



The LEGO® Minifig or Life doesn't end at 30

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In 1973, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, son of the company founder, challenged designers to add a new playing dimension to the LEGO® building experience. This led to the first LEGO figures, built from a combination of classic bricks and figure parts, that appear in the the LEGO Family line, which included a dad, mom, grandmother, daughter and son. In 1975 a smaller figure with a simple head, no face and an rigid body was introduced. Kjeld Kirk Christiansen, grandson of the company founder, developed a "System within the LEGO system" that brought themes to LEGO play. The idea of the minifig arose from the necessity of a more realistic, moving figure that had more role playing ability for children. The minifig was developed by LEGO designer Jens Nygaard Knudsen and his colleagues, who designed nearly 50 different prototypes before the company executives chose the present minifig. A patent was

filed in 1977, and the first minifigs were manufactured and put into sets on the morning of August 25, 1978.

The first minifigs appeared in play sets of the Town, Space and Castle themes. Several different minifigs were introduced – a police officer, a fire man, a street worker, space figures, knights,... The first female minifig, a nurse, arrived two months later. The most popular one to date is the police officer, with 41 different versions appearing in 104 sets. On its 30th birthday the minifig population reaches over 4 billion, making it 3 times larger than the population of China.

The body of the minifig consists of nine parts: two arms, two hands, two legs, a hip, a torso and a head. The minifig is the same height as 4 LEGO



bricks, 1 ½ inches, and weighs 1/10 of an ounce. The standard minifig has just over 970 degrees of movement. The classic LEGO® minifig was given the iconic yellow skin tone and happy facial expression to reflect the non-specific and vital quality of a child's imagination.

The LEGO minifig is the second most important LEGO design after the classic LEGO brick, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Globally, 3.9 minifigs are sold per second (122 million per year) and there are more than 8 quadrillion possible combinations of minifigs that can be made using all the different parts LEGO has produced over the last 30 years.

A lot has been said about the more or less realistic proportions of the minifig. What is clear is that it has given rise to the so-called "minifig scale", limiting the proportions of innumerable constructions. Although many creators design in very different scales in which a minifig would not fit, most of them have found new uses for the parts of a minifig, some obvious ones, others very imaginative, so it's very difficult to find someone in the LEGO world who is indifferent to the minifig phenomenon.

Although over the years the minifig has undergone aesthetic changes, some of them more appreciated by fans than others, the essence and the compatibility have remained intact. This compatibility, one of the pillars of the LEGO System, has turned the minifig into an international icon and into the star of animation films, video games,... and soon in a

virtual world in Internet. You may think that the minifig has lost part of its innocence as it has changed its face or its colour,...but the times change. On the one hand children want to be able to reproduce the world around them more accurately, on the other hand the economic situation and the signing of agreements for famous licenses have forced the minifig to evolve. After all, LEGO System allows you to choose your favourite lines and the used parts market allows you to keep playing with the good old fashioned lines.

A new culture has developed around the minifig, sometimes without any relation with the LEGO bricks (you can find collectors exclusively of minifigs) and although it is in its 30s, it stays young and without any problems with oxidation and free radicals. What is its secret?

LEGO is celebrating the 30th birthday of the minifig with the GO Miniman GO campaign, with activities and contests. You can find all the information at www.GominimanGo.com ■

1978-The first minifigures are introduced to the Town, Space and Castle building themes.

1989-The new Pirates line introduces good and bad minifigures with beards, frowns and eye patches. Some minifigures are even fitted with peg legs and hooks for hands.

1990-The minifigure ghost is introduced in the new Castle sets

1993-Pink minifigures with the new Paradisa sets.

1995-The LEGO® skeleton is the second specialized minifigure to be created. The minifigure travels underwater in the Aquanauts line.

1996-Minifigures roam west for the first time with LEGO Western.

1997-The minifigure comes to life in the computer game "Panic on LEGO Island."

1998-Johnny Thunder, embarks on his first adventure, exploring the pyramids in Egypt.

1999-The minifigure makes its first appearance as a licensed character in the new LEGO Star Wars™ sets.

2001-LEGO Studios sets allow the minifigure to be the star of fan-made movies.

2002-Shorter legs are added to the mix (Yoda minifig). Harry Potter characters come to life with double-faced heads

2005-The minifigure makes its CGI primetime film debut on Cartoon Network in LEGO Star Wars™ Revenge of the Brick. The minifigure becomes electrified with the introduction of the light-up lightsaber

2008-30 years and good health, thank you.



2000-LEGO Soccer produces new minifigures that are spring-loaded for tabletop game action. Jar-Jar Binks from the LEGO Star Wars™ line is the first minifigure created with a molded head.

2003-The minifigure population expands to be more authentic to its real-world likeness, including authentic skin colors and hair styling. LEGO Basketball

2006-The minifigure gets a new hairdo with the addition of neon-colored, rubber EXO-FORCE® wigs.