



A LEGO GLOSSARY

From A to Z

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Introduction

There will be many technical terms below, but I think three are more important than others, so an explanation of them before going to the alphabetical order.

Stud

The circular bumps are on almost every LEGO piece. They fit inside the anti-studs below another piece and form LEGO's interlocking system. They are often used for measuring LEGO parts and models.

Plate

A thin LEGO part, 3.2 mm high. They have different shapes, sizes, and colors, but the height remains the same. You get a brick when you put 3 of them on top.

Brick

Any LEGO piece that is at least three plates high. While the most common bricks are rectangular, there are many round bricks.

Bricks are categorized according to the brick width, length, and height. The width and length are measured in studs and the height in bricks. Since most bricks are the same size, the height is only mentioned in those higher than the regular brick. So, instead of saying 2x4x1, we say 2x4 for the blue brick shown in the picture. For the "special" bricks higher than the regular ones, like the brown arch piece here, the height is also mentioned, in this case, 1x4x2. You may have noticed that when talking about the size of a brick (or any LEGO part, for that matter), the short side comes first. That's why it's 2x4 instead of 4x2.

Bricks come in many different types and colors. Of course, not every brick comes in every color, nor is each type as common as others, but when you think about it, the numbers are pretty impressive! There are more than 200 types of bricks and more than 60 colors.

A

ABS

Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene is the material LEGO bricks are made of. These elements give the bricks their strength, resilience, and shiny surface. I'm sure you all know the formula, but if you don't, it's $(C_8H_8 \cdot C_4H_6 \cdot C_3H_3N)_n$.

AFOL

Adult Fan of LEGO. AFOL is pronounced similarly to hay-foal. Most adults use this acronym, but others like AHOL, ALE, ALH, AFFOL, FFOL, and FEFOL.

AFFOL

Adult Female Fan of LEGO. I wouldn't say I like the distinction between AFOL and AFFOL, but there may be more male fans than female, so I understand the need to express gender.

AHOL

Adult Hobbyist of LEGO. I wouldn't use AHOL because of the resemblance to a not-so-nice word. Some people dislike using "fan" because it derives from "fanatic."

ALE

Adult LEGO Enthusiast.

ALH

Adult LEGO Hobbyist.

Ambassador

A person representing a LEGO User Group (LUG) and acting as their liaison to the LEGO Group. See Communities at the end of the article.

Anti-stud

The indentation underneath most bricks, plates, and tiles connects with the studs to form LEGO's interlocking system.

Architecture

LEGO Architecture is a theme released in 2008. Designed by the architect Adam Reed Tucker, LEGO produced models of iconic landmarks based on the existing buildings. There are three sub-themes of LEGO Architecture: Landmark Series, like the Leaning Tower of Pisa and Buckingham Palace; Architect Series, like Villa Savoye and Sydney Opera House; and Skylines, like Shanghai and San Francisco.

Axle

A TECHNIC piece used in sets that have wheels and gears, allowing them to rotate freely. It also connects appropriate components and prevents the model from falling apart.

AZMEP

Aus Zwei Mach Eins Plättchen. The German acronym for half-stud offset.

B

Baseplate

These are what you build on. They're a bit different from regular plates. They're thinner, too, almost paper-thin, though surprisingly sturdy. There are no anti-studs below, so they must be at the bottom. I'm guessing that's where the term "base" comes from.

Baseplates come in different sizes, measured in the number of studs each side has, like 48×48 or 16×32. Color variations on a single baseplate may create a specific landscape pattern, like a stream or a beach. However, all the studs of these baseplates are on the same level.

Apart from the regular baseplates, there are also "raised" and "road" baseplates. Raised baseplates have some built-on terrain or structure (like hills or the base of a castle), giving the baseplate two or more levels to build on, although the landscape doesn't necessarily need any studs to attach bricks. Road baseplates have two parts: one with the road and without any studs and the other surrounding the road. There are straight and curvy roads, T-junctions, and crossroads. These are great if you're building your city.

