

By Iluisgib

Pictures by Dorling Kindersley

The LEGO® Book, by DK, €19.95, dk.com
LEGO® DC Universe Batman Visual Dictionary,
by DK, €16.95, dk.com
LEGO® Harry Potter Building the Magical World,
by DK, €16.95, dk.com
LEGO® STAR WARS™ Character Encyclopedia,
by DK, €16.95, dk.com
LEGO® STAR WARS™ The Visual Dictionary,
by DK, €16.95, dk.com
LEGO® Harry Potter Characters of the Magical World,
by DK, €16.95, dk.com
LEGO® STAR WARS™ Brickmaster, by DK, €19.95, dk.com

The publishing house Dorling Kindersley (DK) has an extensive catalogue of LEGO related books. Many of these books are dedicated almost exclusively to children like sticker books or short themed stories.

In addition, there is a series of books that fit in perfectly with the world of adult LEGO collectors and that do not only offer detailed information about different aspects of our hobby, but often include some kind of exclusive element (usually a minifig) which often has a positive impact on the decision to buy any of the books.

In this article we'll give an overview of the main themes that the DK catalogue offers adult fans of LEGO, leaving out the ones that are specifically targeted at children.

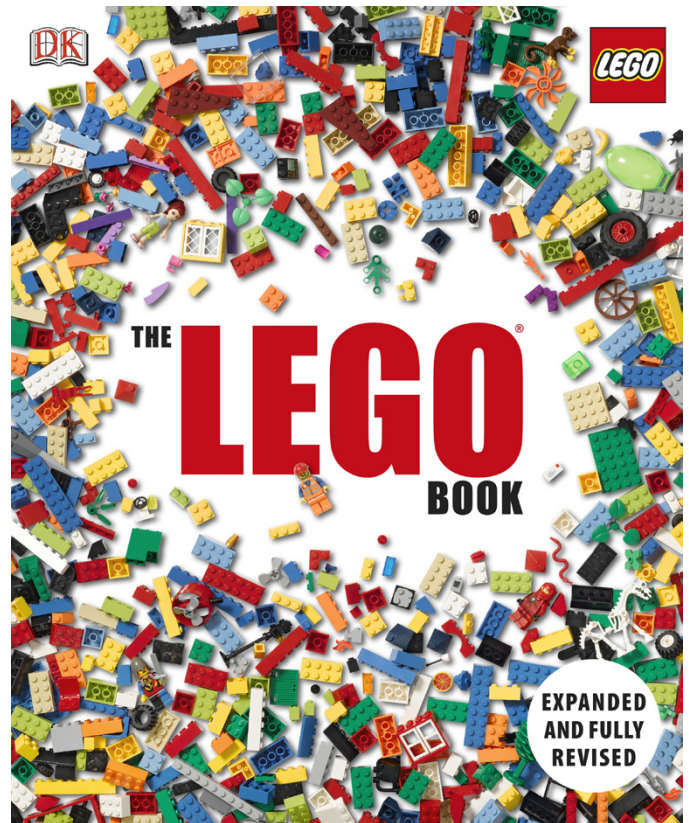
The LEGO Book

This is an essential book if you want to know more about the history of the LEGO Company and, in addition, have a general overview of the themes that have been released in the last decades.

The book was originally published in 2009, although in 2012 DK published a revised edition, which is the one I am reviewing, in which new themes such as LEGO Friends, Pirates of the Caribbean and Super-Heroes appear.

The book starts with an introduction to the history of the company. Next there are two interesting time lines. In one of them the author reviews the most important events in the 80 years of the LEGO history, mixing the appearance of toys with other more "corporate" events. In the other one we get a general overview of how LEGO elements have evolved, from the first bricks in 1949 (before the current system) to the new Friends minifigs.

After a short explanation of how LEGO bricks are made, how sets are designed and even how the logo has evolved, there are over 180 pages dedicated to all the Play-Themes since LEGO decided to divide its models by themes in 1978.



In all the Play-Themes there is a first part that details the most important (and recent) sets of the theme. For example, in CITY theme there are sets from the last 5-6 years. There is a short description of the set and some fun facts. Occasionally an older set turns up to activate the emotional sensors of the adult reader. To finish, after each main Play-Theme (CITY, Castle, Space...) there are a couple of pages that can make you green with envy. They are called SETS TO REMEMBER and they contain pictures of the boxes of some of the most important sets in the corresponding theme. Obviously this is the most recommended part of the book and it will satisfy the curiosity of the reader.

It is much appreciated that the last few pages are dedicated to the LEGO culture. They cover subjects like Master Builders, Brick Art and Fan Constructions.

The book is a complete guide to the history of LEGO and an overview to see the evolution of the LEGO product since 1978. The 2012 revision makes the book completely up to date. The book is an entertaining read and can be read bit by bit as there is no specific line to follow.

