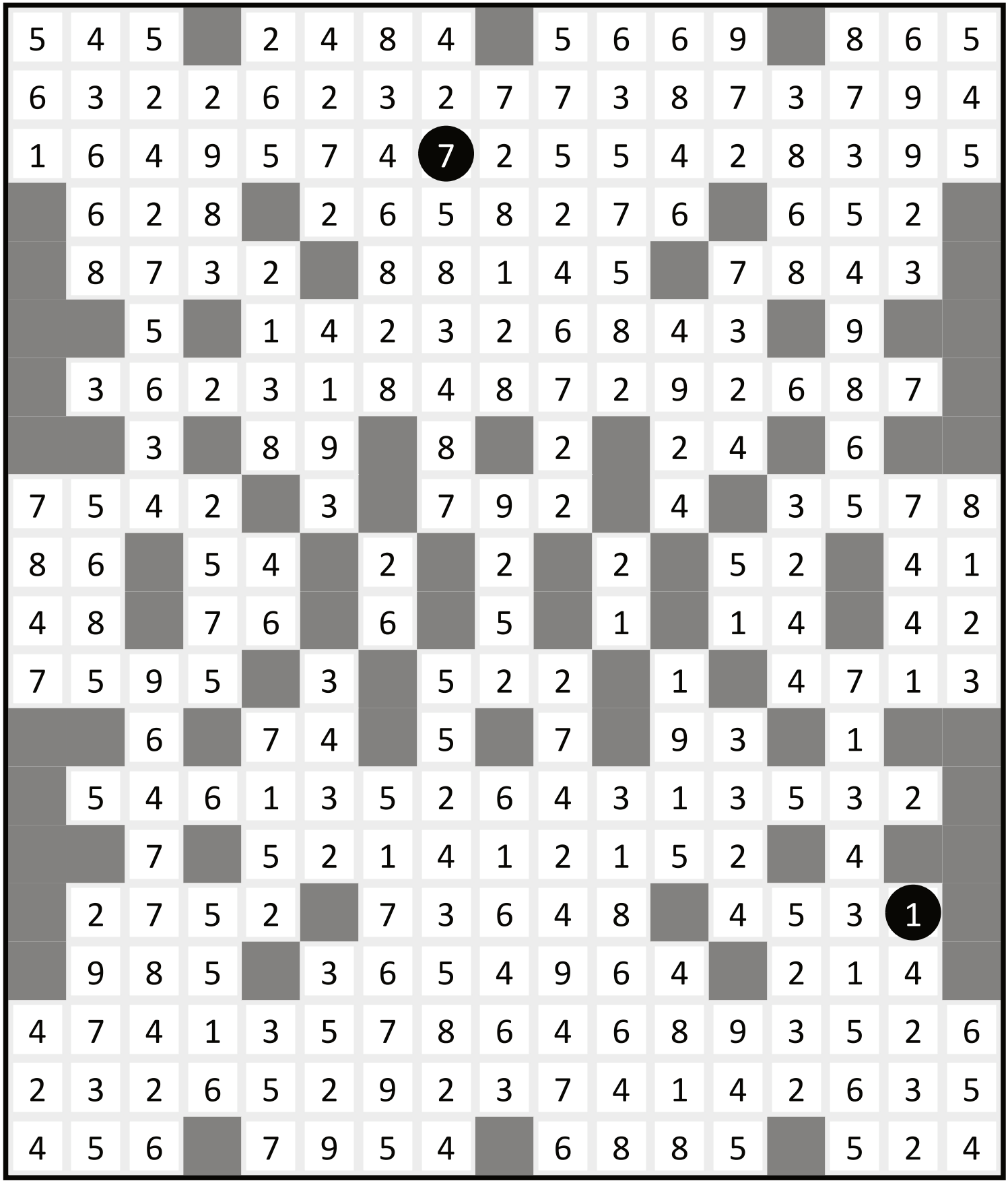
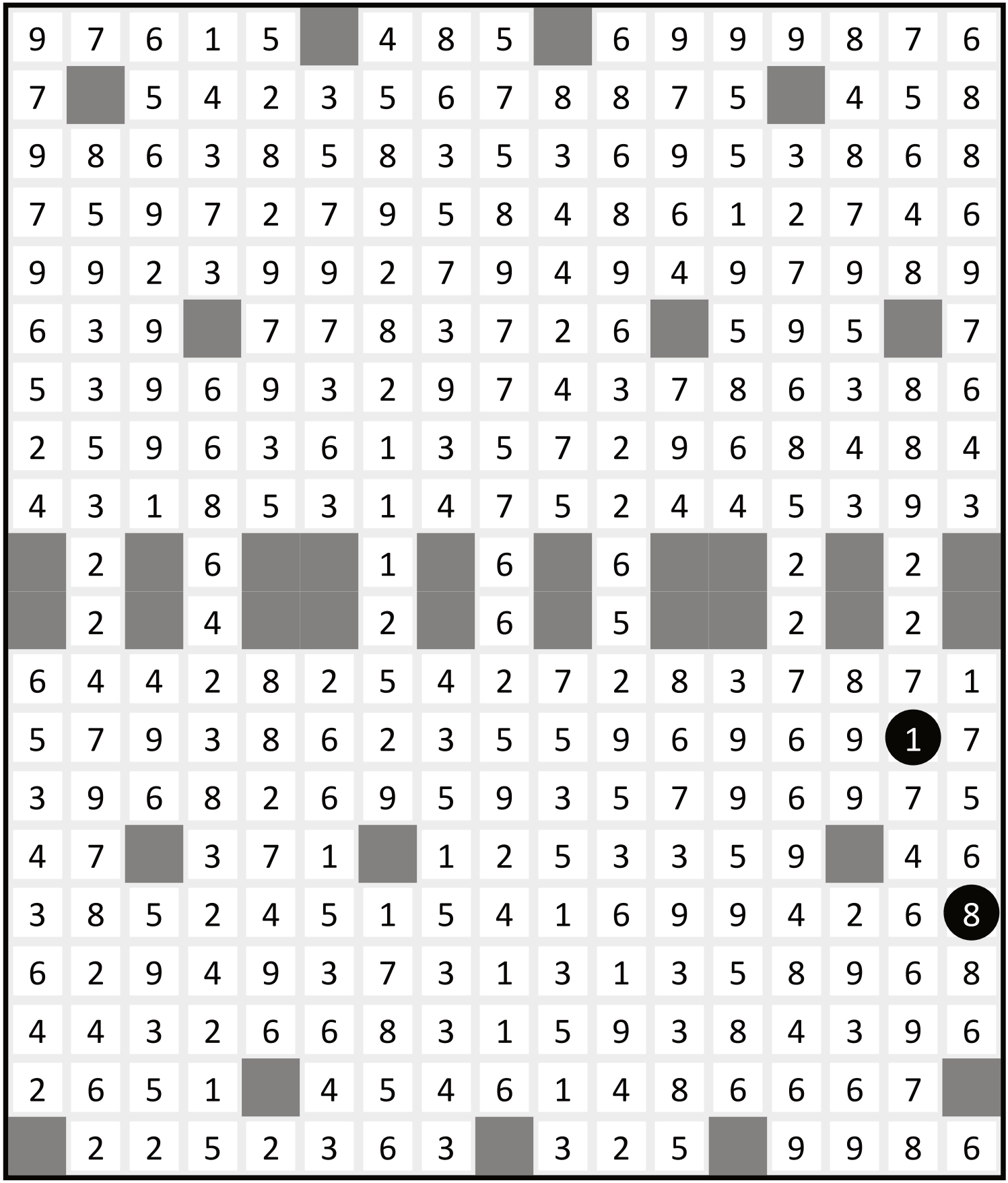
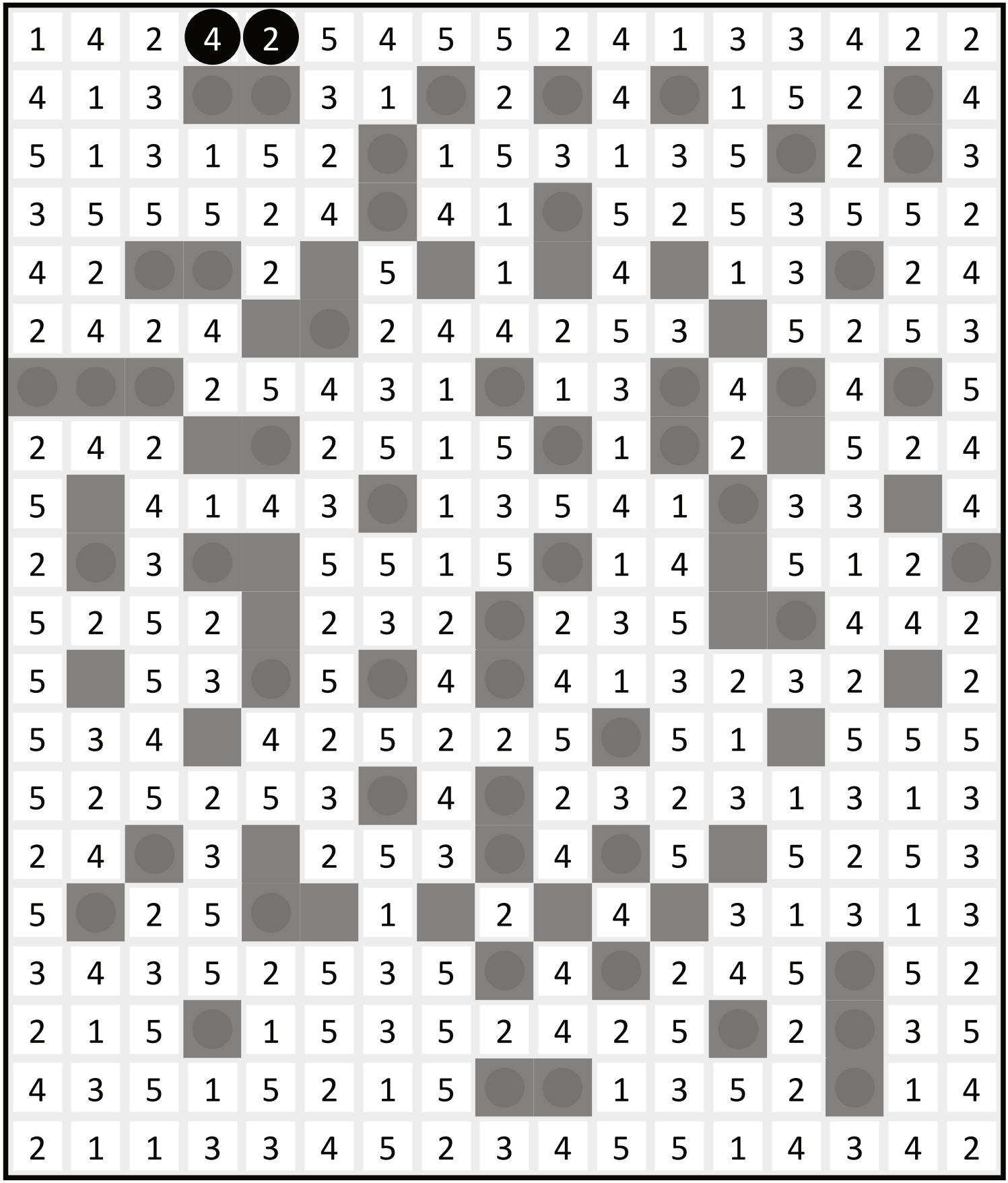