Belville

A theme that was introduced in 1994 and discontinued in 2009. Its target audience was mainly girls. While the sets were mostly made out of System pieces, the Belville Figures were the most significant. These were larger than regular Minifigures, with multiple joints and more human-like features. Belville sets had many specialized parts, like furniture, animals, and food.

Prominent Figure or Bigfig

A figure is more prominent than a regular Minifigure. It's way more extensive. Examples are the Hulk from the Marvel Universe, Wampa from Star Wars, and the Goblin King from The Hobbit. While some are similar, the mold of every bigfig is not the same.

Bignette

A LEGO scene is more significant than a vignette but smaller than a diorama.

Billund

A town in Denmark where the LEGO Group (TLG) headquarters is located.

Bionicle

A theme that used Technic parts and ball-and-socket joints to create significant figures. It was first released in 2001, discontinued in 2010, returned in 2015, and discontinued in 2017.

Bley

Stands for bluish grey, given by the fans when LEGO changed the tone of the grey bricks to be more bluish than greenish in 2004.

Blind Bags

Blind Bags are the little sealed foil packets from which all the collectible Minifigure Series come. These sealed packets are used with various collectible items, such as trading cards or sticker albums. The idea, of course, is it's a 'blind' bag because you have no idea what you'll get inside. Each packet contains one random Minifigure, so you have no idea which one will be inside unless you can feel which figure it is. With LEGO, it's more significant than with trading cards because it's become a fine art form to feel which reason it is through the sealed packets.

Brick-built

A creation made out of bricks instead of a prefabricated part. While some of these creations may not be as "good-looking" as the prefabricated ones, it gives the creator more flexibility to do as they like. Also, a prefabricated build version may not be available in some cases. The hippo in the left image only comes in DUPLO, while the one on the right is made out of System parts by Takamichi Irie.

Brickheadz

Released in 2017, Brickheadz allows fans to create buildable characters with almost a 1:1 head-torso ratio, both cube-shaped. While most characters are from licensed themes, like Batman or Star Wars, some represent Easter, Valentine's Day, or Halloween. There's also a

'blank' Brickheadz set called "Go Brick Me," which lets you build and customize a Brickheadz any way you like.

Bricklink

See Digital Platforms.

Brickowl

See Digital Platforms.

Brickset

See Digital Platforms.

BOLOCs

Build Lots Of Colors

A build with many colored bricks is usually done out of necessity rather than design.

Boost

Boost is a robotics set created for children aged 7+. A Move Hub is included in the group that communicates with a tablet and can be coded using an app, which allows the robot to do specific commands. Also, see Mindstorms.

Buildable Figure

An action-figure-sized character that uses CCBS. The themes with buildable figures are Bionicle, Hero Factory, Legends of Chima, Star Wars, and Super Heroes.

Builder

Those gifted individuals can create wonders with LEGO bricks.

BURP

Big Ugly Rock Piece. A large molded piece that resembles a rock. They are not very famous among builders since they prefer to create their landscapes out of bricks instead of one big chunk of a prefabricated part. See also: LURP and POOP.

C

CCBS

Character and Creature Building System. It uses balls and ball connectors to build an action-figure-sized LEGO character instead of studs and tubes.

Cheese Slope

A sloped part is one stud wide, one long, and two plates high (1x1x 2/3). The yellow ones resemble a piece of cheese, hence the name.

Clikits

Another theme that was designed for girls. It was released in 2003 and discontinued in 2006, although some accessories appeared in some sets until 2008.

Clone brands

Construction toys are similar to and sometimes compatible with LEGO but cheaper and often quality. They are also known as a bootleg or fake LEGO.

CMF

Collectible Minifigures. In 2010, LEGO started to sell single Minifigures (usually with accessories) in blind bags. These were new designs made especially for this sub-theme. There are 18 main series, plus more than ten additional ones like the LEGO Movie, Team G.B., or The Simpsons. Each series contains 16-22 Minifigures, except the Team G.B. series, which only has 9.

Construction

Constructible Action Figures. See Buildable Figure and CCBS.

Cracklink

A nickname for Bricklink, implicating how addictive it can be.

