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(56) Documents cited
GB 2202753 A US 4877248 A US 3810630 A
GB 20672/90

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(71) Applicant

Eric Marcel Präg
2/4 West Pilton Grove, Edinburgh, EH4 4BU,
United Kingdom

(72) Inventor

Eric Marcel Präg

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

Cruikshank & Fairweather
19 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow, G1 3AE,
United Kingdom

(54) Puzzle

(57) A puzzle (1) comprises a board (2) having primary (4a), intermediate (4b) and final elongate guideways (4c) which are interconnected. A plurality of counter means (10) have progressively graded identification means (11), and are formed and arranged for slidable engagement with the elongate guideways (14). In use of the puzzle the plurality of counter means (10) is initially arranged in one of an ascending and descending sequence along the primary elongate guideway (4a) and is then transferrable, in a large plurality, of individual counter means (10) moves, into the same sequence, in said final column (4c).

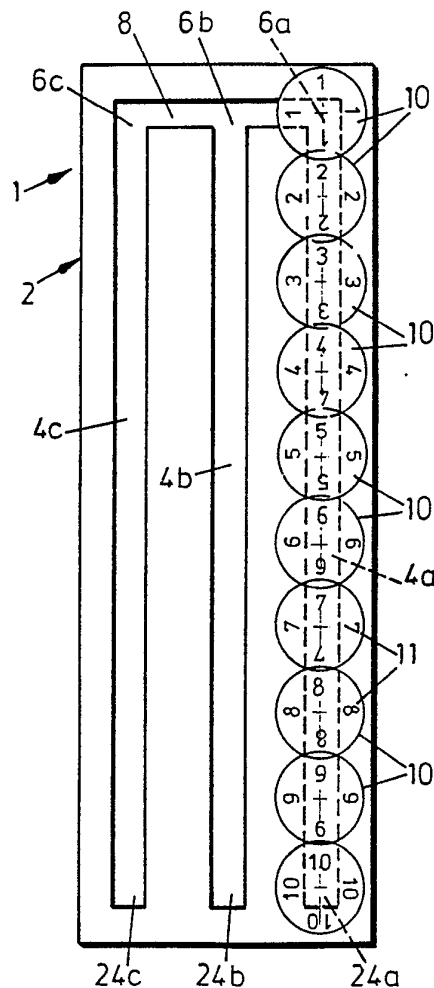


FIG. 1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

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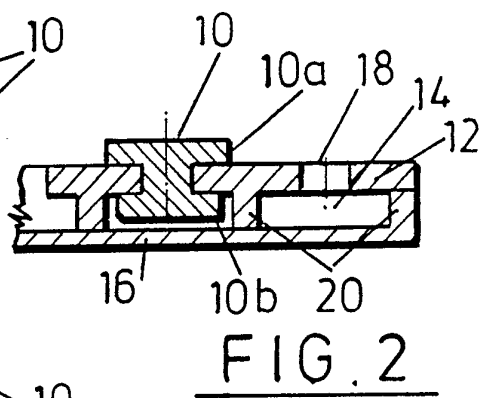
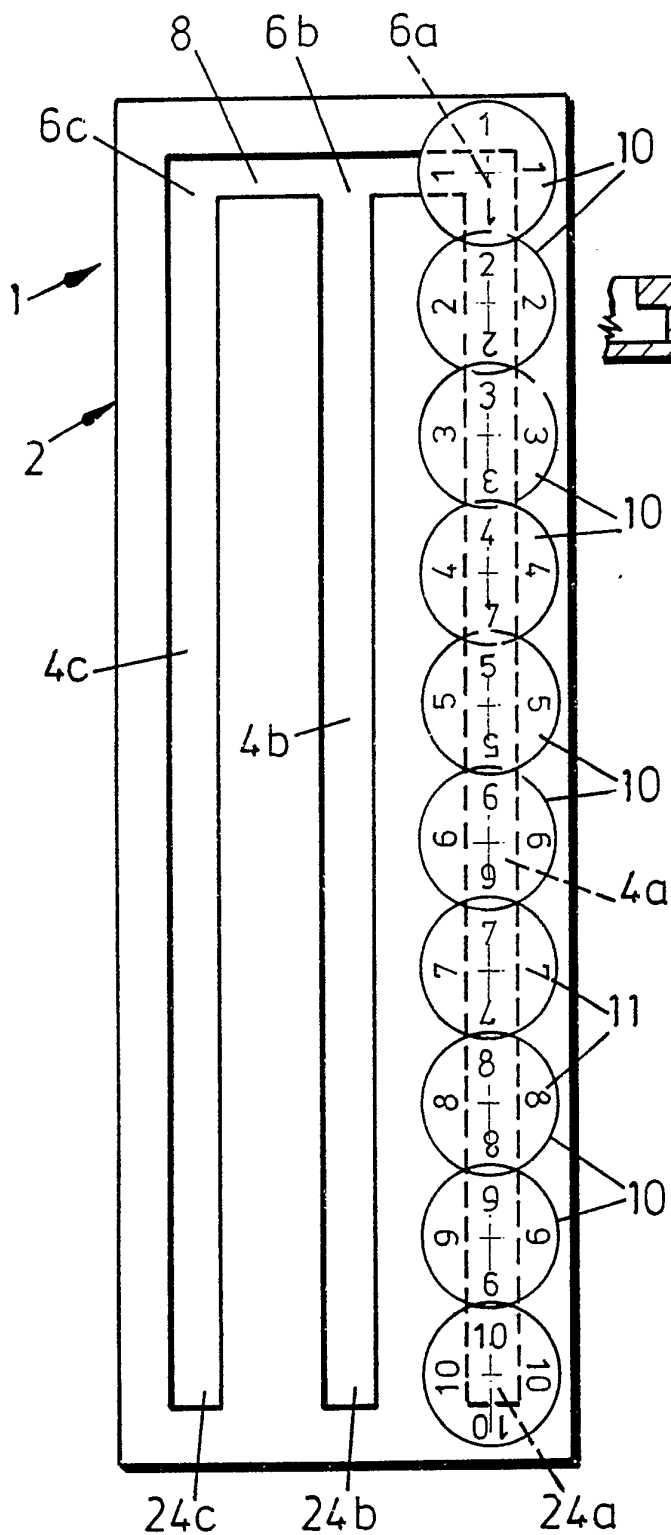


