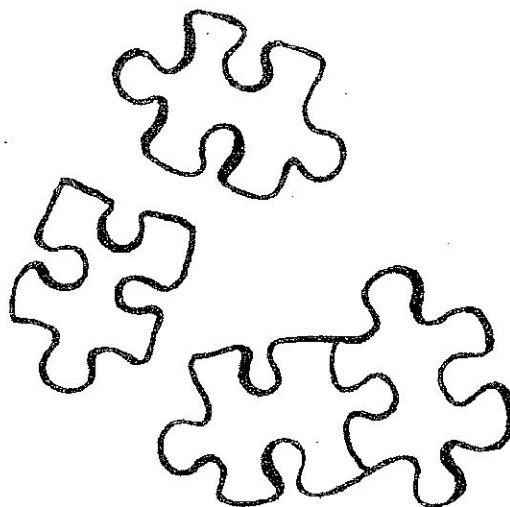


Puzzled by Puzzles?

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

When you were very young, you probably put together wooden jigsaw puzzles that had pieces about as large as your hand. Each puzzle had about four or five pieces, and each piece fit into a space all by itself. The pieces might not even touch each other in the finished puzzle. By now you have probably learned to like jigsaw puzzles that have many small pieces. And in a few years, you may be doing really hard puzzles—ones with a thousand pieces!



The first jigsaw puzzles were made in 1760—even before America was a country. People in Europe pasted maps onto wood and then cut them apart. The trick was to put the map back together to make a country.

In the early 1900s, people really started to love wooden jigsaw puzzles, but they were not very much like our modern cardboard ones. For one thing, the pieces did not lock together. One little bump, and the whole puzzle would fall apart. Often there was no picture on the lid or the puzzle box. This made it really hard to put the puzzle together. The finished picture was always a surprise.

In the 1930s, The Parker Brothers Company made their puzzles more fun by cutting the pieces into shapes like children, dogs, numbers, and flowers. During the Great Depression people bought ten million puzzles a week. If they didn't have enough money to buy one, they could rent one at the library for three cents. Puzzles sometimes came free when you bought something else, much like the prizes in cereal boxes today.

Today the most famous puzzles are made by The Stave Puzzle Company. They cut all of their puzzles by hand and will even cut a piece shaped like your name. They make trick puzzles that will go together more than one way. Some of the Stave puzzles cost as much as \$4,000!

Puzzles have come a long way since the first ones were invented. You, too, have come a long way since you first fit that giant puzzle piece into its special place.

By Mary Rose

Dear Parents,

This article about jigsaw puzzles uses the literary convention of compare and contrast, even though the clues to this are fairly subtle. Nowhere does the article state that one thing is being directly compared to another. If you (and your child) look carefully, however, you'll notice that throughout the article the author compares how puzzles used to be with the way they are now. Remember (as with earlier assignments of this nature, "The Fire on the Mountain" and "The Little Red Hen") your child is not being asked to actually do the comparing, but instead is expected to recognize when an author has used this convention. Once again, it may be easier for your child if he or she highlights or underlines the information in the passage.

Skill

Recognizing Compare and Contrast

We completed this assignment together.

(Child's Signature)

(Parent's Signature)

The Questions

The author compares older jigsaw puzzles to new ones. See if you can find four ways the author tells you that puzzles are the same and different.

1. What are jigsaw puzzles made of?

Old ones: _____ New ones: _____

2. How do the puzzle boxes look?

Old ones: _____ New ones: _____

3. How does the puzzle stay together?

Old ones: _____ New ones: _____

4. How much does the puzzle cost?

Old ones: _____ New ones: _____

Bonus: Did you find more things that are the same or more that are different?