Custom

These are parts that LEGO does not officially produce but are made by a third-party company. They can include decals, printed parts, mini-figures, or accessories. If it's a print, it's generally printed on an official LEGO part. The supplements have their unique mold, and the quality of the material can be very close to LEGO's, depending on the company producing it. More on this at the end of the article.

Customizer

Someone who uses different means like painting, sculpting, or cutting to modify LEGO parts. These guys do not play well with purists, who prefer to use only official LEGO parts.

Cuusoo

The name of LEGO Ideas during its beta phase.

D

Dark Ages

Remember that one time when you were too cool to play with LEGO? That was your dark ages. It was a period when someone stopped playing with LEGO for any reason. It's only valid if that person returns to being a FOL (fan of LEGO).

Decorated parts

A LEGO piece with something printed on it.

Design ID

The number is written (but not so easily seen) inside every LEGO part. It refers to the mold shape of the part but not the color.

Dimensions

See Digital Platforms.

Diorama

A significant scene or landscape made out of LEGO parts.

DSS

You dreaded Sticker Sheet. Sometimes, LEGO prints stickers instead of printing on parts, and you need to apply them as you build. These stickers are not very popular because aligning them perfectly is challenging, especially on small pieces.

Dual Moulded

Remember when LEGO printed shorts, skirts, and boots, and the back of the legs wasn't the same color as the front? Instead of printing, they use dual molds, so both sides have the same color. It's used both in the legs and arms.

DUPLO

LEGO's product line is for children between 1 and 5 years old. Compared to regular Minifigures,

DUPLO figures

Duplo figures are more prominent and cannot be separated. A 2×2 DUPLO brick is twice the size of a 2×2 system brick in width, length, and height. DUPLO bricks are compatible with system bricks bigger than 2×2 in width and length. DUPLO animals, accessories, figures, and bricks are designed for small children.

E

Element

The generic name for each unique LEGO part. I think it's better to explain this with an example. A red 2×2 piece and a blue 2×2 piece are bricks, but they're counted as different elements because their color is different.

Element ID

This is similar to the Design ID but describes the color instead of the general shape and size. So, if we take the bricks mentioned above as an example, both their Design ID would read 3003 written inside, but the Element ID is 300321 for the red brick and 300323 for the blue brick. The Element I.D.s are usually found in the instruction manuals with sets. They can be used to find specific parts on sites like Bricklink, Brickset, Brickowl, Firestartoys, and the Pick a Brick section of LEGO's official online store.

Erling Brick

A 1×1 SNOT piece with two studs and two anti-studs. Named after its designer, Erling Dideriksen, it is also known as the "Headlight Brick."

Eurobricks

See Digital Platforms.

F

FFOL

Female Fan of LEGO

FAFOL

Female Adult Fan of LEGO.

Fabuland

A theme that lived between 1979-1989. It was meant for children aged 3-7 to be a transition theme between DUPLO and System. The builds use regular System bricks, adding individual parts and accessories. Fabuland figures are similar to DUPLO figures because they are not interchangeable but are minor (though still more significant than mini-figures). All the residents of Fabuland have humanoid bodies with animal heads, and they all have a name, making them the first licensed theme.

Firestartoys

See Digital Platforms.

FIRST LEGO League

An alliance between FIRST and the LEGO Group encourages children to design and build a robot using LEGO Mindstorms and apply science, technology, engineering, and math concepts (STEM) to solve real-world problems like food safety or recycling.

Friends

The latest and, so far, the most successful sub-theme was intended for girls. 2012 Friends Set introduced many colored bricks, accessories, and animals never seen before. It follows five girls: Olivia, Mia, Andrea, Emma, and Stephanie. The theme does not have Minifigures. Instead, there are mini-dolls.

G

Greebles

The small details are used primarily on large builds of space-related themes, so instead of a flat surface, you get a more complex look, like the close-up of the Millennium Falcon you see in the picture.

H

Half-Stud Offset

A building technique that lets you step outside the studs' limitations. They are usually done using jumper plates, though other elements are.