Visual Dictionaries

The Visual Dictionaries offer a detailed view of a specific subject, like STAR WARS™, Harry Potter™ or Super Héroes - BATMAN™.

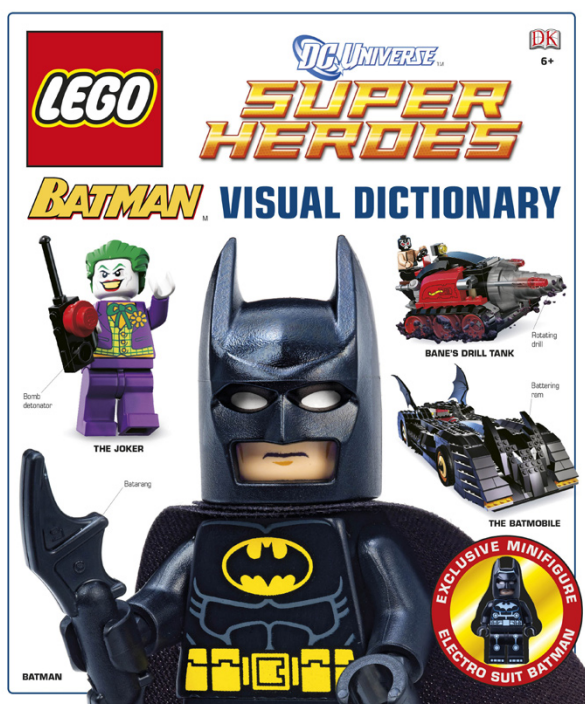
These books contain a complete overview of all the sets in the theme (up to the year of publication) and show their characteristics and peculiarities. I will talk about the book dedicated to Super Heroes - Batman, the last to appear on the market.

Before opening the book I found my first surprise: the exclusive minifig for this book. It is a reproduction of the "ELECTRO SUIT BATMAN". This figure is not only a collectible, but helps to solve puzzles in the LEGO BATMAN 2 video game.

Upon opening the book, the first thing you find is a time line of all the BATMAN sets, including both the sets that appeared under that name in 2007-2008 and the ones from 2012, included in the DC Universe Super Heroes theme. The list is very complete and even includes promotional polybags and the DC Universe sets that don't refer directly to the BATMAN comic books.

After this nice introduction we dive into the BATMAN world by means of a complete review of all the LEGO® models and minifigs, including all variations and accessories of each character. In this case the review is done character by character. Different from other similar books, in this case there are also some comic strips with minifigs on a background drawing.

Then there are some pages that are dedicated to explaining how the LEGO Super Heros - BATMAN models are designed. The designers explain some of their secrets and there are even some pictures of prototypes and models that were never released. Finally the book takes a look at the LEGO Merchandising and the LEGO video games.



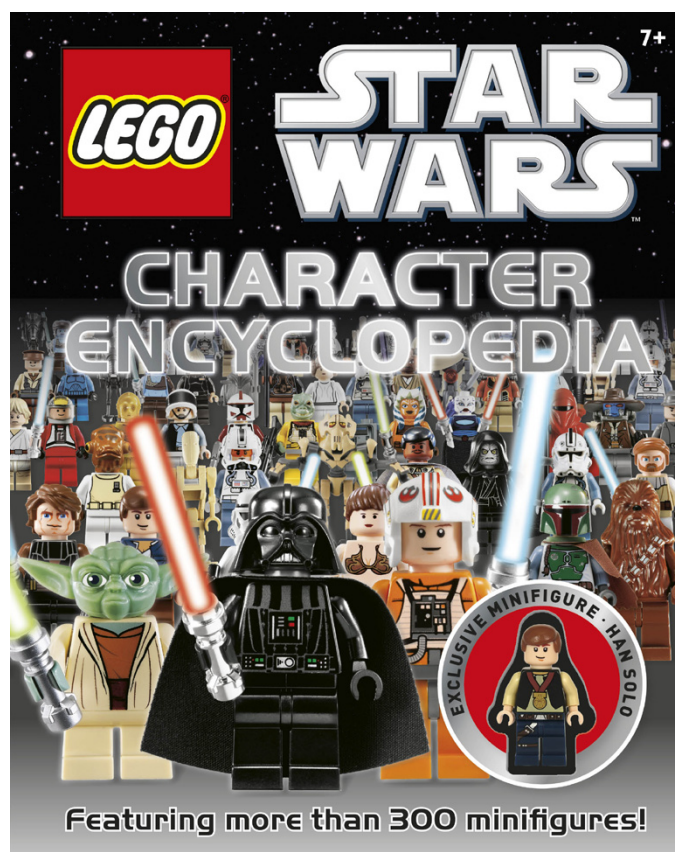
The Visual Dictionaries are a bible for the fans of a specific LEGO theme, or a nice read for those who like LEGO in general. In addition you get an exclusive minifig which is always a great excuse to get the book.

