ABSTRACT: A maze puzzle relying on the sense of touch of the player comprises a flat container of opaque material. On the inner surfaces of the top and bottom of the container are mazes. Slots in the opposite sidewalls of the container permit the passage of a flat rod, having a stud on one end thereof, into the pathways of the mazes so that depending on how the rod is inserted a different maze puzzle is available.
The mazes are exploded by feeler rod 26 of FIGS. 1, 2 and 6. Feeler rod 26 comprises a flat rod member 28 of such thickness to slidably pass through a slot 20. At the end of flat rod member 28 and extending upward from one face is a stud 30. Stud 30 has such a width and height so as to pass through a notch 22 or 24 and slidably move through the pathways of either maze.

In operation, player inserts feeler rod 26, stud end first, into slot 20. If the stud 30 extends upward, as viewed in FIG. 1, it enters the maze of surface member 10. The player by using his sense of touch attempts to guide the stud 30 of the feeler rod 26 to the notch in the sidewall (not shown), directly opposite the entry notch. If the stud 30 had extended downward then the maze in the surface member 12 would be exploded in a similar manner. Thus, it is seen that two separate maze puzzles are available from the same structure. Furthermore, since the entry notch and the exit notch are interchangeable by the player, the number of puzzles is again doubled.

Several further variations are possible. It is possible to increase the difficulty of the maze by including a one-way door in one of the pathways to prevent backtracking. FIG. 5 shows such a door which can be a flap 32 of spring metal fixed at one end to a wall of the maze an having another end overlapping a pathway corner 34. Thus, if the player passes stud 30 through the door 32 from pathway 36 into pathway 38 which leads to a blind alley, the stud 30 cannot pass back through the door 32 to pathway 36. Instead, the stud 30 must be guided to pathway 40 which will lead back to an earlier stage of the maze.

Furthermore, the puzzle can present visual enjoyment to a child, according to the following variation. The stud 30 can be made from a permanent magnet and the surface members 10 and 12 of plastic. The outside faces of the surface members can be printed to resemble the sky with clouds. There is then provided a small model 42 of an airplane punched from sheet steel (See FIG. 1). Then, by placing model 42 above an entry notch and inserting the feeler rod 26 into that notch, the magnetic force of the magnet will guide the model 42 of the airplane over the surface.

Up to this point in the description, the puzzle is used by a single player to play a solitaire game. It is also possible for the puzzle to be used as a competitive game for two players.

In this case, there is a flat smooth center surface member 11 sandwiched between top and bottom surface members 10' and 12' similar to members 10 and 12 of FIG. 1 (See FIG. 7). Each player is provided with one of the feeler rods 26A and 26B which he inserts in one of the slots 20A and 20B. Then, the players try to solve their own maze puzzles as described above. The winner being the first to solve his puzzle or the puzzle of the other player.

Of course, mazes can also be cut in each surface of center surface member 11 and the slots 20A and 20B provided with second notches like the slots 20B of FIG. 1 so as to provide each player with two puzzles.

There has thus been shown a versatile maze puzzle which relies on the sense of touch of the players to obtain a solution.

While only a limited number of variations of the puzzle have been shown and described in detail, there will now be obvious to those skilled in the art many modifications and variations satisfying many or all of the objects of the invention but which do not depart from the spirit thereof as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An invisible maze puzzle comprising a container having top and bottom surface members which are parallel planes and at least one wall interconnecting said surface members, at least said surface members being opaque, a plurality of walls extending from the inner face of one of said surface members, a plurality of walls being disposed in different directions in a predetermined manner to form a plurality of irregular pathways constituting a first maze, said sidewalk being provided with a least one slot in a plane at right angles to said surface members, a first notch in one edge of said one slot for providing access to a pathway of said first maze, a flat rod having a thickness so as to slidably move in said slot, a stud extending upward from one face of said wall and a stud extending upward from a face of the rod at one end thereof, by inserting the rod into the notched slot the stud enters a pathway and is guided through the maze by the player's sense of touch.
tending upward from one face of said flat rod and adjacent one end thereof, said stud having such dimensions to slidably move through the pathways of said first maze, said first notch having such dimensions to permit the passage of said stud to a pathway of said first maze, and said sidewall being provided with a passageway means remote from said first slot, said passageway means having a shape to at least permit the free passage of the said stud and said one end of said flat rod.

2. The maze puzzle of claim 1 wherein a second plurality of walls extends from the inner face of the other of said surface members, said second plurality of walls being disposed in different directions in a second predetermined manner to form a plurality of irregular pathways constituting a second maze, and a second notch similar to said first notch being provided in the other edge of said one slot for providing access to a pathway of said second maze.

3. The maze puzzle of claim 2 wherein said passageway means is common to said first and second mazes and is in the form of a second slot similar to said first slot and having third and fourth notches similar to said first and second notches, said third and fourth notches being in the first and second edges of said second slot, respectively.

4. The maze puzzle of claim 1 further comprising a one-way door means in at least one pathway of said first maze.

5. The maze puzzle of claim 2 further comprising a one-way door means in at least one pathway of at least one of said first and second mazes.

6. The maze puzzle of claim 1 wherein at least one of said surface members is of nonmagnetic material and further comprising a figure slidably movable over the outer face of said one surface member, and wherein one of said stud and said figure includes a permanent magnet and the other of said stud and said figure includes a magnetically attractable material whereby the movement of said stud through a maze guides said figure over the outer surface of said one surface member.

8. The maze puzzle of claim 4 wherein at least one of said surface members is of nonmagnetic material and further comprising a figure slidably movable over the outer face of said one surface member, and wherein one of said stud and said figure includes a permanent magnet and toe other of said stud and said figure includes a magnetically attractable material whereby the movement of said stud through a maze guides said figure over the outer surface of said one surface member.

9. An invisible maze puzzle comprising a container having top and bottom surface members which are parallel planes, a center surface member sandwiched between said top and bottom surface members, at least one sidewall interconnecting said surface members, a plurality of walls extending from one of the opposed faces of said center and top surface member, a plurality of walls extending from one of the opposed faces of said center and bottom surface member, each of said plurality of walls being disposed in different directions in a predetermined manner to form a plurality of irregular pathways constituting a different maze, said sidewall being provided with a first slot in a plane at right angles to said surface members and being disposed between said top and center surface member, a first notch in one edge of said first slot for providing access to a pathway of one of the mazes, said sidewall being provided with a second slot in a plane parallel to said surface members and being disposed between said bottom and center surface members, a second notch in one edge of said second slot for providing access to a pathway of another of another of the mazes, first and second flat rods, each rod having a thickness so as to slidably move in one of said slots, a stud extending upward from one face of each of said rods, said studs having such dimensions to slidably move through the pathways of said mazes, said notches having such dimensions to permit the passage of said studs to pathways of said mazes, and said sidewalls being provided with two passageway means, each of said passageway means having access to a pathway of a different one of said mazes and having a shape to at least permit the free passage of a stud and rod therethrough.

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