Puzzle 8



Puzzle 9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2 4 2 2 5 1 5 1 2 5 2 4
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5 5 3 5 4 4 1 3 2 3 2 2
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2 4 3 2 5 3 4 5 5 2 5 3
5 2 5 1 2 4 3 1 3 1 3
3 4 3 5 2 5 3 5 4 2 4 5 5 2
2 1 5 1 5 3 5 2 4 2 5 2 3 5
4 3 5 1 5 2 1 5 1 3 5 2 1 4
2 1 1 3 3 4 5 2 3 4 5 5 1 4 3 4 2

Puzzle 10

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Puzzle 11

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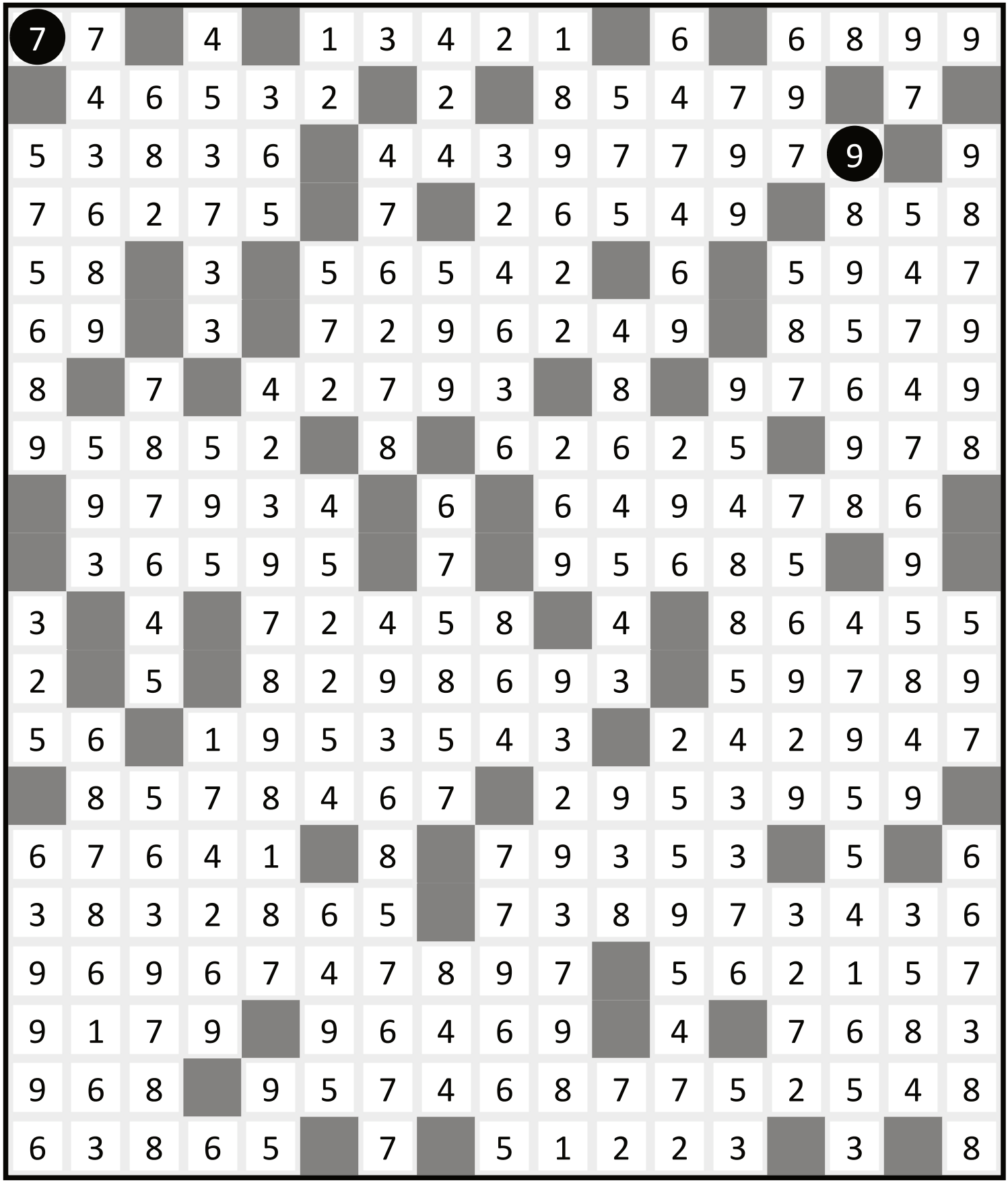
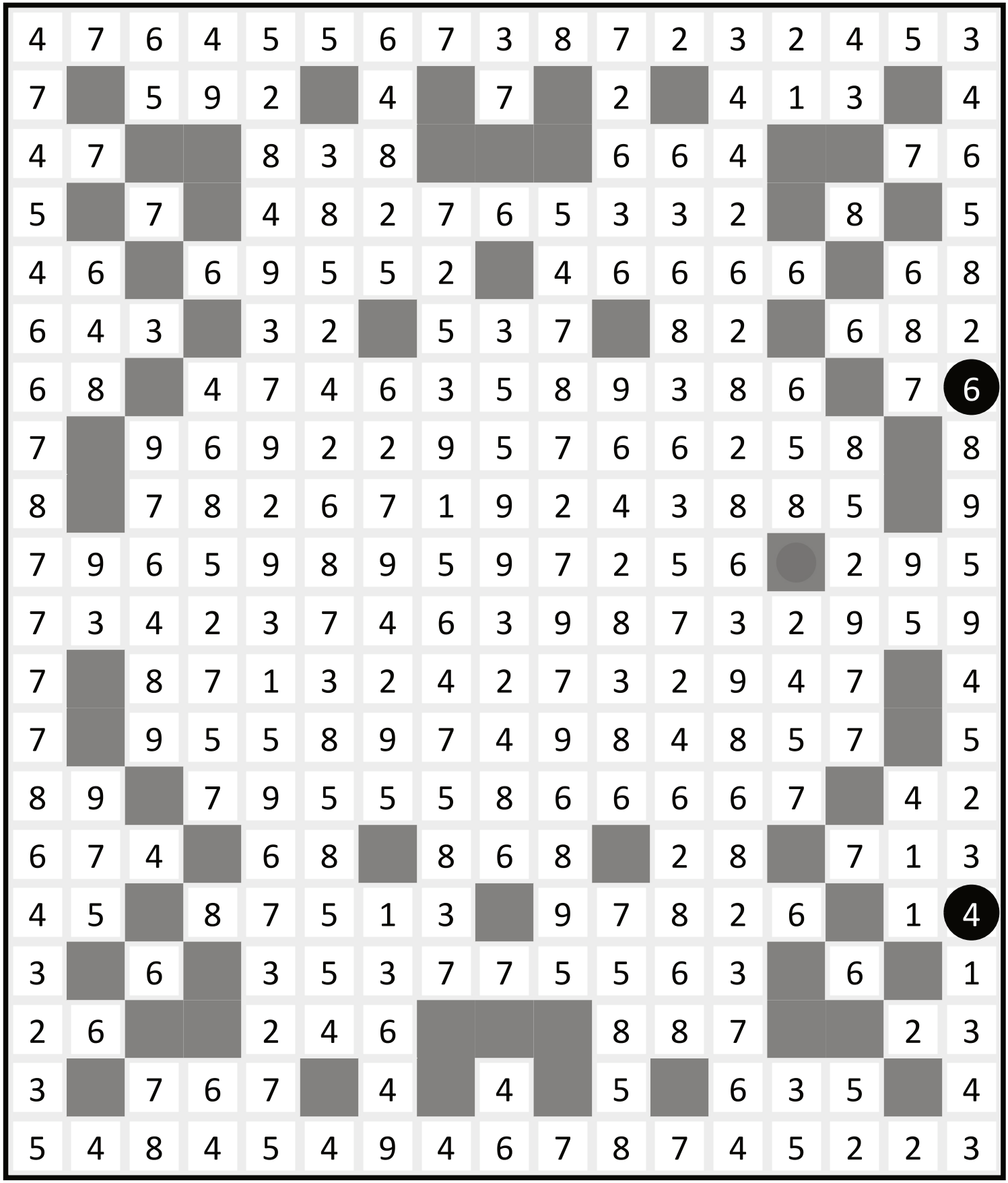
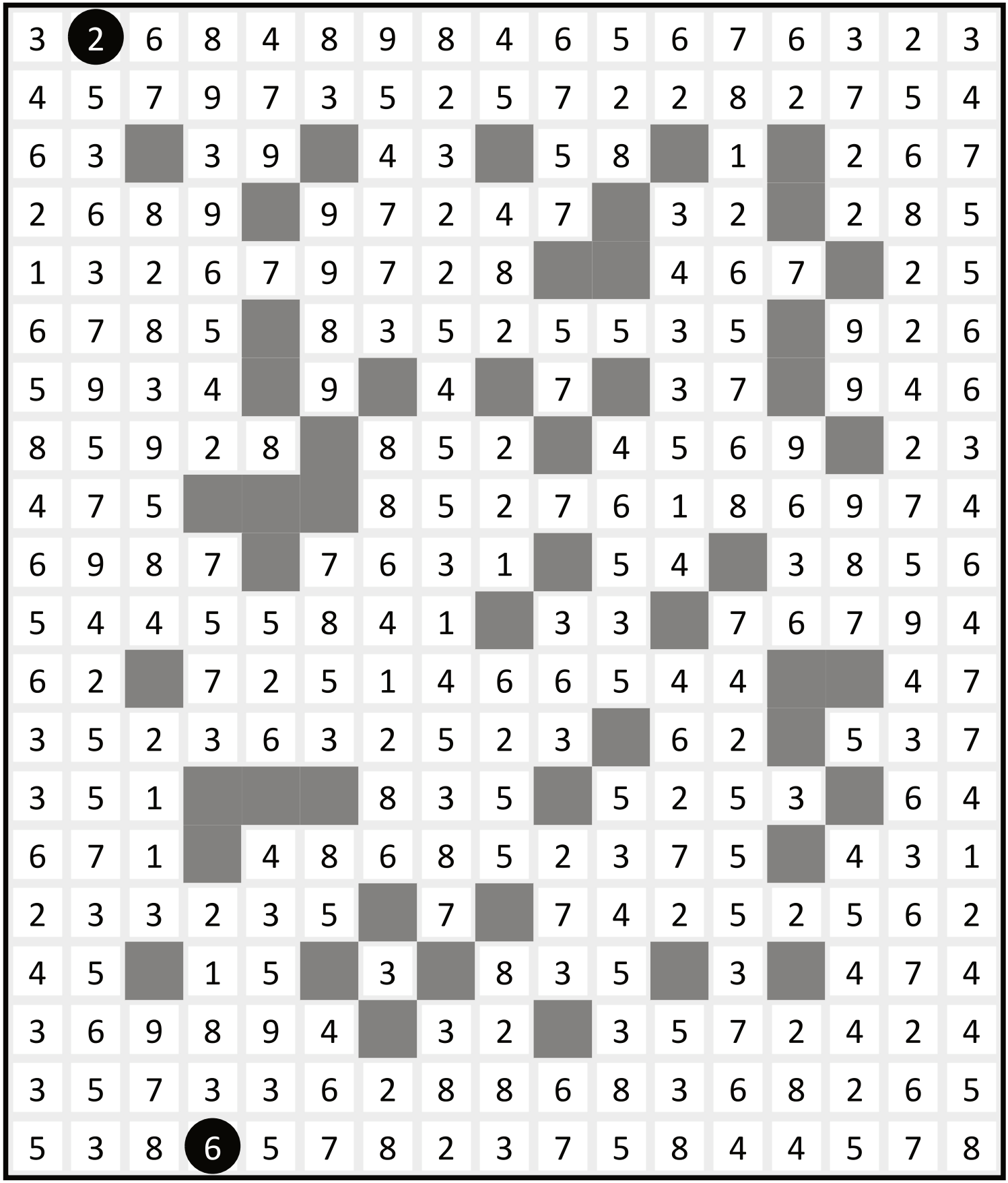
Puzzle 12