Headlight Brick

See Erling Brick.

Hero Factory

A similar theme to Bionicle was produced between 2010 and 2014. Like Bionicle, the sets had mainly Technic parts and followed the adventures of robotic heroes.

Hidden Side

See Digital Platforms.

I

Ideas

LEGO Ideas is a crowdfunding site that allows fans to create a potential set idea and share it with the world. If an idea gets 10,000 supporters in a given time frame, it's reviewed by the LEGO Group and has a chance to become an official set. LEGO Ideas started as Cuusoo in 2008, operated until 2014, and gave birth to sets like Back to the Future and Minecraft. 2014 the beta phase ended, and the name was changed to LEGO Ideas. Since its start, 24 sets have been released under Cuusoo and Ideas. The latest one can be seen below.

Illegal

Building techniques outside the suggested instructions provided by the LEGO Group, either because they stress the elements more than intended or produce an unstable model. A simple example would be placing a plate vertically between the studs of a brick. While it's over ten years old, it's an excellent source to see what is considered illegal and legal.

Inventory

The list of parts included in a set. These can be found in the instruction manuals with collections (except the old ones) and online sites like Brickset, Bricklink, and Brickowl.

J

Jumbo Brick

First released in 1964, Jumbo Bricks were a product made for Samsonite. They were approximately three times larger than the regular bricks we know today. They were manufactured until 1970 in Canada and 1971 in the U.S.

Jumper Plate

The part that allows the half-stud offset to happen. There are three jumper plates, all of which you can see in the image compared to regular plates.

Juniors

A theme designed for children between 4-7 years old. Like Fabuland, it is meant to transition between DUPLO and System. However, the parts and Minifigures (or mini-dolls) used are no different than regular parts and Minifigures. The main difference is that the models are more straightforward to build.

K

KFOL

Kid Fan of LEGO.

L

LAN

See Communities.

LCP

LEGO Certified Professionals. The gifted individuals create unique art pieces on a big scale using LEGO bricks. These people do not work for the LEGO Group, but they officially recognize them. According to the LEGO Group's website, there are 13 LCPs: Dirk Denoyelle, Nicholas Foo, Rene Hoffmeister, Yenchih Huang, Any Hung, Wani Kim, Ryan McNaught, Jumpei Mitsui, Matija Puzar, Robin Sather, Nathan Sawaya, Georg Schmitt, and Riccardo Zangelmi.

LDD

See Digital Platforms.

LDraw

See Digital Platforms.

Legal

Building techniques approved by the LEGO Group to provide more stable models and better playability.

LEGO

Those round-shaped things you get from a bakery. They are lovely until you step on them. It comes from the Danish words "leg godt," meaning "play well."

LEGOs

The biggest mistake you will ever make if you try to use this word as a plural of LEGO. In the catalogs published in the 1980s, the LEGO Group politely asked parents and children to use "LEGO Bricks or Toys" instead of LEGOs. They recently answered a tweet in 2014, saying

neither LEGO nor LEGOs should be used as a plural. Rather, we should say "LEGO bricks" or "LEGO sets." It makes sense since LEGO is the brick brand, not the name, but it's easier to say "LEGO" instead of "LEGO bricks." Long story short, use "LEGO bricks" if your first language is English and you're talking about it on a serious platform. If not, go wild.

LEGOLAND

See Attractions.

Licensed Theme

These are LEGO sub-themes based on T.V. Series, movies, and video games. The first licensed set was Wooden Pluto, a pull-along toy based on Mickey Mouse's dog. It was made in the 1950s when LEGO was making wooden toys. After LEGO became the toy we know today, the first licensed theme was Star Wars for System and Winnie the Pooh for DUPLO, released in 1999. Licensed themes include Marvel, DC, Harry Potter, The Simpsons, Minecraft, and Overwatch.

Life

See Digital Platforms.

LFM

See Communities.

LOC

See Communities.

LUG

See Communities.

LURP

Little Ugly Rock Piece. Sibling of BURP.

LXF

See Digital Platforms.

M

Mecabricks

See Digital Platforms.

