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## The daily star crossword answers

Photo: Pixabay (Pexels)For some reason, lots of people believe that the ability to solve crossword puzzles is a talent doled out at birth to a select few. This couldn't be farther from the truth. Crosswords aren't an immutable test of your vocabulary or intelligence—they're a learnable skill that anyone can develop.Learning new skills is one of the best ways to make yourself both marketable and happy, but...Read moreNo other word game or puzzle asks quite as much of your brain as a crossword. Experienced puzzlers consider not just the literal meaning of each clue, but also similar ones they've seen before, frequently repeated answers, syntax quirks, puns, cultural references—and, of course, the puzzle's theme. Unfortunately, this means that crosswords can be downright unwelcoming to newcomers. Everyone starts somewhere, and no matter what your capabilities look like now, here are four general strategies to help you improve.Do Puzzles Every DayThe only way to improve at crosswords is to do lots of them, and the best way to do that is to work them into your daily routine. For me, that means tackling a few puzzles from an ancient book of 365 Will Shortz crosswords before bed every night. My mom prints out Washington Post crosswords and chips away at them over breakfast; my friends who commute by bus or train are diehard New York Times crossword app fans. New York Times puzzles are most folks' crossword gateway drug for a reason: they're easy to find and have a built-in difficulty grading. Mondays are the easiest, Saturdays are the hardest, and the puzzles in between ramp up day by day, so you can pick and choose the ones that work for you. That said, the New York Times is far from the only publisher out there. The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and Merriam-Webster also publish daily American-style crosswords; if cryptic crosswords are your jam, try The Guardian. Some organizations, like Queer Crosswords and Puzzles for Progress, will even send you original themed puzzles as a reward for nonprofit donations. Just remember that each publication has its own style—mastering the tricky clue phrasing in a Saturday New York Times puzzle won't necessarily translate to one from the Post, and vice versa.Use an AppIf you really want to up your crossword game, subscribing to an app, like this one from the New York Times, is a great idea. As much as I love them, paper puzzles just can't touch the user-friendly features you get with an app. You can easily check your work or reveal answers letter by letter, rather than accidentally peeking at the entire solution. This demystifies clues just enough to make them feasible, which is exactly what you want. Also, most apps time your work, which makes it easy to measure your progress. But really, the biggest advantage is accessibility: carrying around thousands of digital puzzles in your pocket makes it easy to do a lot of puzzles.Know When—and How—to CheatCheating is a sensitive topic among crossword enthusiasts, but there's no denying it has its place. Crosswords should be fun, and repeatedly banging my head against the same wall, praying for a different result, isn't my idea of fun. Besides, frustration is a lousy teacher; unless you have serious competitive puzzle aspirations, stubbornly refusing to look up answers or check your work will get you nowhere.A lot of games require a big time investment—at least, if you want to have the best gear, the...Read moreObviously, you should solve every clue you possibly can without help, but you can't improve without a challenge. A bit of strategic cheating can guide you through even the toughest puzzles. Apps make this super easy: just check or reveal letters one at a time until you can solve a particularly nasty clue. This gives you just enough information to (mostly) hack it on your own, which in turn makes the answer more likely to stick in your memory. Paper puzzles make strategic cheating a little tougher, but thanks to the Internet, not by much. If you're stuck on a print crossword, Google the whole clue in quotes. Framing your search around the clue rather than, say, how many letters you have to work with will help you understand what the clue wanted from you. Over time, you'll find yourself needing less and less help to solve puzzles that previously would've been real stumpers. Study UpIf you're serious about crossword mastery, the Internet is full of likeminded people who would love to help. A blog like Rex Parker's is a great place to start. He solves the New York Times puzzle each day, compares the difficulty to other puzzles from that day of the week, and breaks down key clue/answer pairs in a short post. Between the posts and the