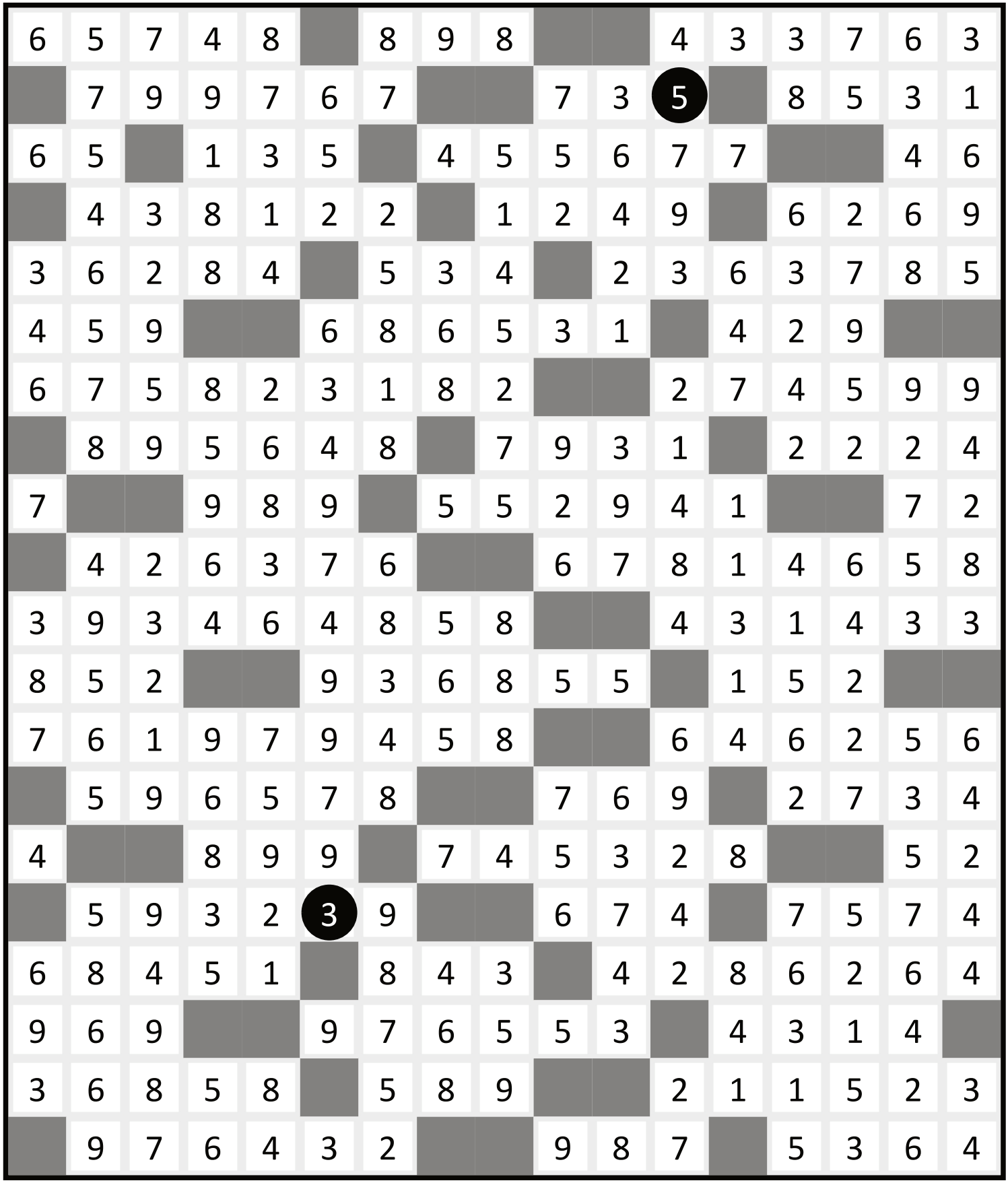
Puzzle 13



Puzzle 14



Puzzle 15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7 6 1 9 7 9 4 5 8 6 4 6 2 5 6
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5 9 3 2 3 9 6 7 4 7 5 7 4
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9 6 9 9 7 6 5 5 3 4 3 1 4
3 6 8 5 8 5 8 9 2 1 1 5 2 3
9 7 6 4 3 2 9 8 7 5 3 6 4

Puzzle 16

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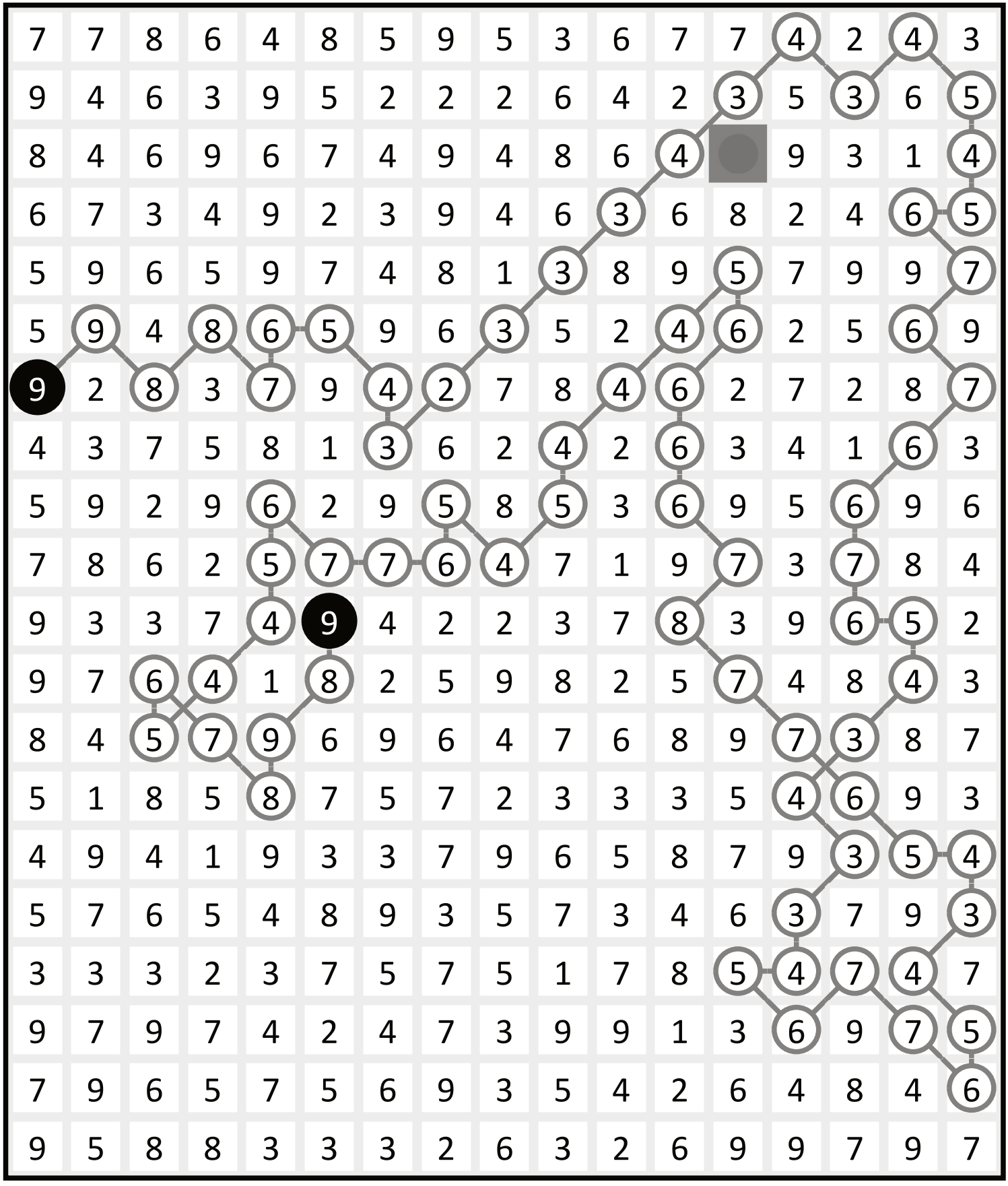
Puzzle 1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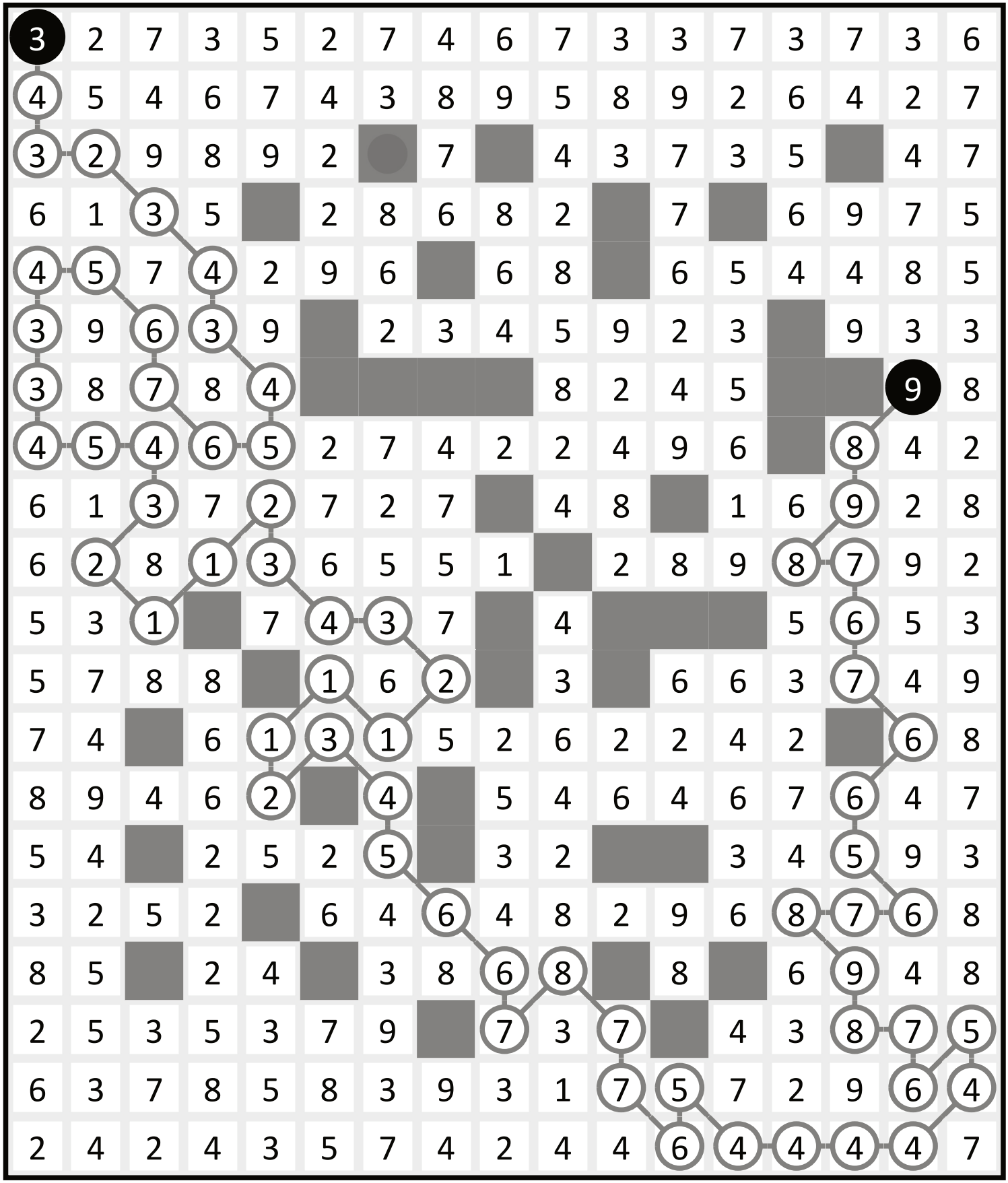
Puzzle 2