Microfigure or Microfig

A single sculpted piece consisting of a head, torso, and legs is smaller than a regular Minifigure (1x1x2). These are usually used as pawns in tabletop LEGO games, such as Heroica or Ramses Return. Micro figures were discontinued in 2014. "Micro-figure" is now used for nano figures (or statuettes).

Micro-doll

A new type of figure released in 2020, micro-dolls are approximately half the size of mini-dolls. They use the same headpiece, but their arms and legs do not move.

Microscale

A build with a scale much smaller than a Minifigure so that when you put one in it, it will look like Godzilla attacking. It can vary from a build just shy of being in the Minifigure scale to a whole city that can fit in the palm of your hand, in which it wouldn't be possible to see a figure at all.

Mindstorms

Like LEGO Boost, Mindstorms allows older children to create robots with technical and system parts and code them using desktop software. In addition to Boost's color and distance sensors, Mindstorms has a touch sensor, an infrared sensor, and a remote infrared beacon. It has an intelligent brick that can be programmed. The two systems are not compatible with each other.

Mini-doll

The figures included in sub-themes Friends, Elves, Disney Princesses, and D.C. Super Hero Girls. The parts of mini-dolls are interchangeable, like regular mini-figures, but the legs can not move separately or backward. Unlike Minifigures, the skin color of mini-dolls is either

light flesh, flesh, or medium dark flesh. There are three torso types for teenage girls, adult women, and boys and men. The legs have different molds, allowing you to choose between skirts, shorts, trousers, or dresses. Also, almost all mini-dolls wear shoes printed on the leg parts. The hair of most female mini-dolls is made of soft plastic and compatible with regular Minifigures. However, the neck connection is thinner than a Minifigure, so the heads are not. While the size of the hands is the same, mini-dolls can't move their hands like Minifigures, but they can use the same accessories.

Minifigure or Minifig: The little LEGO people are included in almost every set. The Minifigures we know today were released in 1978 and haven't changed since design. The printing, however, is a whole different story. It began with two dots as eyes and a smile for every Minifigure, and now you can find almost every emotion along with other types of faces, male and female, with glasses, mustaches, freckles, make-up, and so on.

There are many books about Minifigures alone, but let me give you a quick summary and fact timeline about the milestones of Minifigures based on the infographic the LEGO Group has kindly provided on their webpage.

1978

The Minifigure is born!

1979

Introduction of the male hairpiece. Before this, all the male Minifigures wore hats.

1989

The release of Pirates brings facial hair and different body parts, like peg legs and hook hands.

1990

A unique Minifigure who glows in the dark and has a spooky wearable mold arrives at The Ghost! Also, lady Minifigures can wear dresses now. How fancy!

1993

The separate beard element is introduced in a wizard Minifigure.

1997

The first digital Minifigure appears in the video game LEGO Island.

1999

Launch the first licensed Minifigures with the Star Wars theme. Also, a particular mold head appears for the first time with Jar Jar Binks.

2001

Double-sided heads are introduced.

2002

Star Wars sets another milestone! Yoda is the first Minifigure who has short legs.

2004

The Minifigures included in licensed sets have flesh-colored heads now.

2009

Minifigures are minimized (!), and micro figures are born.

2010

The madness called the "Collectible Minifigure Series" begins. Also, Minifigures are minimized further and become trophies (also called statuettes or nano figures – more on this later).

2014

The Minifigure has its very own movie! The LEGO Movie hits the theatres.

2016

It's now possible for Minifigures to have babies! The baby Minifigure is born. Also, LEGO makes a wheelchair mold and makes it possible to have disabled Minifigures.

2018

The Minifigure celebrates its 40th birthday.

Minifig Scale

A build created on the scale of a Minifigure.

MOC

My Creation. Anything built with LEGO bricks without using instructions pronounced like "mock."

Modular Buildings

Designed by Jamie Berard, Modular Buildings is a sub-theme of the Creator product line primarily targeting adults. One set has been released each year (starting in 2007), and when put side-by-side, they create a Minifigure-scaled street. There is also a micro-scaled set of the first five Modular Buildings, seen in the picture. The sets are large and highly detailed, and the floors can be taken apart to see the interior.

