

Reading comprehension: TANGRAM

Math, Miss Belén 2021

Like building blocks, tangrams can teach kids about spatial relationships. They may help kids learn geometric terms, and develop stronger problem solving abilities. They might even help children perform better on tests of basic arithmetic.

But what is a tangram?

Invented in China approximately 200 years ago, a tangram is a two-dimensional re-arrangement puzzle created by cutting a square into seven pieces — seven geometric shapes called “tans”

What are the seven shapes in a tangram?

Each tangram puzzle contains the following:

2 large right triangles

1 medium-sized right triangle

2 small right triangles

1 small square

1 parallelogram

Arranged correctly, these tangram shapes can be fitted together as a large square, rectangle, or triangle. They can also be arranged in a variety of complex shapes.

There are many ways to play with tangrams. The simplest way is to let kids create their own complex shapes. But traditionally, tangrams are treated as puzzles.

The player is shown a target shape in outline, so that the “seams” between the composite tans are concealed. Then the player attempts to recreate the shape using the seven pieces.

As noted by Zhen Yuan and his colleagues, solving tangram puzzles appears to activate parts of the brain associated with creative thinking and trial-and-error problem-solving .

1. When was tangram invented?
2. Where was tangram invented?
3. Do you think tangram is an important game for children? Why?
4. Draw on the your notebook the pieces of a tangram as described in the text.