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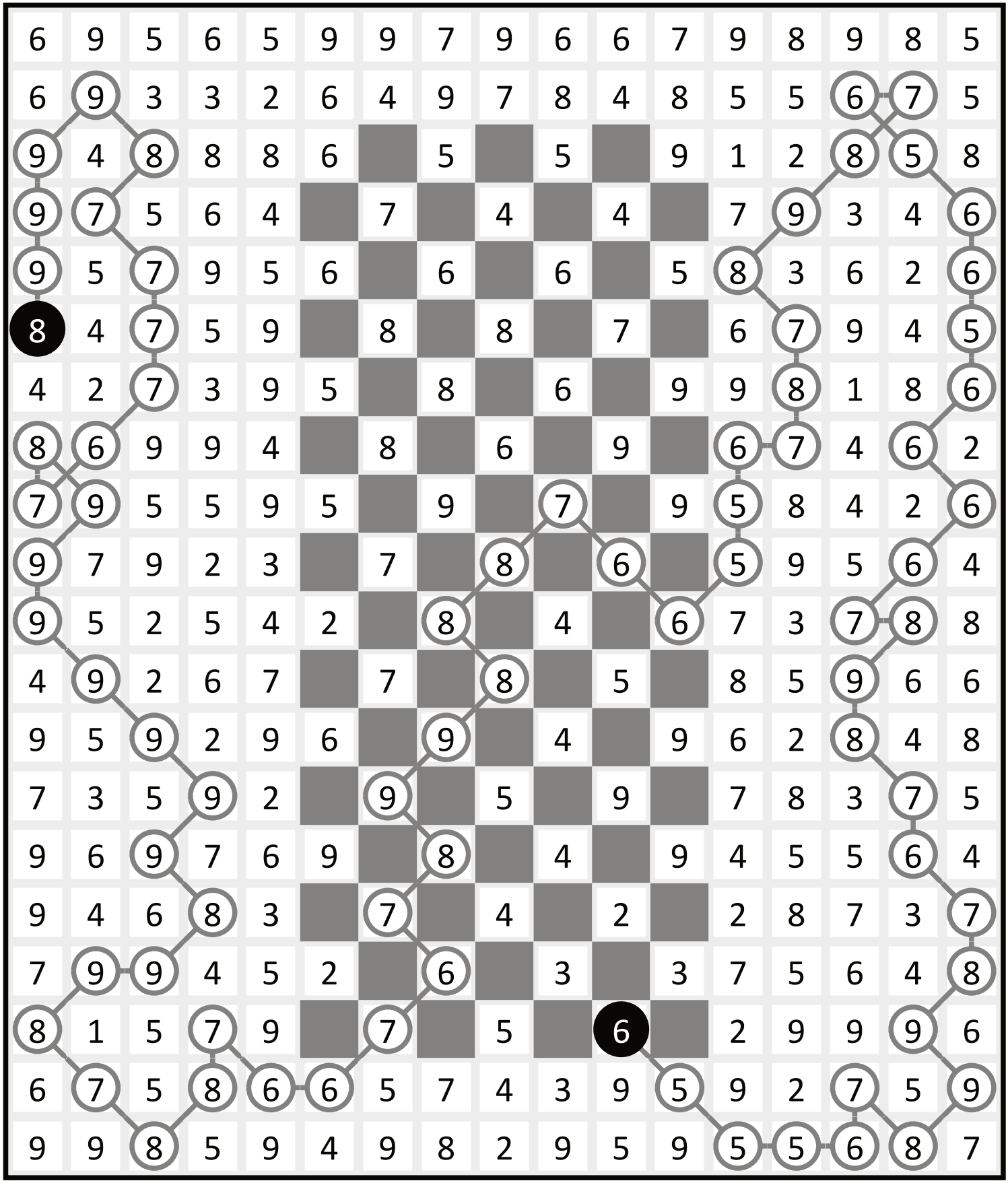
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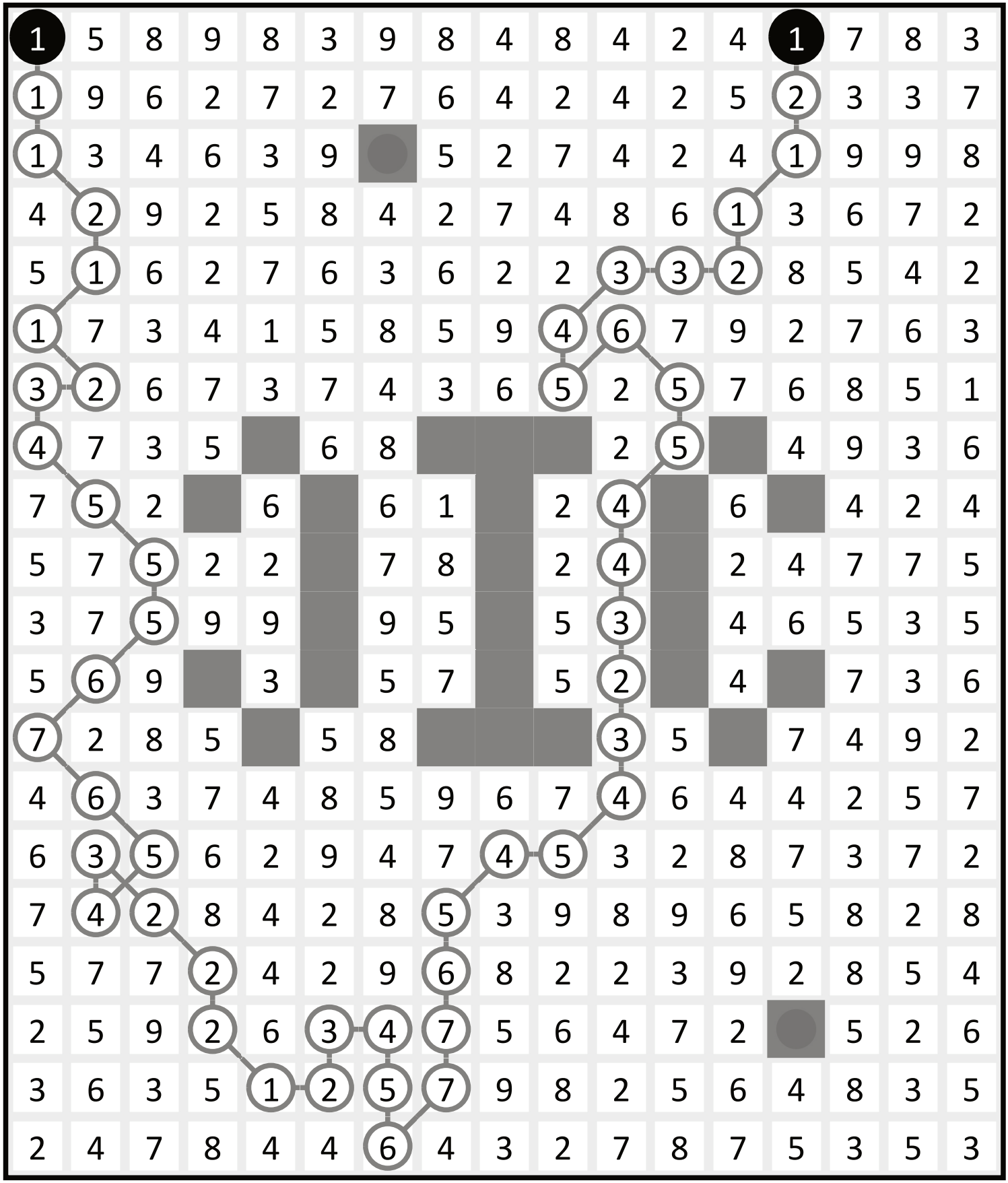
Puzzle 4



