

COMMUNIST' LEGO

2018 REVIEW OF CHINESE CLONE BRANDS

Blatant
copyright
flouting!
Yet again!

An
angry
angry
soldier!

Genuine
LEGO rivals!

Hideous
tubbyfigs!

Mountains
of rubbish!

COMMUNIST LEGO 2018

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

BRAND LIST 2018

China

Rest Of The World

REVIEWS

Scoring System

SETS

ANKER Play

Bulldozer Pit
Oil Rig Rescue
Police Car
Steam Roller

BLOCK Tech

Beauty Salon
Dragster GT
Jet Ski
Medical Response
Rescue Engine
Response Force
Snowman
Snow Mobile

Blox

Black Cab
Fire Engine

CaDA

Parade Car

Cartoon Cars

Cartoon Pickup

Click Brick

Dump Truck
Dozer
Farm Tractor and Hay Rake

COGO

Corpse Flower

Decool

Caterham 620R

Enlighten

Roadsweeper

Gudi

Cops N Crooks

Hsanhe

Corner Coffee
Fast Food Restaurant

Kazi

Field Army 155mm 52cal Truck-Mounted Gun

M.Y

Girls Brick Set, Buggy and Signpost
Girls Brick Set, Jet Ski
Girl/Girls Brick Set, Kitchen
Space Craft

