



Cambridge Primary Checkpoint

ENGLISH

0058/01

Paper 1 Non-fiction

April 2024

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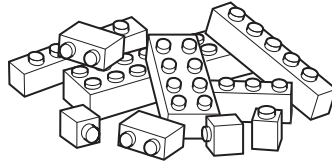
INFORMATION

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This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

LEGO



You've probably seen or heard of LEGO bricks. But have you ever wondered where this children's toy comes from or why it's called LEGO? Actually, the name is much older than the little plastic bricks that you might know. Let me tell you the story...

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Ole Kirk Christiansen, born in 1891, was a skilled carpenter who lived in Billund, Denmark. He owned his own company, but times were extremely tough and, eventually, he had to dismiss his employees.

Shortly after, Ole's wife passed away. Ole was tasked with looking after his four sons alone, and he knew he had to provide for them. In his free time, he began crafting and making wooden toys for his children. One of the most loved toys was a duck. Ole's creation made his sons so happy that they convinced him he should make toys for a living. He used the leftover wood from his carpentry business, and never looked back.

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Despite the quality of the toys, sales were poor at first. Then, his 12-year-old son, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, began helping in the business. He was an invaluable support to his father. Soon, word began to spread that wonderful wooden toys were being produced in Billund. The company became busier and busier, and Ole was able to re-hire his former workers.

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It was now time to think of a name for the business. In 1934, the company adopted the name LEGO, formed from the Danish words 'LEg GOdt' (play well). In the late 1930s, LEGO began to make a profit. With such high sales, it seemed nothing could go wrong.

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This was not the case, though. In 1942, disaster struck when the LEGO factory burned to the ground. All the drawings and models were destroyed, and everybody was devastated. However, with Ole's determination, production began again and, in 1946, he bought a plastic-moulding machine for toy production. Ole began to make tiny teddy bears and babies' toys. In 1949, LEGO began manufacturing their first building bricks, which the company is now known for.

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On a business trip to England in 1954, Godtfred met the manager of a big shopping centre. They talked about toys and the fact that there was a lack of simple construction toys for children. An idea was born in the mind of Godtfred Kirk Christiansen – the LEGO System. This is a system of interlocking plastic

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building bricks which has helped children across the globe to build their own worlds and develop their creative skills. Sales grew rapidly and the company expanded. 35

The brick in its present form was launched in 1958 and is still unique, offering limitless possibilities. It's just a matter of freeing the imagination. LEGO's Duplo line was introduced in 1969. It's a range of simple blocks whose lengths measure twice the width, height, and depth of standard LEGO blocks, and are aimed at younger children. Almost 10 years later, LEGO produced the first mini-figures, which have since become a staple in most sets. 40

LEGO has now been named 'Toy of the Century' twice. Their products have developed a lot over the years – but the foundation remains the traditional, hardwearing LEGO brick. 45

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