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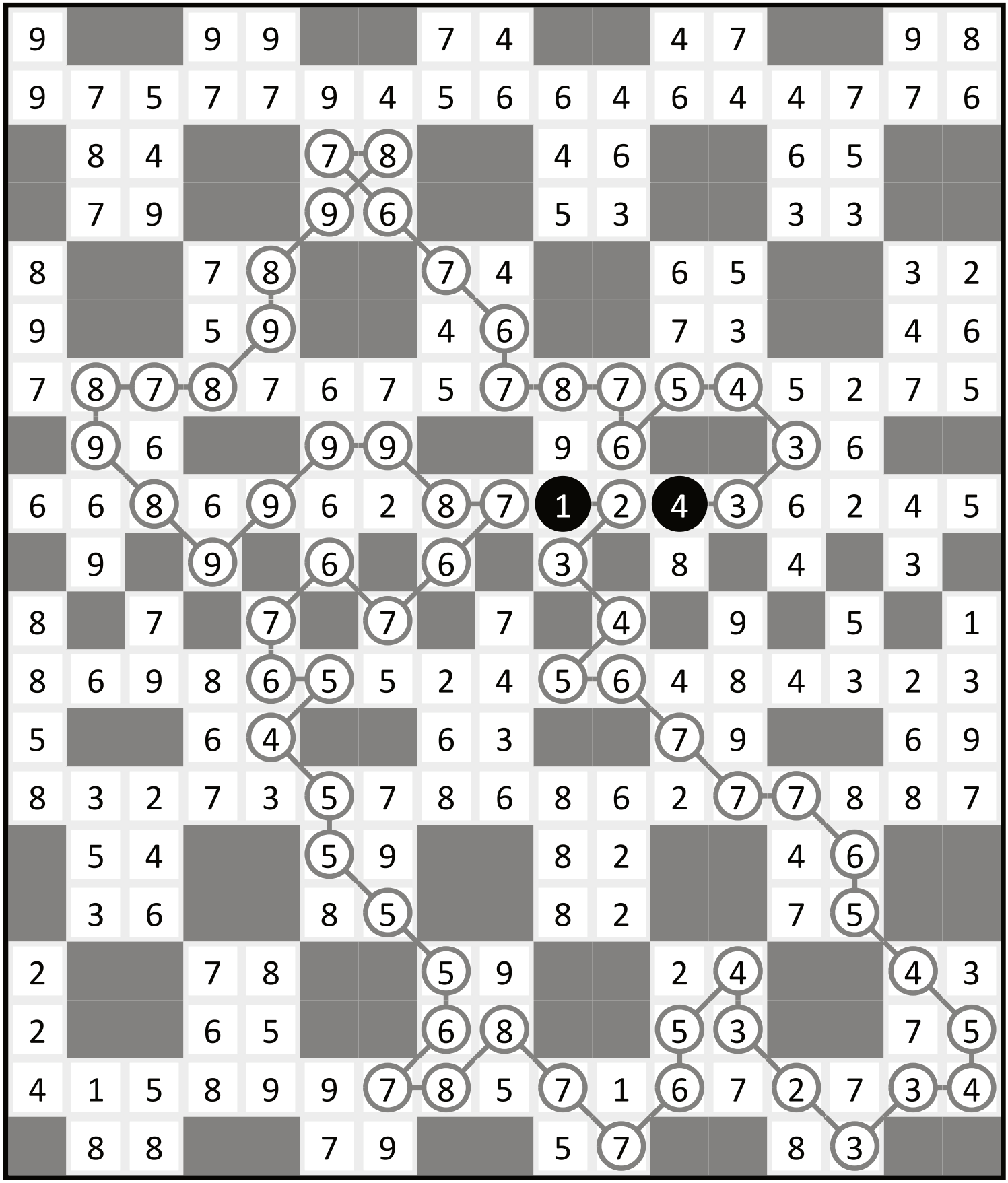
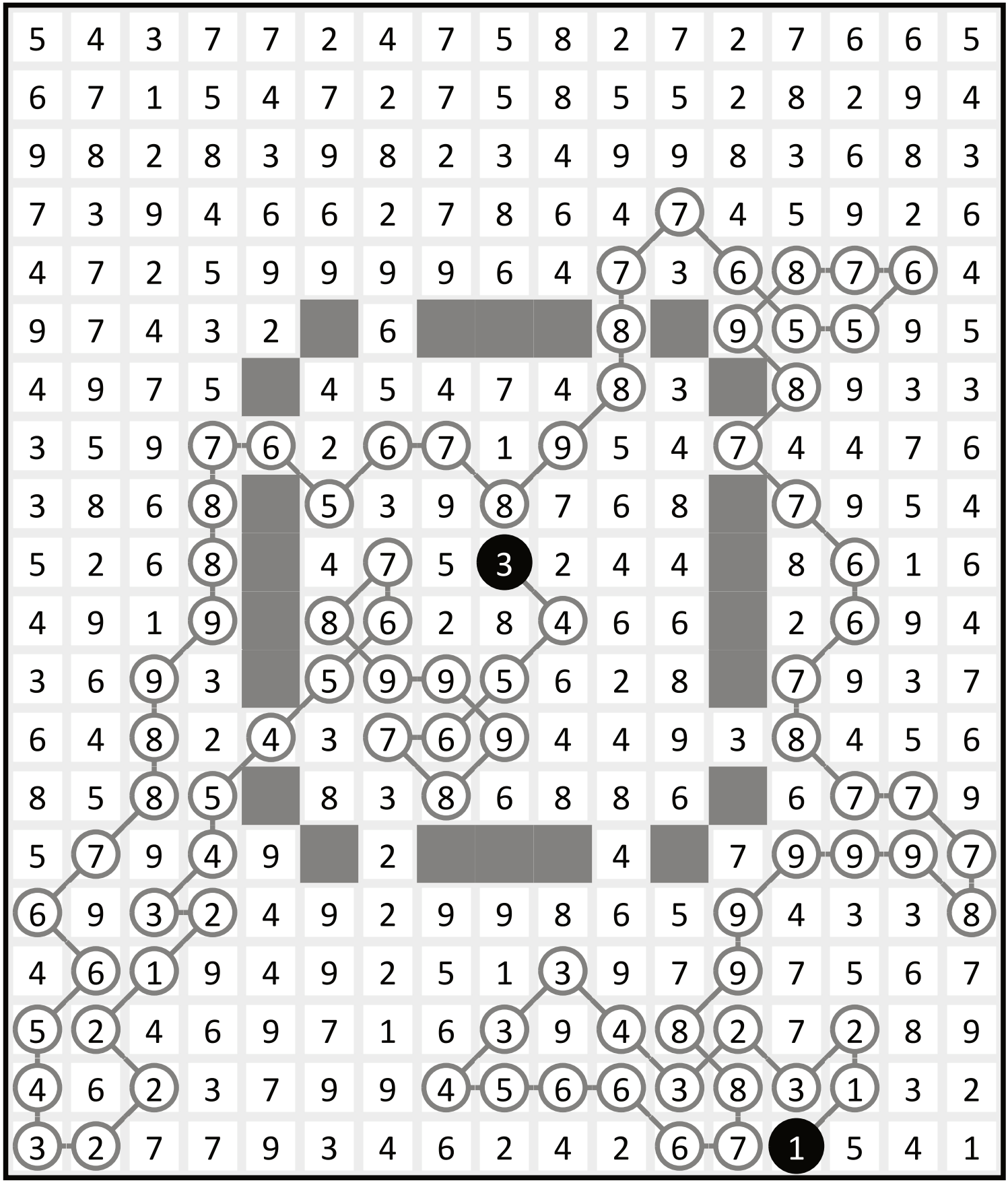


Puzzle 6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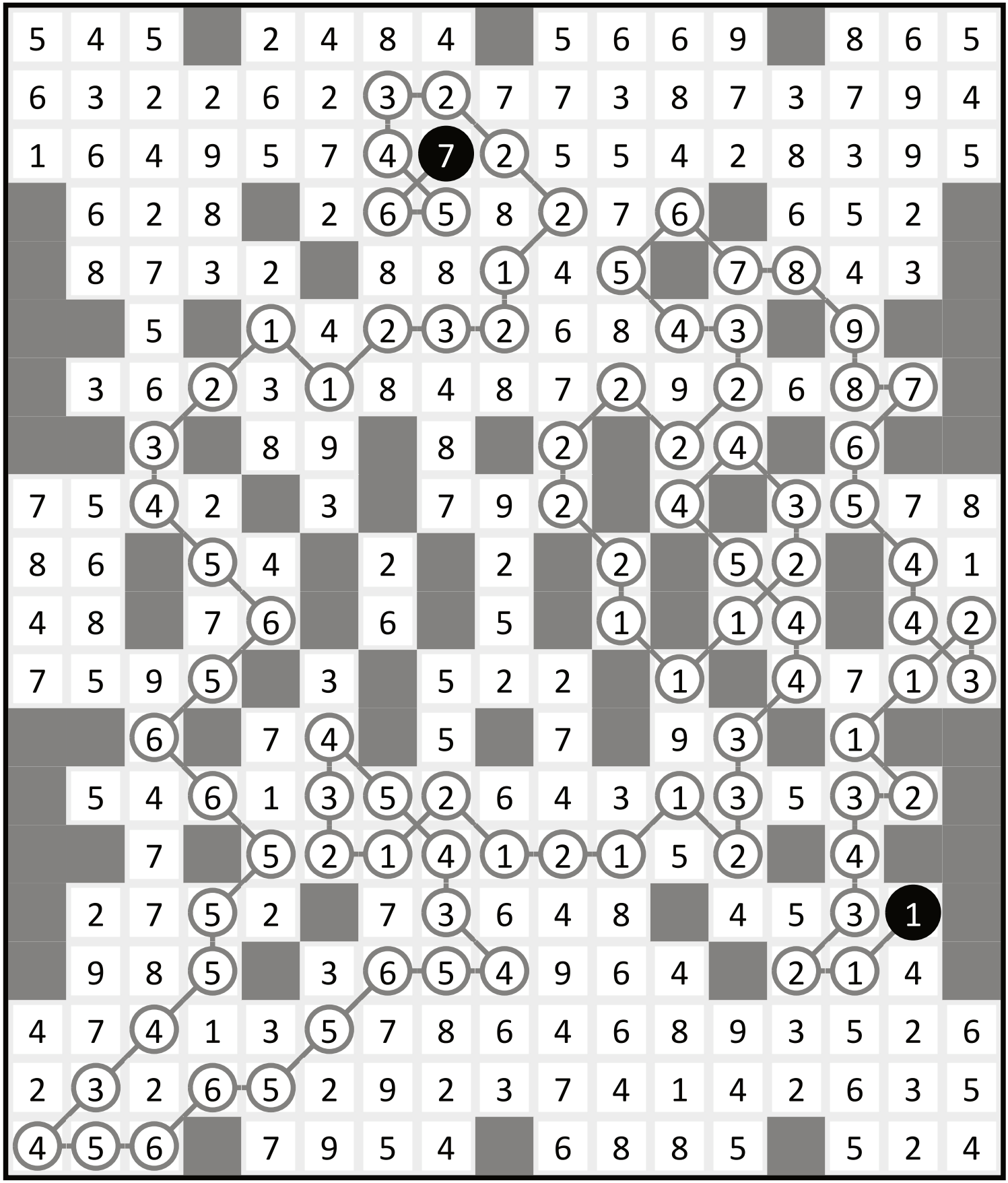
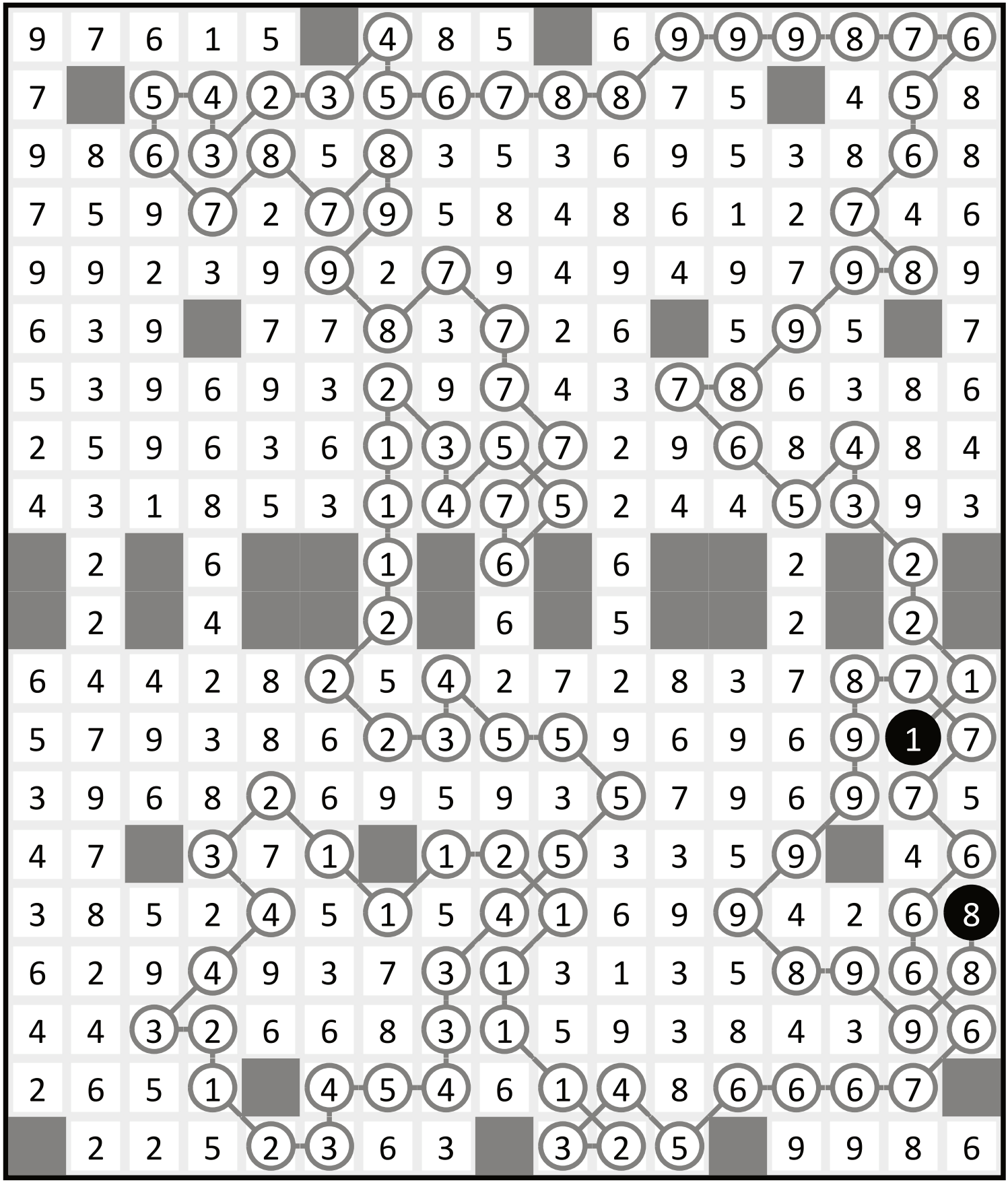
Puzzle 7



