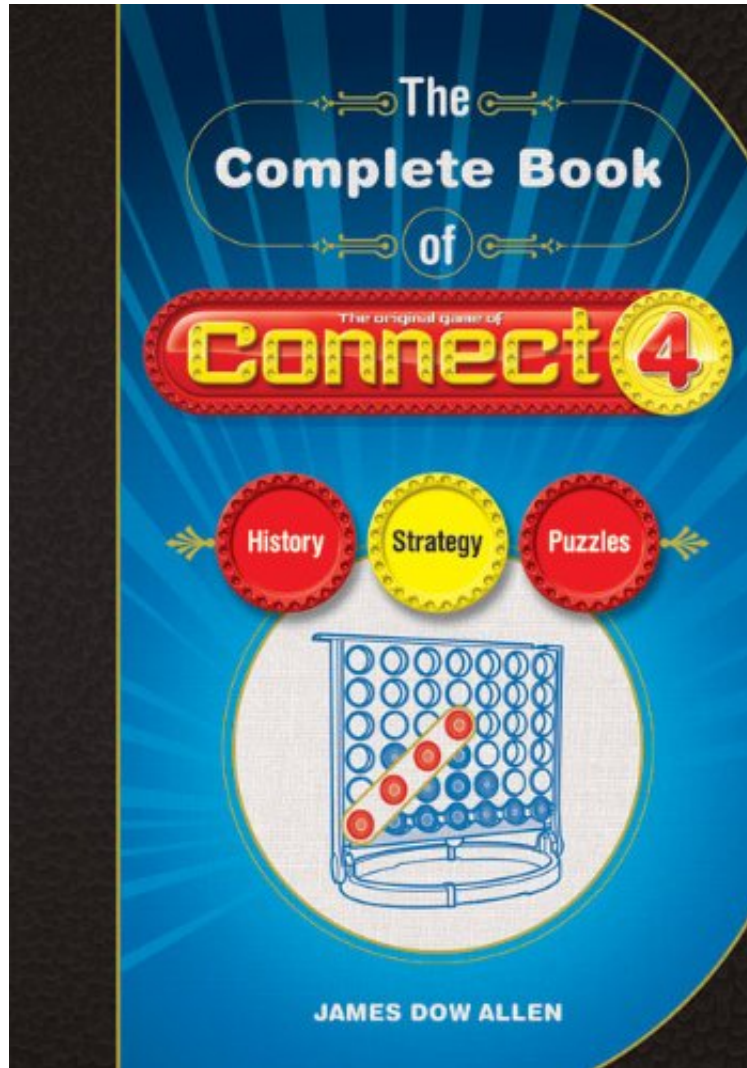


(Download pdf) The Complete Book of CONNECT 4: History, Strategy, Puzzles

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James D. Allen

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#1350791 in Books 2010-11-02Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 .90 x 6.90 x 9.80l, 1.15 #File Name: 1402756216272 pages | File size: 40.Mb

James D. Allen : The Complete Book of CONNECT 4: History, Strategy, Puzzles before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Complete Book of CONNECT 4: History, Strategy, Puzzles:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Just get the book, regardless of your expertiseBy KililiBackground:First, I almost never work games or puzzles of any type. They just don't hold my interest. I do have a background in math and computers, however, which does lend itself well for such.Until 2 months ago, I had never even heard of the game. I decided to learn Connect Four because I learned it's a popular social activity at a place I'll be visiting soon. I scanned the internet, and found very little info, except for an old research paper and some online

versions of the game. It looked simple enough, thought it would be easy to learn. I played internet versions for 2 weeks, and lost nearly every time. I came to the conclusion that the starting player was at a definite disadvantage. Wrong! Learning the Game I got the book, and started scanning for "the secret" to winning. That didn't happen, I was going thru it too quickly. It's what I do, and I have a hard time reading at a pace that gives me proper comprehension. I started over again, more slowly, backing up when I felt lost. That happened a lot. Not the fault of the book, but of my learning patterns. I was reading without application, and I learn best by doing. Then, I came to the problems, 300 of them. I started working on them, switching back and forth between reading and playing. I found an online game version, "Mustrum", which seemed best to use. The problems, in general, are not easy to solve. They are grouped at different levels of complexity. There are so many different possible play variants that I'll likely never be able to solve them all. However, I have solved more than 200 of them.