Character Encyclopedias

As the name indicates, these books present a complete guide of the minifigs that appear in a specific theme.

The first one to come out was STAR WARS™, which I will use for this review. Again the first thing we find is the exclusive minifig. In this case it is Han Solo Medal Ceremony, which goes with the Luke Skywalker Medal Ceremony minifig that comes with the STAR WARS™ Visual Dictionary. These two minifigs are reproductions of the characters that appear at the end of Episode IV - A New Hope, when Princess Leia gives them a medal for destroying the Death Star.

In this case the book goes straight to the point. From the very first page you can explore the different characters (over 300). They are organised by Episode (from I to VI), Clone Wars and



the Extended Universe. Each minifig comes with a description, characteristics (DATA FILE), some trivia (exclusivity or accessories) and the possible variations of the character.

The pictures of the minifigs are excellent and the information is very complete. Practically any doubt a fan might have about a minifig is resolved in this magnificent book.

In addition to STAR WARS™, there are also Character Encyclopedias for Harry Potter and NINJAGO.

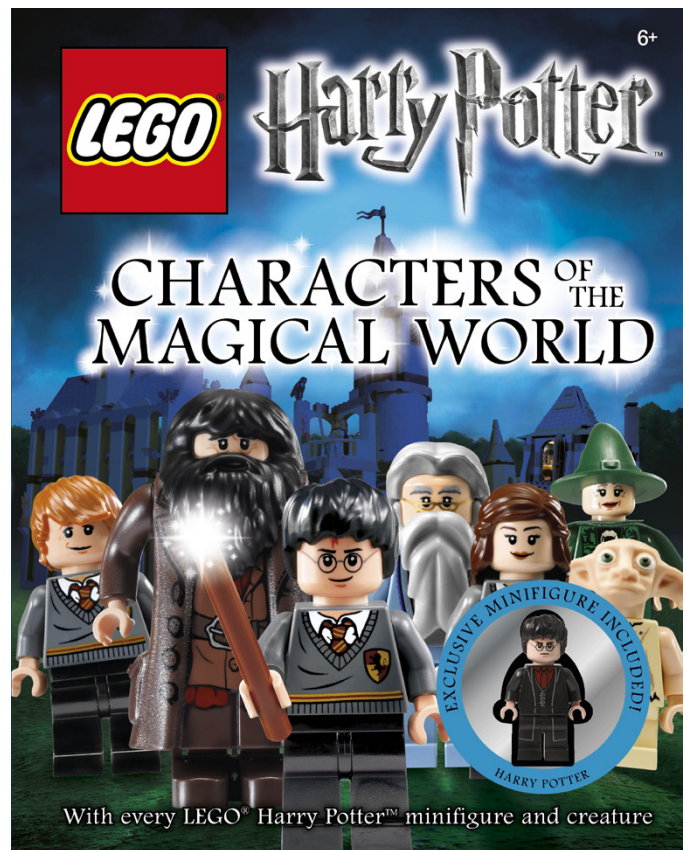
BRICKMASTER

The BRICKMASTER books are closer to what could be called the LEGO DNA: building. Although the book is thick, it contains few pages as the front is in fact a box with LEGO® bricks. These bricks enable you to build 8 models (in groups of 2) and each book is dedicated to a different theme like CITY, Pirates, Castle or Ninjago.

BRICKMASTER STAR WARS™ was published in 2010 and contains 240 pieces and 2 minifigs: a Clone and a Droid. First there is a page with a kind of BIO of the characters. At the start of every ship there is also a short description sheet and at the end the main functions are listed. There are also some building tricks and trivia.

The book includes instructions for building four pairs of STAR WARS ships (one for each "side") and that allow you to create a story around them. Each pair of ships is focussed on a different scene. The Battle on Christophsys, Ice Encounter, Desert Raid and Forest Fight.

The two main models are a Republic Attack Shuttle and an Armored Assault Tank (AAT). They are nice and well reproduced models. These two models are mini scale reproductions of the 2009 minifig scale models from LEGO. The remaining models are minifig scale; a little more imaginative, but useful nevertheless.



The interesting thing about these books for adult fans is that you can build the small ships that are exclusive to this book to complete your diorama. With the instructions, and keeping in mind that fans usually have many pieces, you will probably be able to reproduce all 8 models without much problem.

Dorling Kindersley has made a strong commitment to the LEGO licence and it has a wide and interesting range of books. I'm sure that any LEGO fan will find one or more books that fit in with their personal view of the hobby. During 2013 new titles will be published that will touch upon new aspects of our hobby and about which we will keep you informed in later issues. I especially recommend the book *LEGO Minifigure Year By Year: A Visual Chronicle* that will come out in October and in which I have had the honour to collaborate.

Acknowledgements: Dorling Kindersley for providing the books and the images for this review.
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