Puzzle 8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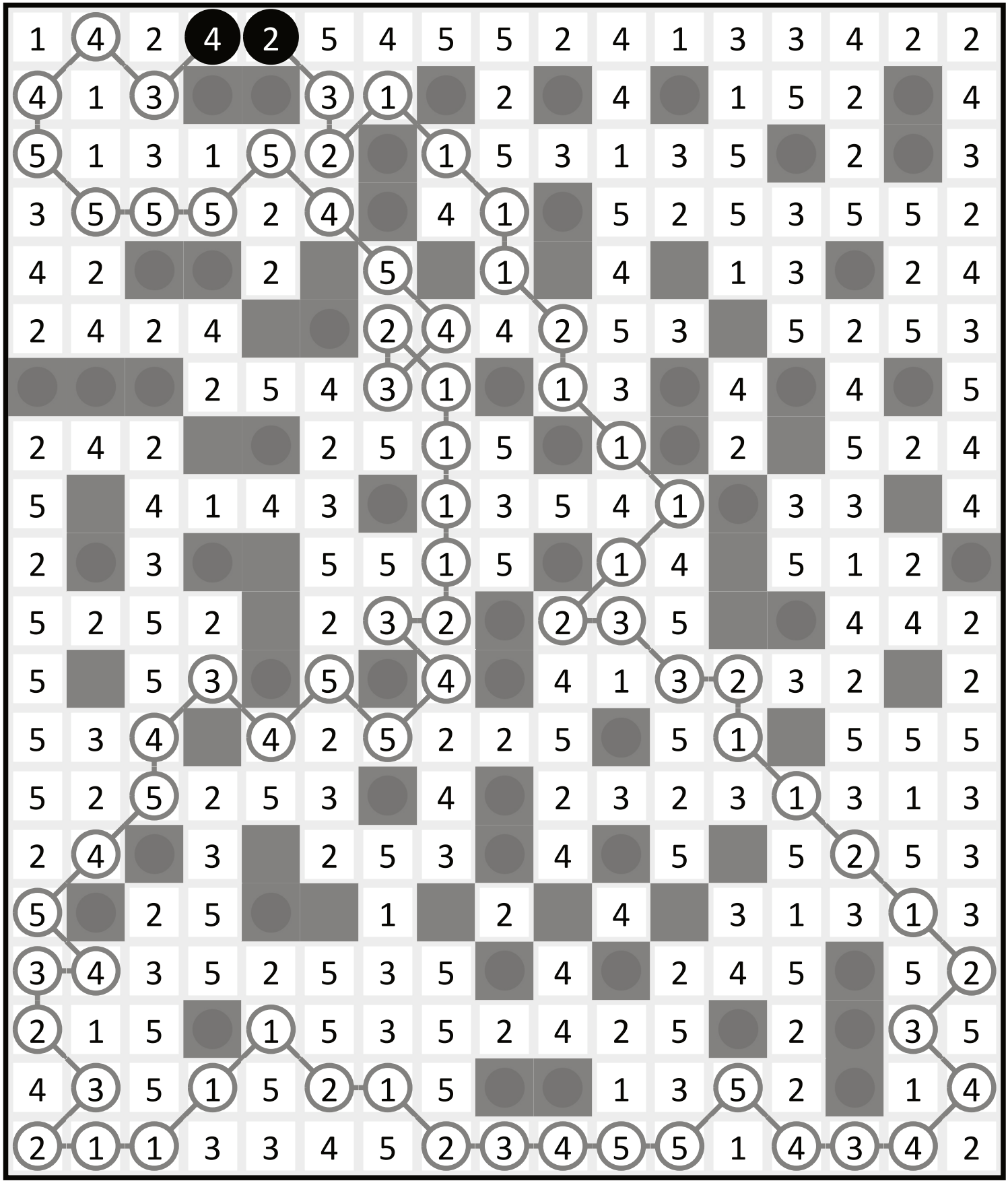
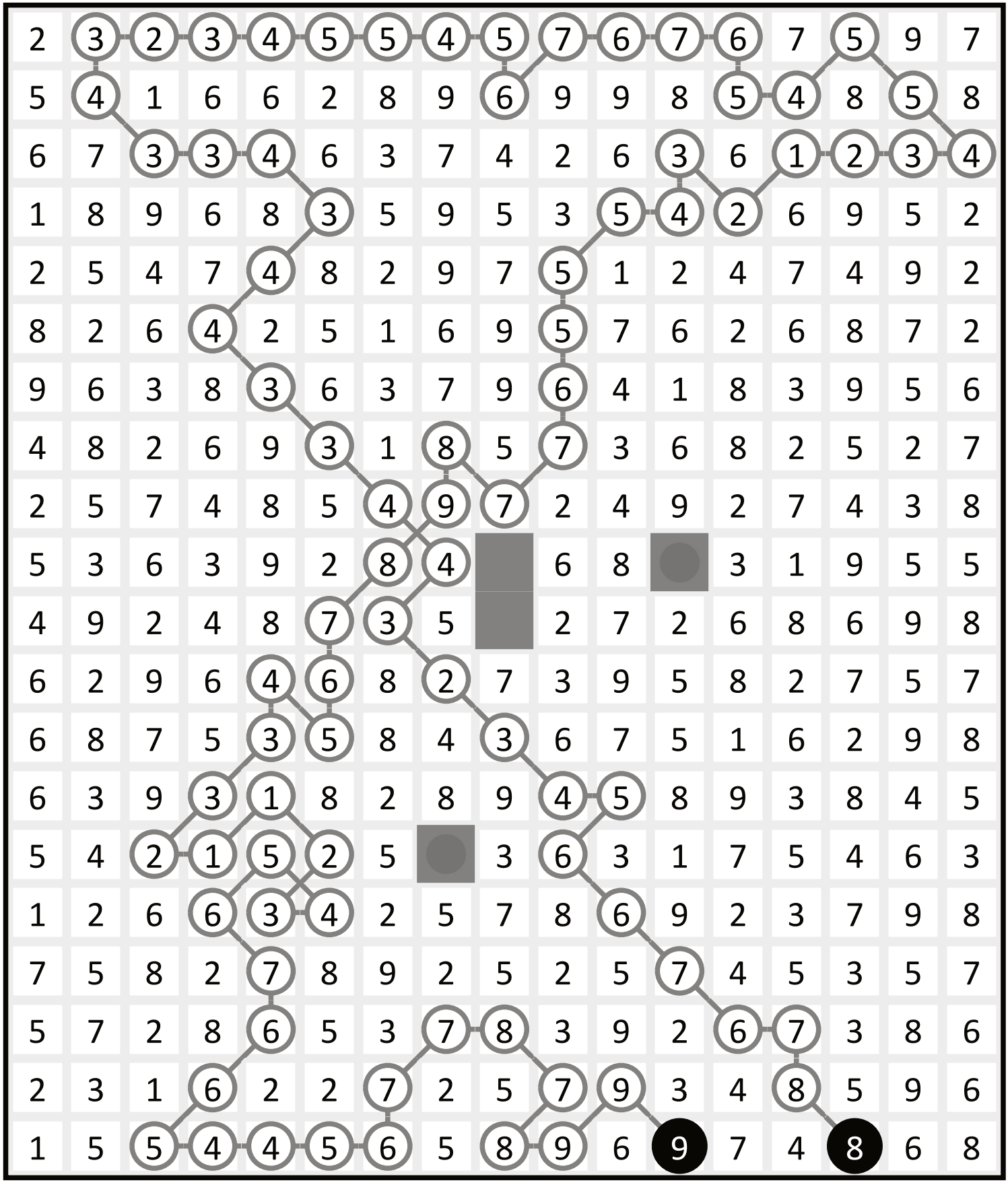
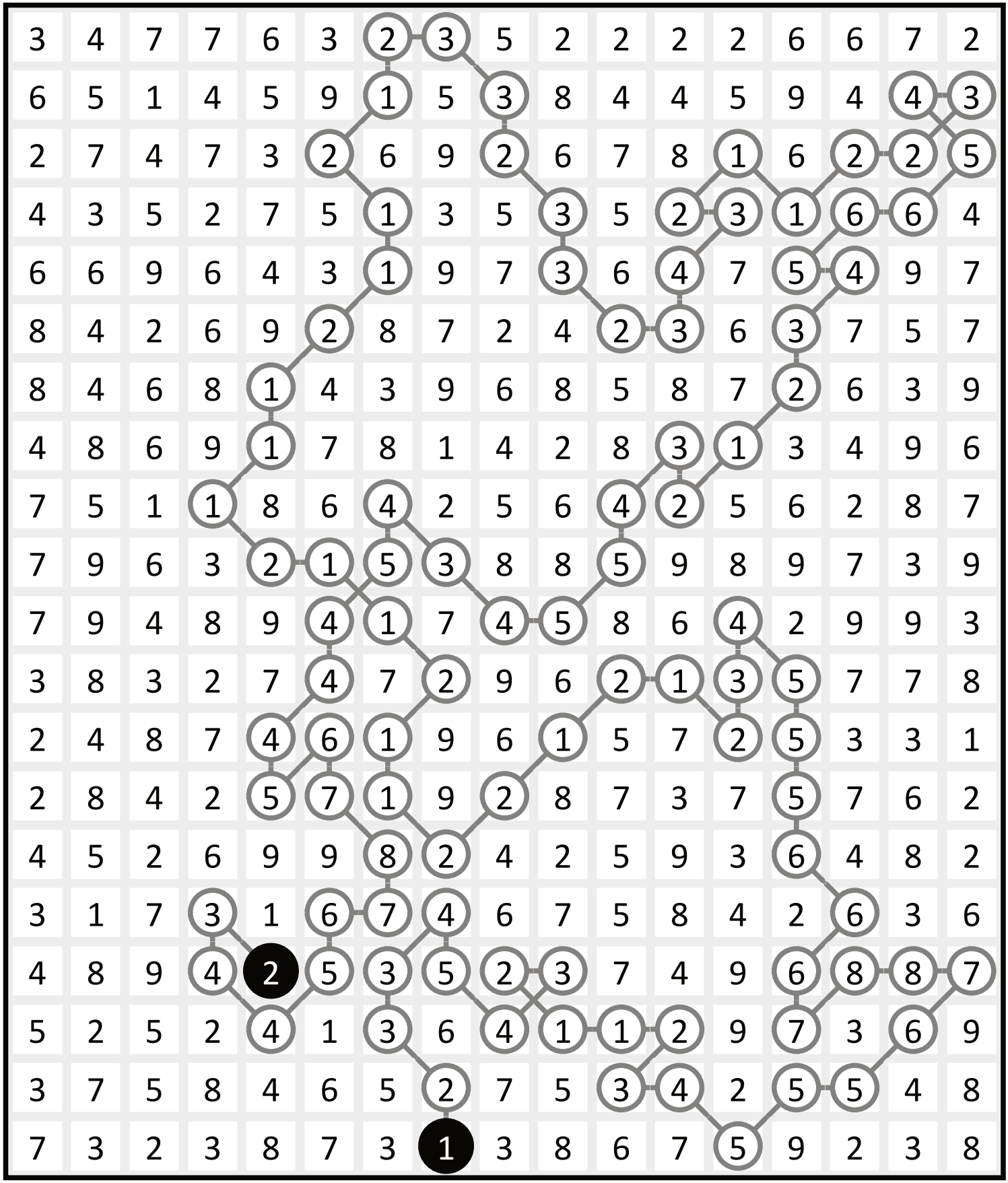
Puzzle 9