comments, you'll get a more complete picture of the solution than if you'd just looked up the answers.You can also specialize even further and brush up on your crosswordese—words that appear frequently in crosswords but almost never in conversation. The New York Times has a quiz that tests your crosswordese knowledge, and there's a more general guide from Dictionary.com. Perhaps predictably, there's also a whole website devoted to crosswordese, with a new word featured every day and an extensive archive.If a statistical approach is more your speed, there are crossword answer databases out there. Data scientist Noah Veltman analyzed a set of New York Times crossword clues and answers from 1996-2012, then arranged them by "crosswordiness" and how frequently they appeared. You can filter the lists by the minimum number of appearances or word length, and see details about any given answer. Similarly, Xwordinfo.com will show you the most popular answers and clues for Times puzzles by year or word length. Hell, you could really go all-out and code yourself some training programs like this guy did, though it's unclear whether his approach is more effective than just doing a whole bunch of crosswords. This is not to say that you must build a robot or memorize clues to solve crosswords more efficiently; the best "training strategy" is the one that makes you happy. It doesn't matter how many puzzles you solve, or how fast you can solve them—just that you keep at it. If you can do that, you'll never stop improving. Keep up with the latest daily buzz with the BuzzFeed Daily newsletter! The world is tricky, as you're well aware. Sometimes it feels as though the main aspects of life are all spinning plates—love, family, friends, career—and each of us is doing our best to keep everything in motion. Some of the success in that momentum is based on hard work. But some of it, too, is rooted in pure luck. That's probably why it seems as though astrology has grown in popularity recently: We're all just looking for explanations behind why things are the way they are. And maybe the zodiac can provide the clarity and comfort we need to continue on. Whether you're new to astrology or you're an expert in the zodiac, these 17 books on the subject will give you everything you need to know about this often-quoted realm, from deciphering the inner-workings of a Capricorn to discovering if a Pisces and a Leo are well-suited for a relationship. In other words, these titles can help you keep your life spinning to the best of your control. Here are our picks for the best astrology books to read now. 01 of 16 Joanna Martine Woolfolk The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need \$16 Shop Maybe the title of this updated anthology says it all, because it is a comprehensive look at the zodiac, in everything from the astrological compatibility between to signs to the likelihood of fame and fortune based on your birthday. It provides its insights in a straightforward tone, too, which is just one of the reasons it's been a fan favorite since it was first published in 1982. More than 500,000 copies have been sold since, proving The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need to be a must-have for your collection. 02 of 16 Gary Goldschneider The Astrology of You and Me: How to Understand and Improve Every Relationship in Your Life \$20 Shop Adorned with whimsical illustrations on its front cover, this book aims to explain the interpersonal skills and weaknesses of each astrological sign within its 344 pages. As it delves into the basics behind what makes each sign tick—from a coworker who's a Gemini or a love interest who's a Scorpio—it shares ways to create harmony and avoid conflict in every interaction. 03 of 16 Juliana McCarthy The Stars Within You: A Modern Guide to Astrology \$13 Shop If you're more interested in what the stars have to say about your personal experiences rather than how you relate to others, then this beautifully illustrated title can share a more detailed look. Its birth charts identify personality traits alongside explanations for rising, moon, sun, and planet positions, too. 04 of 16 Vanessa Montgomery Star Power: A Simple Guide to Astrology for the Modern Mystic \$15 Shop Want to spend an afternoon figuring out the stars with friends? This book covers Astrology 101 with colorful illustrations to make learning about this subject fun, easy, and insightful. 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But what this quick-read does do is give you the confidence you need to push your career forward and cultivate meaningful relationships based on the inner-workings of your astrological sign. By focusing on your professional and personal strengths, this book can help you hone those skills for tangible results. 