More About the Book: The book contains rules, tactics and strategy, and is supplemented with 422 annotated game play diagrams. Like the problems, these are also left to the reader to solve. I've had difficulty with the diagrams. The problem is me, not the book. I lose focus working on them, something I need to try harder to overcome. I think the material in the book is well written, concise, and easy to read for a technical book. Not like reading a novel, however. The book contains a great deal of detail, and is undoubtedly the best [and possibly only] reference source for understanding the game. The author expects a lot from the reader in terms of comprehension, however, and you will need to focus solidly to learn. He also suggests you read the book twice. I think that's a solid recommendation, twice or more, until you understand, and rework the problems and diagrams as well. Some sections I have read many times, either because I do not completely understand, or because I have simply forgotten what I read. This last one happens to me a lot. It's also part of my nature. Oddly, the info on opening plays comes quite late in the book. You spend a great deal of time learning to complete a game before ever learning how to start one. However, the author knows his material well, and thought this approach best. Like numerous other things I find a bit confusing, I assume it will make sense to me later on. I recommend this book for anyone with an interest in improving, or learning, Connect 4. It seems safe to assume that very few players actually know what they are doing and why. Just learning a few of the fairly simple points will undoubtedly improve your game. If you think you are an expert player, well, maybe you don't really know as much as you thought.

Suggestions: I feel it's best to retain the solutions for every problem and diagram worked, in a database, or even spreadsheet. This gives the user a huge amount of data that can be used for data mining purposes. For example, finding specific play patterns along with solid solutions, or replaying a game and refreshing your mind with the solution when the playing goes astray. To me, at least, such a repository of info is so important that I have spent more time on the database than reading the book and working problems. Again, it's my nature to work this way.

Commenting on Other Reviews: One reader claimed that the book was useless to anyone but an expert. I disagree, and think it's dependent on the nature of the reader. I started the book knowing absolutely nothing about Connect Four or games in general, and have learned quite a bit in the two months that have passed, and I have yet to read a great deal of the material presented. As for using the book for bedtime reading, I do exactly that. Read some, go to sleep, let the mind digest it in a relaxed state.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. ... engineer's take on the game of Connect 4 while smart and strategic

By Alexander Colby This engineer's take on the game of Connect 4 while smart and strategic, is very poorly explained. He whizzes past concepts without providing a lot of examples that would show WHY you want to avoid certain issues, and expects you to be able to do a lot of mental work right from the get go, explaining that you simple will need to read it several times. Also all the example problems are put near the front of the book before 80% of the techniques are even explained which seems bonkers

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent stuff

By Alchemist The first time I played Connect Four was in Asia (2007) and I lost almost every time. Back home I decided to take the game seriously. I researched material on the internet where I found the basics. However applying the basics to a game is a different thing altogether. As luck would have it, I stumbled across Mustrum, an application which plays perfect Connect Four. That is when I started to learn the moves and more importantly why. The book is certainly a help to both experts and beginners. I use the book to sharpen my play. Whenever I visit Asia and play Connect Four I almost always win. The book starts with a short history of the game and follows with actual set ups. I found it useful to follow the game using Mustrum and compare different moves. It is not easy to follow the arguments presented but when understood, they are extremely rewarding since they open up vistas for new techniques. So if you're passionate for Connect Four buy the book and indulge yourself.

Fun to play on the board or on the computer, CONNECT FOUR has become a staple of the family game room and this is the definitive book on the subject. It tells all about how CONNECT FOUR came to be, offers game-enhancing strategies from a puzzle expert, and provides actual examples so solvers can test themselves on what they've learned along the way. By the time players finish this complete guide, they'll be lean, mean, disc-dropping machines, ready for CONNECT FOUR success!

About the Author James Dow Allen is a computer scientist and inventor with 32 U.S. patents. In addition to professional work with device firmware, operating systems and compression algorithms, Mr. Allen pursues

programming as a hobby. In 1988 he developed a computer solver for the game of Connect Four just for fun.