Puzzle 10



Puzzle 11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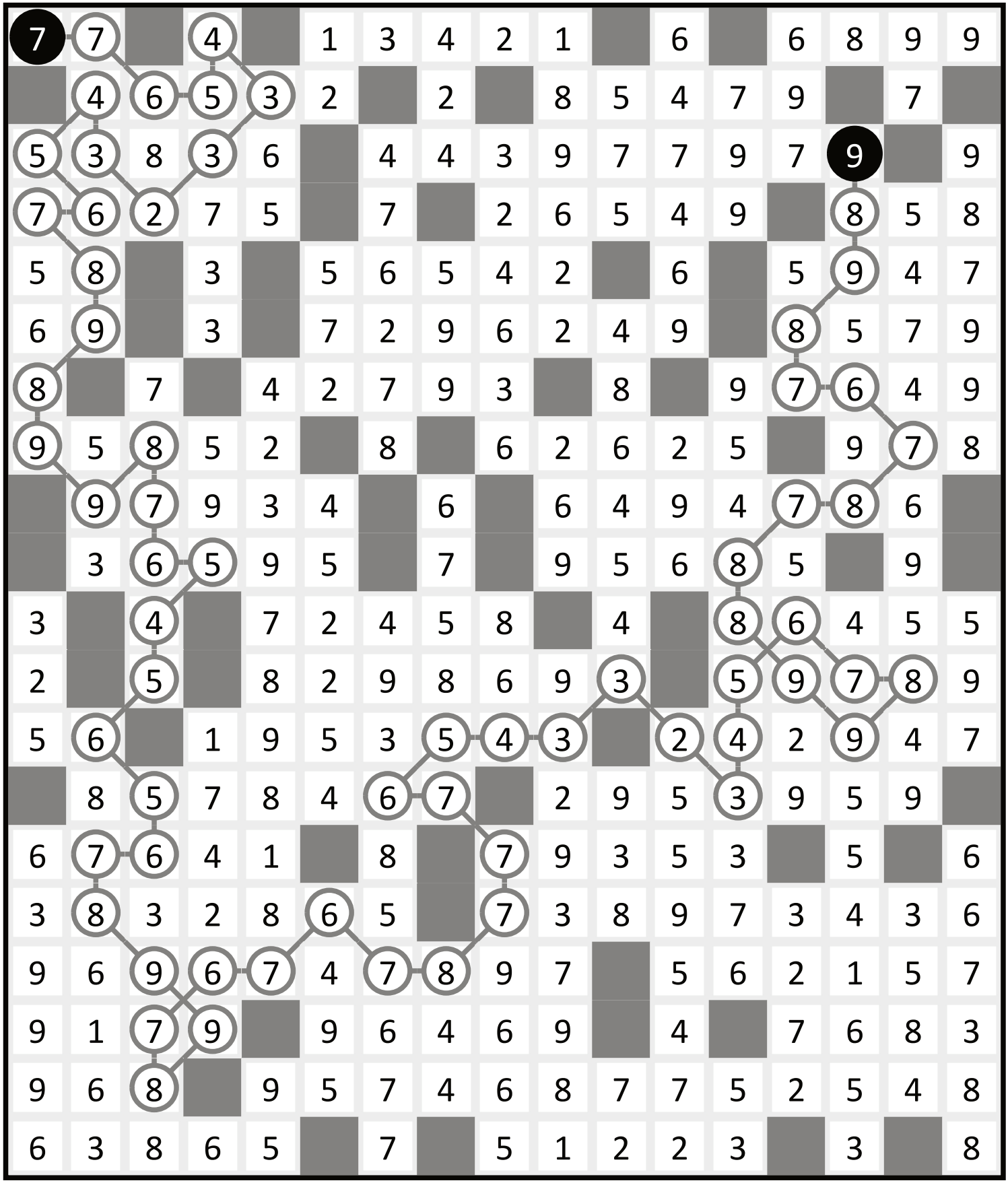
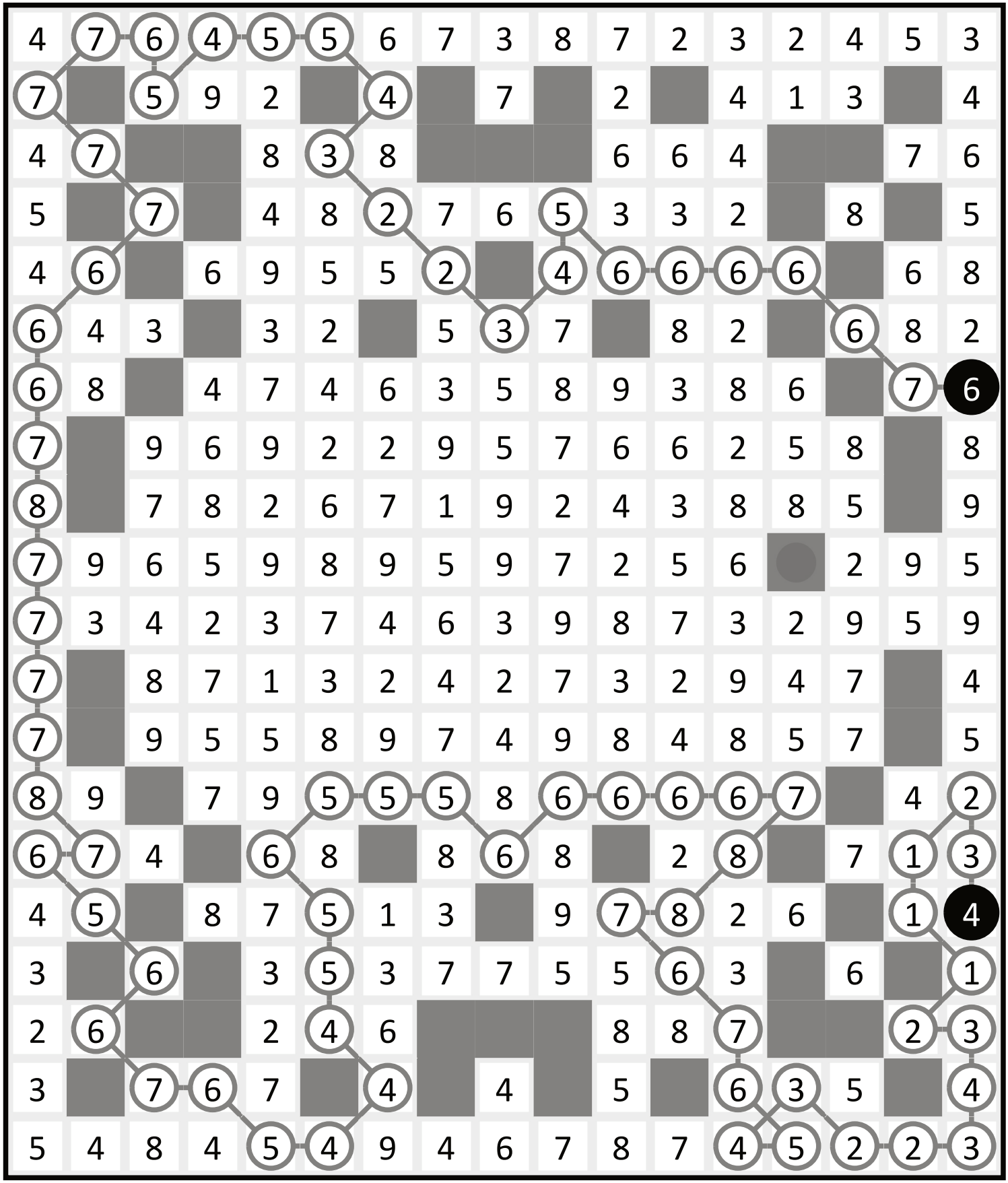
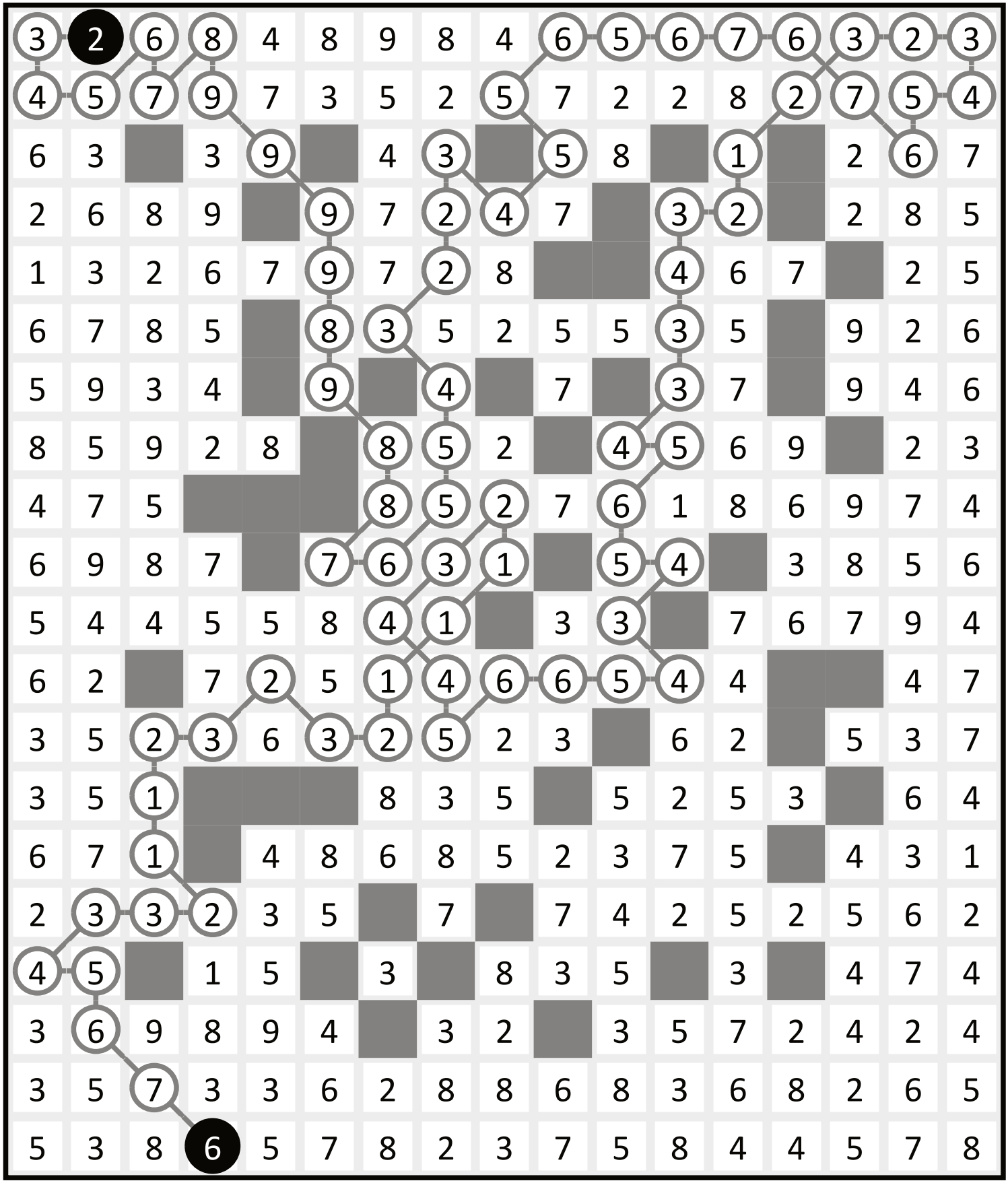
Puzzle 12