07 of 16 Jan Spiller Astrology for the Soul \$15 Shop This astrology book was first published in 1997, but its knowledge of astrology is still useful for first-timers and advanced readers who are seeking insight into their spiritual needs. The 500-page book has all you need to discover the hidden details of your sign, as well as those of others who pique your interest. 08 of 16 Robert Hand Planets in Transit: Life Cycles for Living \$27 Shop Originally published in 1976, this enduring, insightful astrology book is considered by many to be the definitive guide to planetary transits. Consider it your insider's guide to understanding and interpreting the major transits (conjunction, sextile, square, trine, and opposition) and their effect on the natal houses. 09 of 16 Julia and Derek Parker Parkers' Astrology \$32 Shop Accessible yet informative, this beginner-friendly astrology book equips the reader with everything they need to create and interpret an astrological chart. Expect detailed explanations of the houses, transits, aspects, and much more, all accompanied by colored illustrations. 10 of 16 Howard Sasportas The Twelve Houses: Exploring the Houses of the Horoscope \$35 Shop As its title suggests, this book (first published in 1985) examines the 12 astrological houses while offering helpful instruction for their interpretation. The author delves deep into each house to offer insight into what each house means, how they're connected to the planets and the signs, and how to use knowledge of their placement for personal development. 11 of 16 Kris Brandt Riske MA Llewellyn's Complete Book of Astrology: The Easy Way to Learn Astrology \$17 Shop Geared toward neophytes and intermediate hobbyists, this guidebook begins with the basics of astrology before tackling topics such as the signs, planets, and houses. The goal of the author—a member of the American Federation of Astrologers—is to help the reader not only grasp the concepts and sometimes complex language of astrology, but to be able to apply this knowledge to interpreting and understanding their birth chart. 12 of 16 Linda Goodman Linda Goodman's Love Signs: A New Approach to the Human Heart \$21 Shop Ever wish you could peer into the future to see how a relationship will pan out? This astrology book might just be the closest you'll get to a crystal ball. Employing a cheeky tone and ample anecdotes, master astrologer Linda Goodman examines the behaviors and tendencies common to each sign—the good, the bad, and the ugly. She also explores the compatibility of each sign with the 11 others, giving the reader the inside scoop on a relationship's potential strengths and weaknesses. 13 of 16 Saffi Crawford and Geraldine Sullivan Power of Birthdays, Stars, & Numbers: The Complete Personology Reference Guide \$28 Shop A conversation-starting book to park on your coffee table, this 831-page astrology book offers birthday forecasts for every day of the year. The forecasts—366 in total—provide a glimpse into the personality traits and characteristics that link people to their birthday, with potential career paths, relationship tips, and numerological insights rounding out the customized profiles. 14 of 16 Stephen Arroyo Astrology, Karma and Transformation: The Inner Dimensions of the Birth Chart \$20 Shop One of eight books penned by licensed therapist-slash-psychological astrologist Stephen Arroyo, this essential astrology book equips advanced beginners with the fundamental concepts necessary for the accurate interpretation of birth charts. The information is presented as guidelines as opposed to absolutes, allowing the reader to draw deeper meaning from his or her natal chart. 15 of 16 Julia Steyson Astrology Uncovered: A Guide To Horoscopes And Zodiac Signs \$10 Shop Geared toward newbies, this book serves as an easy-to-follow introduction to astrology. The author begins with a brief overview of the history of astrology, tracing the practice's place in civilization as far back as prehistoric times. From there, the author introduces the celestial bodies and the role they play in shaping our destinies before delving into the interpretation of birth and star signs. 16 of 16 Theresa Reed Astrology for Real Life: A Workbook for Beginners \$16 Shop Theresa Reed (a.k.a. "The Tarot Lady") is the author of this 290-page book, which shares Reed's knowledge of astrology through accessible lessons and a lively, friendly tone. The no-nonsense guidebook covers need-to-know topics such as how to read a natal chart, how to understand basic astrology lingo, and how to interpret the current alignment of the planets. Journal exercises round out each chapter, encouraging the reader to reflect on each lesson and how it can be applied to everyday life.

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