



The History of LEGO

Reading Comprehension

1. Why do you think the author begins the text with a rhetorical question?
2. What was Ole Kirk Kristiansen's original business?
3. Name two of the original wooden toys produced by the LEGO factory. Why did the factory begin to manufacture toys?
4. Choose one of the subheadings in the text. Why did the author choose this and why is it effective?
5. How did Kristiansen settle on the name LEGO? Give two facts from the text.
6. What was the philosophy behind the LEGO System of Play? Why did Godtfred Kirk Kristiansen develop it?
7. Give two facts the author gives us about the patent for LEGO bricks.
8. How tall are standard minifigures? How did they make Yoda even shorter?
9. How many LEGO blocks are produced each minute?
10. In the text box called **Awesome Combinations** the author uses several words that show they are impressed by the numbers of brick combinations. What are two of these words?

Extension:

- One pupil wrote 'The author of the article seems to clearly appreciate the hard work ethic and business success of the LEGO company.' To what extent do you agree with this assessment?
- Research one of the world records held for LEGO related building. What happened, when and why? Why do you think there is an endearing fascination with LEGO building?
- Based on the article you've read, what do you think is the secret of LEGO's enduring success? What advice might you take from this to give a start-up toy company?



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Reading Comprehension - Answers

1. Why do you think the author begins the text with a rhetorical question?

Answers may vary here but some recognition of the author's attempt to interest the reader in the subject matter at hand and to get them to consider, even in a minor way, where LEGO came from should be rewarded.

2. What was Ole Kirk Kristiansen's original business?

Ole Kirk Kristiansen was a woodworker/carpenter and his original business was a wood workshop specialising in creating buildings and furniture.

3. Name two of the original wooden toys produced by the LEGO factory. Why did the factory begin to manufacture toys?

The workshop made pull-along toys, wooden building blocks and yo-yos. The factory began to manufacture toys because the world-wide depression in the 1930s had caused huge drops in housing and furniture sales.

4. Choose one of the subheadings in the text. Why did the author choose this and why is it effective?

Answers will vary based on the subheading chosen.

5. How did Kristiansen settle on the name LEGO? Give two facts from the text.

The text states that there was a competition in the year 1934 to choose a name. The prize was a bottle of wine but Kristiansen himself won the competition since he chose his own name - LEGO - made from the combination of Danish words Leg Godt meaning play well. The word lego is also a Latin verb meaning to assemble or put together.

6. What was the philosophy behind the LEGO System of Play? Why did Godtfred Kirk Kristiansen develop it?

Godtfred Kirk Kristiansen recognised that there was no system for playing, a set of toys that combined together to create a more extensive and creative system. He developed the System of Play in which every element could connect to every other element. He wanted to create 'a toy that prepares the child for life, appeals to the imagination, and develops the creative urge and joy of creation that are the driving force in every human being.'

7. Give two facts the author gives us about the patent for LEGO bricks.

The author mentions the development of the new brick in 1957 and the patent of it in 1958. The patent is now used in over 33 countries. The patent was for a 2 stud by 4 stud brick that had a three pipe connector on the underside. The 2 by 4 brick is still made in exactly the same way.

8. How tall are standard minifigures? How did they make Yoda even shorter?

They are 1 ½ inches tall. Yoda was made smaller by making shorter legs.



9. How many LEGO blocks are produced each minute?

36,000 bricks are produced every minute.

10. In the text box called **Awesome Combinations** the author uses several words that show they are impressed by the numbers of brick combinations. What are two of these words?

Choices are 'awesome', 'appeal', 'staggering', 'impressive' and 'astounding'.

Extension:

- One pupil wrote 'The author of the article seems to clearly appreciate the hard work ethic and business success of the LEGO company.' To what extent do you agree with this assessment?

Answers will vary.

- Research one of the world records held for LEGO related building. What happened, when and why? Why do you think there is an endearing fascination with LEGO building?

Thousands of LEGO related records can be found on the Guinness World Records site: <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com>. Search under LEGO.

- Based on the article you've read, what do you think is the secret of LEGO's enduring success? What advice might you take from this to give a start-up toy company?

Students might create a booklet or poster as a guide for success to small businesses. They might mention the tenacity of the company; even when facing closure, the founder considered making other products and began to produce toys. They might also mention making investment in the future (the plastic injection-molding machine purchase) and believing that only the best will do.