Puzzle 13



Puzzle 14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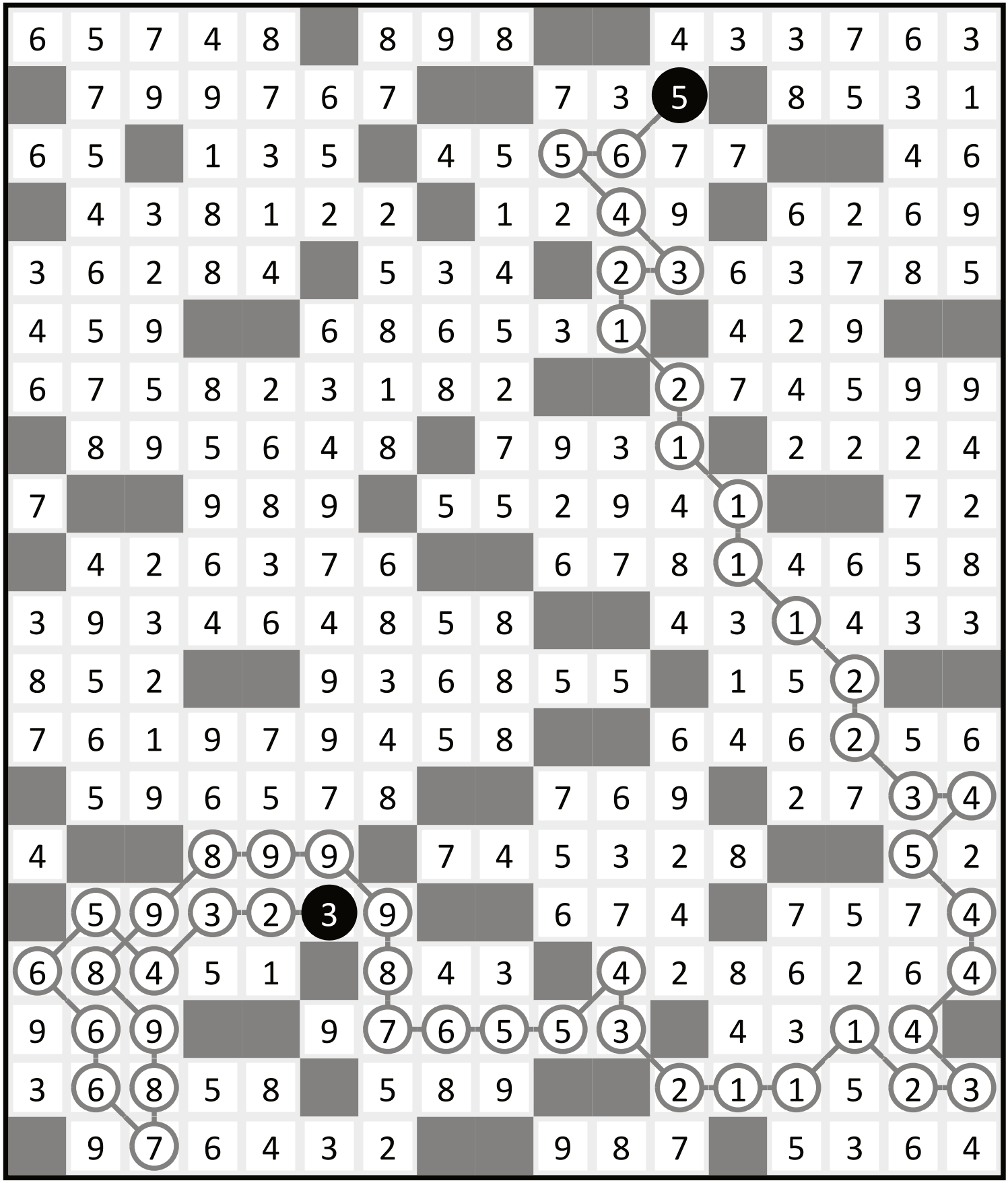
Puzzle 15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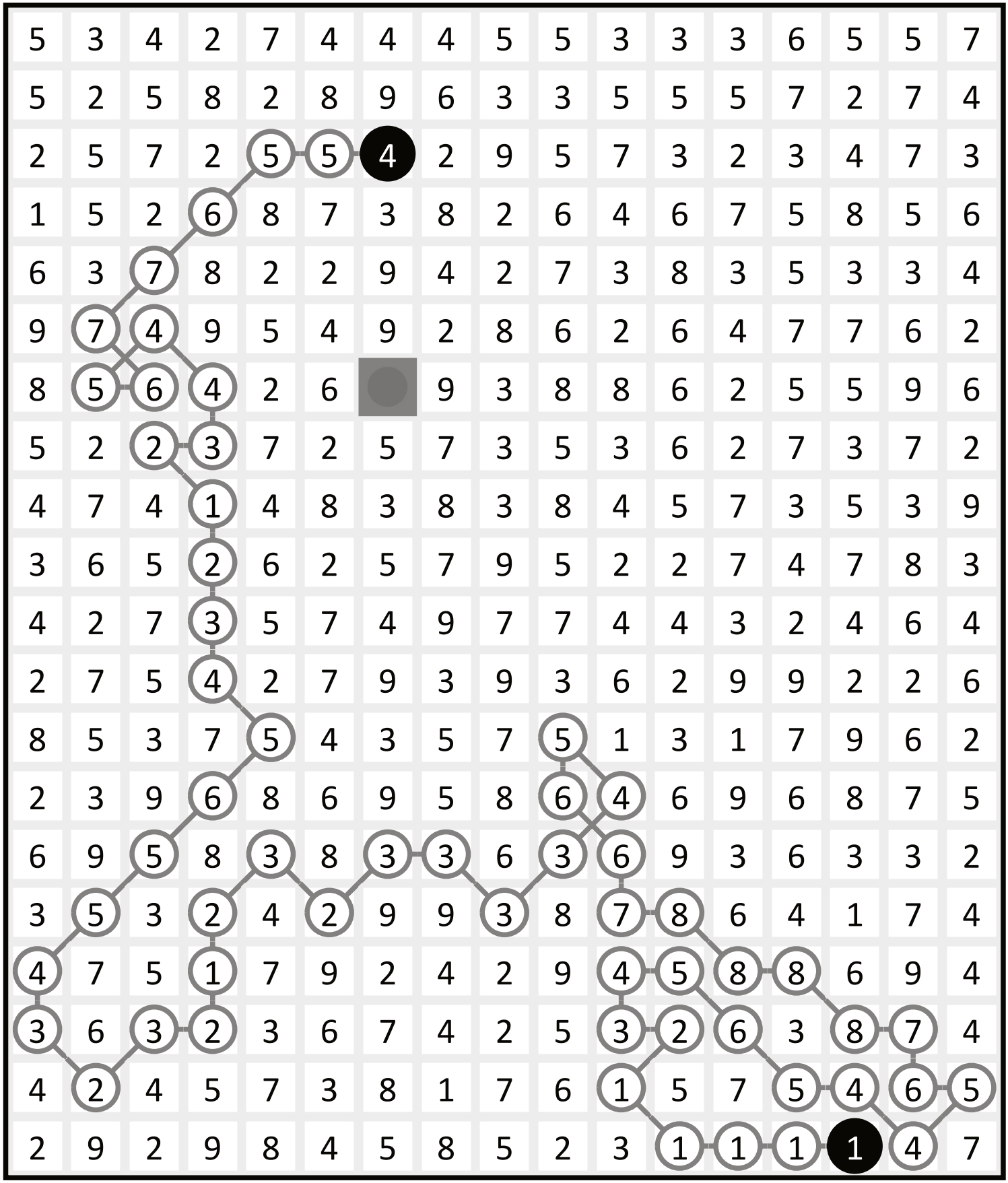
Puzzle 16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MK Eidson (Mike) received his Master of Science degree in Mathematics from the University of Missouri, Columbia, in the mid-1980s, after which he began a career as a computer scientist and crypto-mathematician, which included work in developing military and medical training simulations. Interested in games and puzzles from an early age, Mike has invented a number of them in his lifetime, the majority of which were never captured in a physical medium or only in brief. Mike is now attempting to rectify the situation as the sole proprietor owner of Eposic, creating and publishing fiction, games, puzzles, and digital art. He also composes and produces electronic music as part of the musical act Max Gumdrop. Mike lives in Florida with his wife Mary and their little girl dog, Sibbie.

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- MK Eidson and Dave Eidson

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