FIG. 1

FIG. 2

- 1 -

PUZZLE

The present invention relates to a puzzleboard suitable for use by a wide variety of people which requires skill and ingenuity for its solution.

The present invention provides a puzzle which comprises a board having primary, intermediate and final elongate guideways having first and second ends, said first ends of said elongate guideways being interconnected; and a plurality of counter means having progressively graded identification means, said counter means being formed and arranged for slidable engagement with said elongate guideways whereby in use of the puzzle said plurality of counter means is initially arranged in one of an ascending and descending sequence along said primary elongate guideway and is then transferrable, in a large plurality, of individual counter means moves, into the same sequence, in said final column, the puzzle being played in accordance with rules as described hereinbelow.

The rules according to which the puzzle is played are:

1. Only one counter may be transferred at a time between different guideways.
2. The sequence of counter means in each elongate guideway must not be reversed from the initial arrangement in the primary elongate guideway.

Preferably the board has only three elongate guideways i.e. primary, intermediate and final. It will however

be appreciated that more than one intermediate guideway may be used. The greater the number of guideways the easier the puzzle is to solve, and this may be advantageous in a childrens' version of the puzzle or where a large number of counter means is used.

Preferably, the elongate guideways are arranged parallel to each other on said board with a transversely extending guideway interconnecting the first ends of said elongate guideways. The elongate guideways may however be arranged as spokes radially extending from a central node at which said first ends are substantially directly interconnected. Any other arrangement of the elongate guideways may also be used where said first ends thereof are interconnected directly or via interconnecting guideways. It will also be understood that the guideways do not have to be rectilinear but may be arcuate, serpentine or of any other desirable form.

Preferably at least 6 counter means are employed and desirably not more than 14 counter means are used. Advantageously from 8 to 12, most preferably 10, counter means are used. In general it will be appreciated that smaller numbers of counter means will reduce the difficulty of the puzzle and the number of moves required to complete it whilst an increase in the number of counter means will substantially increase the difficulty of the puzzle and the number of moves required to solve the puzzle.

The progressively graded identification means of the counter means may be in the form of any visually and/or tactile sensible means. Thus, for example, identification means may comprise alphanumeric characters used individually or in the form of combinations thereof e.g. words, different colours, different shades of a colour or different grades of surface texture. Braille characters, graded surface textures, embossed markings, or any other tactile sensible identification means may be used on versions of the puzzle for the blind.

Any suitable form of counter means and elongate guideways may be used. Suitable counter means may comprise discs, balls, pegs or the like, and may moreover be generally plain or provided with engagement portions e.g. grooves, ribs, neck portions or the like which can interengage generally complementary portions provided along the elongate guideways.

Preferably the guideways and the counter means are formed and arranged so that the latter are captively interengaged with the former so that said counter means cannot be removed from the guideways in use of the puzzle thereby inhibiting cheating and preventing loss of the counter means. If desired though in such an embodiment the board could be formed and arranged, e.g. with releasable and/or deformable portions, to allow the

counter means to be released from the guideways and reinserted in a different order e.g. in order to help a player who has got into difficulties and wishes to begin again from the initial starting position.

