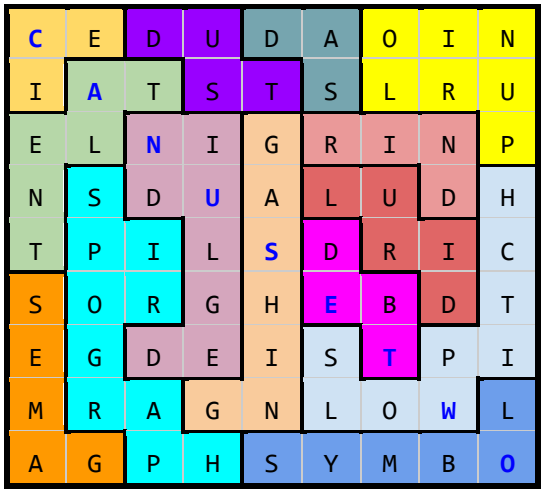
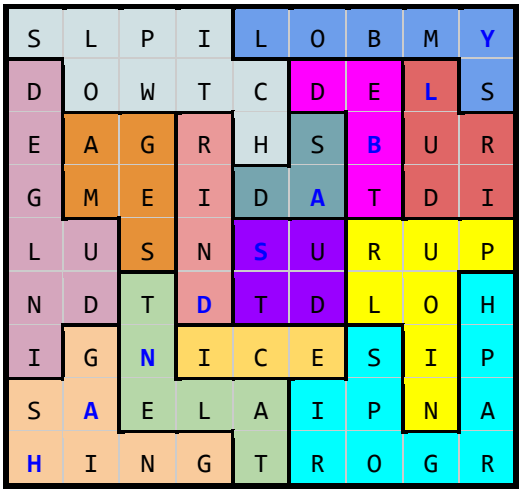
The Logician (solution)

by Ong Kah Kien

The double Meandering Words puzzles can be solved independently using the given words and instructions. Below are the solutions for the two grids:





Reading off the words formed from the two diagonals highlighted in blue above in the two grids gives the clue phrase CAN USE TWO HANDS ABLY, which points to the thematic answer for this puzzle **AMBIDEXTROUS**.

The tables below summarize sample logic paths for filling in the left and right grids. The general solving approach is to iteratively identify a word that must go into a particular area (e.g. due to a unique number of squares/letters, or by excluding other words because of constraints from adjacent letter/s, whether already placed or must be placed), as well as its path fit within that area (e.g. due to constraints from adjacent letter/s, whether already placed or must be placed).

Left grid sample logic path:

Word	Constraint for area	Constraint for fit
SPIROGRAPH	Only 10-letter word	[not fixed yet]
INDULGED	Only 8-letter word	[not fixed yet]
GASHING	P from SPIROGRAPH, and U from INDULGED excludes PURLOIN	[not fixed yet]
SLOWPITCH	Only 9-letter word	H from GASHING
GASHING	[fixed from earlier]	S from SLOWPITCH
SYMBOL	L from SLOWPITCH, and N from GASHING excludes TALENT	O and L from SLOWPITCH
SPIROGRAPH	[fixed from earlier]	S from SYMBOL
GAMES	R from SPIROGRAPH excludes LURID	G from SPIROGRAPH
INDULGED	[fixed from earlier]	N from GASHING, and I from SPIROGRAPH
TALENT	Remaining 6-letter word	N from INDULGED

Word	Constraint for area	Constraint for fit
ICE	A from TALENT excludes SAD	E from TALENT
LURID	Remaining 5-letter word	[not fixed yet]
DEBT	I from GASHING, and I and D from LURID excludes RIND, S from SLOWPITCH excludes DUST	[not fixed yet]
DUST	I and N from INDULGED excludes RIND	T from TALENT
RIND	Remaining 4-letter word	R from LURID
LURID	[fixed from earlier]	I from RIND
DEBT	[fixed from earlier]	D from LURID
SAD	Remaining 3-letter word	S from DUST
PURLOIN	Remaining 7-letter word	I and N from RIND

Right grid sample logic path:

Word	Constraint for area	Constraint for fit
SPIROGRAPH	Only 10-letter word	[not yet fixed]
PURLOIN	G from SPIROGRAPH in adjacent area excludes GASHING	P from SPIROGRAPH
SPIROGRAPH	[fixed from earlier]	I from PURLOIN
INDULGED	Only 8-letter word	G from GASHING
GASHING	Remaining 7-letter word	I from INDULGED
GAMES	D and U from INDULGED in adjacent area excludes LURID	G and E from INDULGED
LURID	Remaining 5-letter word	U and R from PURLOIN
SYMBOL	L from LURID in adjacent area excludes TALENT	L from LURID
TALENT	Remaining 6-letter word	A from GASHING
SLOWPITCH	Only 9-letter word	L from SYMBOL
RIND	E from WAGES in adjacent area excludes DEBT S from WAGES in adjacent area excludes DUST	[not yet fixed]
DEBT	U from LURID in adjacent area excludes DUST	D from LURID
DUST	Remaining 4-letter word	[not yet fixed]
ICE	S from SPIROGRAPH, and D and S from DUST in adjacent areas excludes SAD	I from SPIROGRAPH
SAD	Remaining 3-letter word	D from DEBT
RIND	[fixed from earlier]	D from SAD
DUST	[fixed from earlier]	D from SAD, D from RIND, and T from DEBT

Constructor's notes:

Hong Jhun gave the suggestion that this answer could potentially fit a double logic puzzle, but he was not keen on writing logic puzzles. So I took on this idea as I agreed it is quite thematic to the answer, and have also written double logic puzzles before and found them challenging and interesting to construct. Amongst the Nikoli-style puzzles, Meandering Words is one which is intuitive and easy for beginners, and also provided a convenient means of extraction. While the final puzzle appears fairly straightforward, it was as expected quite difficult and time-consuming to construct, given the constraints of being a double puzzle using the same set of words, as well as extracting a clue phrase from both grids. For elegance, I also avoided the use of potential hint indicators for the start of words, which is an optional element of this puzzle type. As a further challenge, I tried to include more areas that could have 4 or even more possible word fits too, rather than just the basic 2 possible word fits for two-tailed snake shapes. So the takeaway for aspiring puzzle writers is that while the difficulty and length of a puzzle could be simplified for solvers, there are still different ways in which constructors could design puzzles so as to challenge themselves during the writing process, and make puzzles interesting for both themselves as well as solvers.