

50th Birthday of the LEGO Brick

The LEGO® Brick – A Quality Product

The 50th birthday of the LEGO brick was in January 2008 and there was plenty to celebrate. Children all over the world have played with LEGO bricks for the past 50 years, and LEGO is still right at the top of many wish lists – just as it always has been. Industry and trade associations also recognize the LEGO success. Just before the turn of the millennium the LEGO brick was voted “Toy of the Century”, one of the highest awards in the toy industry, by both Fortune Magazine in the US and the British Association of Toy Retailers.



The LEGO history began in 1932 in Denmark, when Ole Kirk Christensen founded a small factory for wooden toys in the unknown town of Billund in the south of the country. To find a name for his company he organized a competition among his employees. As fate would have it however, he himself came up with the best name: LEGO – a fusion of the Danish words “LEg” and “GOdt” (“play well”).

Barely 15 years later Christiansen discovered plastic as the ideal material for toy production, and bought the first injection moulding machine in Denmark. His courage, input and investment paid off: in 1949 he developed the LEGO brick prototype, which continues to excite countless children and adults to this very day. Over the years he perfected the brick, which is still the basis of the entire LEGO game and building system today. Of course there have been small adjustments in shape, colour and design from time to time, but today’s LEGO bricks still fit bricks from 1958.

Production of LEGO bricks with Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) began in 1963. This matt finish plastic is extremely hard, has a scratch and bite-resistant surface, and is ideal for keeping the bricks connected. LEGO labs regularly monitor the high quality of the ABS for the bricks.



LEGO bricks are produced in special plants in Denmark, the Czech Republic and Mexico. The ABS compound is not delivered in a liquid form, but rather as granules, which are heated to 232° C until they melt. Injection moulding machines weighing up to 150 tons then press the hot and "gooey" plastic mass into LEGO brick shapes. The shapes dry and harden and, voilà – you have the famous LEGO brick!

There are 2,400 different LEGO brick shapes, which are produced with the greatest of precision and subjected to constant controls. Each injection mould is permitted a tolerance of no more than one thousandth of a millimetre, so that bricks of every colour and size stay firmly connected, allowing LEGO fans to build entire cities from all kinds of LEGO elements.

LEGO bricks in boxes that are not sold are melted again and turned into new bricks, in accordance with waste prevention and environmental responsibility.

About the LEGO Group

The LEGO Group with its headquarters in Billund, Denmark, is the fifth largest toy manufacturer in the world in terms of sales. Besides traditional LEGO bricks, its portfolio comprises 25 additional product lines sold in more than 130 countries. Worldwide, the LEGO Group today has 4,500 employees. The name of the company, founded in 1932, is made up of the two Danish words "leg" and "godt", meaning "play well".