Further preferred features and advantages of the present invention will appear from the following detailed description given by way of example of a preferred embodiment illustrated with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a puzzle of the invention; and Fig. 2 is a sectional side view of the puzzle in Fig. 1 showing the captive interengagement of a counter with the board.

Reference is first made to Fig. 1 which shows a puzzle, generally indicated by reference number 1 which comprises a board 2 having three elongate guideways in the form of parallel slots comprising a primary guideway 4a, an intermediate guideway 4b and a final guideway 4c. Said guideways are interconnected at first ends 6 a, b, c thereof by a mutually perpendicular connecting guideway 8. Ten counters, 10₁, 10₂.....10₁₀ having progressively graded visually sensible identification means in the form of numerals 11 from "1" to "10" are arranged in ascending order from the first end 6a of the primary guideway 4a. The counters 10₁-10 are formed and arranged for captive sliding interengagement with the elongate and connecting guideways 4a, b, c, 8.

In greater detail and with reference to Fig. 2 the counters 10₁₋₁₀ are generally "I"-shaped in section and are formed and arranged for an upper portion 10a of the counter 10 to engage the upper surface 12 of the board 2 and for a lower portion 10b of the counter 10 to slide within an inverted 'T' - shaped channel 14 bounded by a base portion of the board 2, a slot 18 in the upper surface 12 and elongate support portions 20 formed and arranged to keep said base 16 and upper surface 12 separated so that the lower portion 10b of the counter 10 can slide between them.

In use of the puzzle 1 of the invention the object of the puzzle is to move all 10 counters 10₁₋₁₀, moving only one counter 10 at a time, from their starting sequence in the primary guideway 4a into the final guideway 4c in exactly the same sequence, with the first counter 10₁ at the first end 6 of the chosen guideway 4 and the tenth counter 10₁₀ at a second end 24 of the chosen guideway 4, utilising all three guideways 4a, 4b, 4c for the movement of said counters 10₁₋₁₀ such that at all times the sequence of counters in any intermediate positions in any guideway is not reversed from that found in the primary elongate guideway 4a, for instance, if the first counter 10₁ is placed in the intermediate guideway 4b the second counter 10₂ must not be moved underneath it, but could be placed in the final guideway 4c, the first counter 10₁ could then be placed under the

second counter 10_2 in the final guideway $4c$ as it now follows the same sequence (ascending in the direction from the first end to the second end) along the primary guideway $4a$. The third counter 10_3 may now be moved to the intermediate guideway $4b$ and so on. It will of course be understood that the identification of the various individual guideways as primary, intermediate, and final is essentially arbitrary and will depend on the user's choice of individual guideways as starting and final or destination locations for any one game with the puzzle.

CLAIMS

1. A puzzle which comprises a board having primary, intermediate and final elongate guideways having first and second ends, said first ends of said elongate guideways being interconnected; and a plurality of counter means having progressively graded identification means, said counter means being formed and arranged for slidable engagement with said elongate guideways whereby in use of the puzzle said plurality of counter means is initially arranged in one of an ascending and descending sequence along said primary elongate guideway and is then transferrable, in a large plurality, of individual counter means moves, into the same sequence, in said final column, the puzzle being played in accordance with rules as described hereinbefore.

2. A puzzle as claimed in claim 1 wherein said board has more than one intermediate guideway.

3. A puzzle as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 having from 8 to 12 counter means.

4. A puzzle as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 having 10 counter means.

5. A puzzle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein said progressively graded identification means

are visually sensible.

6. A puzzle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein said progressively graded identification means are tactilely sensible.

7. A puzzle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein said counter means are formed and arranged substantially captively to interengage said guideways.

8. A puzzle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein said counter means are releasably interengagable with said guideways.

9. A puzzle substantially as described hereinbefore and with particular reference to Figs. 1 and 2 of the accompanying drawings.

Patents Act 1977
Examiner's report to the Comptroller under
Section 17 (The Search Report)

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Relevant Technical fields

(i) UK Cl (Edition K) A6H (H12E)

(ii) Int Cl (Edition 5) A63F 9/08

Search Examiner

A T BLUNT

Databases (see over)

(i) UK Patent Office

(ii)

Date of Search

19 FEBRUARY 1992

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of claims 1-9

Category (see over)	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
X	GB 2202753 A DATOO	1, 3-7
X	GB 20672/1890 GARTNER & anr	1-8
X	US 4877248 FARRAJ	1-8
X	US 3810630 GONZALES et al	1-8



Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)

Categories of documents

X: Document indicating lack of novelty or of inventive step.

Y: Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of the same category.

A: Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.

P: Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.

E: Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.

&: Member of the same patent family, corresponding document.

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