

History of Jigsaw Puzzles

Early indications in the history of jigsaw puzzles are of puzzles from European Map Makers in the 1700s who dissected maps. These would have been rudimentary Jigsaw Puzzles as we know it today. Many believe John Spilsbury, a London map maker, was the person who created the first puzzle from a map of Europe cut along country boundary lines.

In the 1800s the history of jigsaw puzzles moved forward when the treadle saw allowed the dissection to be known as jigsaw puzzles.

Cardboard puzzles were first introduced in the late 1800s.

The history of jigsaw puzzles moves on in the 1900s to wooden jigsaw puzzles with challenging cuts. These were expensive and did not interlock. Early on puzzles moved to interlocking ones which were clearly much less likely to be disturbed. The puzzles were difficult as they were cut along the color lines.

In the 20th century the puzzles became die cut. This is basically a lattice of thin metal strips arranged in the puzzle cut. The cardboard and the die were passed through a press resulting in a jigsaw puzzle. Of course the cardboard had a picture already glued on it. This changed the history of jigsaw puzzles as they could now be mass produced. The history of jigsaw puzzles shows that by the 1930s jigsaw puzzles were highly popular. Marketers of great puzzles made attractive designs which were very popular.

Puzzles were available to rent, making dear wooden puzzles affordable. With the introduction of cardboard puzzles they became cheaper and increasingly in demand. Some contained advertising. However there was still a demand for customized wooden puzzles, many without a picture of the puzzle on the box.

For many people during the depression this became a cheap and highly enjoyable way to entertain the family. Puzzle sales were at an all time high. Indeed newsstands sold very cheap daily puzzles alongside of newspapers and magazines.

Now puzzles have moved on to enormously increase the choice and appeal. There are amongst many others, online puzzles, downloadable puzzles, 3D puzzles, puzzle mosaics and a plethora of styles, degrees of difficulty, numbers of pieces and puzzle images.

In 2007 Educa published the new world's biggest puzzle at 24,000 pieces. A few fantastic months work I think.

Interestingly kid's history of jigsaw puzzles has evolved from early maps, through animal shaped puzzles to the enormous variety of Disney and many other pictured themes of today.

Why would Jigsaw Puzzles be so popular and addictive? People have different requirements which can be brilliantly satisfied by doing Jigsaw Puzzles. There is:

- Relax and reduce stress
- The challenge of the puzzle itself
- A great way of passing the time
- A great travel companion
- Great fun
- Competition
- Keeping your mind sharp
- An enjoyable way to spend time with friends
- Entertain the kids
- Love of puzzles and
- Ultimately the thrill of successful completion. We all love to feel successful!