Modulex

A different type of brick was explicitly created for architects. They were smaller than regular bricks and were not compatible with them. However, some connections were made thanks to the curiosity of AFOLs. The color palette of Modulex bricks was different than that of System bricks. They were produced between 1963 and 1965, after which Modulex left the LEGO Group and became a separate company.

Molds

These are the critical elements of how LEGO parts come to life. It can also describe a brand new LEGO part or a Minifigure head different from a standard one. Molten plastic is injected from one side, and LEGO parts come from the other. Of course, it's not as easy as that.

N

Nano figure or Nanofig

These are the most diminutive figures yet. They're a replica of the Minifigure but only 1.5 bricks tall. The first time they appeared was as trophies, in gold, silver, and bronze, so that name and a statuette know them. After a while, LEGO went wild and printed all kinds of details on them, making them a smaller scale of the Minifigure. While the official LEGO name for these tiny people is micro figures, fans usually call them nano figures to distinguish them from the discontinued game micro figures.

NLP

Non-LEGO Person or Non-LEGO Parent. Those unfortunate souls that are not in the LEGO universe.

NPU

Nice Part Use. It uses a particular part differently from its intended usage, like a croissant for an eyebrow or a beak surfboard for a beak.

P

PAB Wall

Pick-A-Brick Wall. A wall located in LEGO Stores has containers sorted by color. You can fill a cup with the parts you choose, and as long as the pieces fit in the cup, it doesn't matter how many there are. You pay for the cup and not its contents.

Polybag

Small models that come in plastic bags are usually promotions.

POOP

Parts Out of Other Parts. It refers to single-mold pieces that can quickly be built with smaller existing parts, such as BURP or LURP.

Purist

A MOC that only uses official LEGO parts or an individual firmly against third-party customizations.

Q

QUATRO

For children ages 1-3, QUATRO bricks were the most oversized bricks ever created. They were twice the size of DUPLO bricks and compatible with System and DUPLO. They lasted only two years, between 2004-2006.

R

RLFM

See Communities.

RLOC

See Communities.

RLUG

See Communities.

S

Scala

Scala was another theme intended for young girls. It was first released in 1979, discontinued in 1980, re-released in 1997, and discontinued in 2001. Very little construction was needed in Scala sets, mainly for the dolls and accessories. They were, however, generally compatible with System parts.

Sigfig

Signature Figure. A cartoon version of an AFOL made out of LEGO, used as an avatar.

SNIR

Studs Not In a Row. An advanced building technique creates a row of bricks diagonally instead of horizontally or vertically.

SNOT

Studs Not On Top. Another advanced building technique allows the build to go sideways. The Erling brick is one of the earliest and most popular parts to allow this, although there are other parts.

STAMP

Sticker Across Multiple Parts. It's pretty self-explanatory: a situation where you must apply a sticker to more than one part, making removing and reusing said parts almost impossible without ruining the sticker.

Studio

See Digital Platforms.

System

The main product line of the LEGO Group of building elements, Minifigures, and sets – in other words, the regular LEGO bricks we all know and love. It comes from "System i Leg," meaning "System of Play."

T

TECHNIC

Released in 1977, TECHNIC sets use parts like gears, axles, and connectors to create more mechanical models. They are primarily compatible with System bricks.

TFOL

Teen Fan of LEGO.

Tile

Apart from the same height as a plate, but no studs on top. They are usually used as a finish to provide a smooth surface.

Theme

A product line with a specific subject. It can be licensed, like Star Wars, the Lord of the Rings, or a LEGO original, Space or Castle.

TLC

The LEGO Company.

TLG

The LEGO Group. It was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Kristiansen.

Tower

See Digital Platforms.

TLM

The LEGO Movie.

U

UCS

Ultimate Collector Series. Supersized and incredibly detailed Star Wars sets.

V

Vignette

A small LEGO scene.

W

WIP

Work In Progress.