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STATION ACTIVITY: KENKEN PUZZLES



Professional athletes know they must work hard to strengthen their athletic performance. They struggle both physically and emotionally with this work, and yet they find the opportunity to stretch beyond their current abilities to be exhilarating. What if students saw challenging mathematics in this same way, an exciting opportunity to stretch their cognitive abilities, a chance to see what they are capable of and then push beyond their current edge of understanding? You can develop the idea that challenging math can also be fun with a standing classroom learning station stocked with math puzzles, number tricks, and games. Here's a puzzle idea to get you started.

KenKen puzzles engage students in logical thinking along with practice of basic number facts. In this partially completed KenKen puzzle, you must place the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in individual boxes so that each number appears once and only once in each row and column. The clues in the top left corners of some boxes tell the sum of the numbers in the dark outlined shape where the clue appears.

Can you complete the puzzle?

5+	2	1	4+	3
4+		2		1
		5+		

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You can learn more about KenKen puzzles in Burns's blog post (2015c; <https://bit.ly/3wGz8OC>)

For younger students, consider using tangram puzzles. Mathigon.org is a free website that offers a wealth of hands-on experiences for students. Students can select a specific tangram template and fill in the pieces to complete the puzzle. (<https://mathigon.org/tangram>)



Available as a downloadable resource on the companion website.

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