Sluban

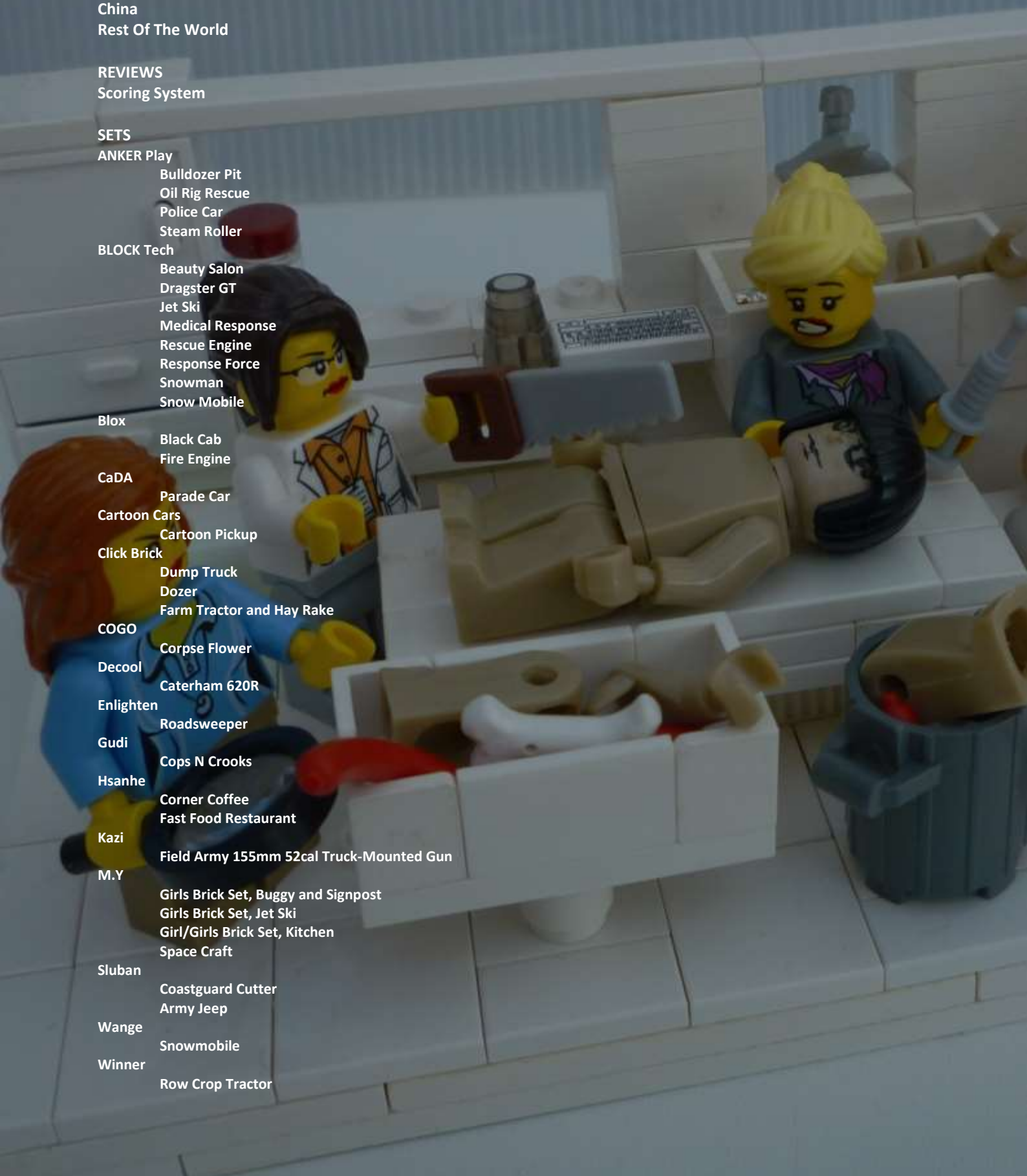
Coastguard Cutter
Army Jeep

Wange

Snowmobile

Winner

Row Crop Tractor



MINIFIGS

ANKER Play

Superheroes Collection!

BLOCK TECH

Action Heroes

Mean Streets

Blox

Police Accessories

M.Y

Military Characters

Kopf

Donald, Ronald, Elvis

Scotty, Edward, Tom, Michael, Robocop

Wayne, Hell Boy, Clubber, He-Man, Skeletor, Bob, David

LELE

Lone Ranger Soldier

Pogo

Watto, Captain Britain, Ripley, Alien

REVIEW SUMMARY

Conclusions

Summary

Review Tables



Change History

V1.2 Original release, Autumn 2013

V1.3 Second release, Spring 2014

18 new reviews

Updates and corrections on existing reviews

Addition of covers and introductions

Addition of Camouflage

Addition of Zombie Nation and score tables

V1.4 Third release, Summer 2014

26 new reviews

Updates and corrections on existing reviews, rearranged in alphabetical order

Revised introduction and condensed summaries

Addition of Camouflage: Tank Girls

V1.5 Fourth release, Summer 2015

50 new reviews

Revised introduction and condensed summaries

New additions to Camouflage: Tank Girls and Zombie Nation

Firing The Imagination

V1.6 Fifth release, Summer 2016

39 new reviews

Revised **introduction** and summaries

New scoring system for minifigs and separate minifig section

V1.7 Sixth release, Winter 2017

1 review of Lepin set

V1.8 Seventh release, Autumn 2018

34 new set reviews

39 new minifig reviews

Revised introduction and summaries

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Blu-Tack is a trademark of Bostic.

Curly Wurly is a trademark of Cadbury.

Some clone bricks were harmed excessively in the creation of this report.

Introduction

Background

Hooky LEGO. It's all over the place and increasing by the day. Is there a list of brands? Is it all rubbish? How do they get away with it?

'Communist LEGO 2018' is the newest version of a series of rather irreverent documents reviewing a wide spread of Chinese-made clone brick kits and minifigs (see "clonebrands_v1.4.pdf" to "clonebrands_v1.7.pdf"). This edition, covering 2017-2018, has tried to pick more competent stuff that could form real rivals to LEGO, as well as the familiar mountain of crap still available in the UK. Despite some successful and continuing litigation from LEGO, there are well over 100 different companies in China making clone bricks and minifigs with only a few not infringing some form of copyright and trademark.

Since 2014 LEGO became the biggest toy manufacturer in the world, and continues to build on this success despite a blip in 2017 where profits plummeted to a measly \$1,250,000,000. Given its enduring popularity as fulfilling the human instinct to create, it is more than likely that production will only increase in the coming years. The patents for LEGO *bricks* have long expired and companies are allowed to make copies; the *minifig* shape is a trademark and copying it is not entirely legal. However, the more serious issues with the clone brands are intellectual property rights and copyrighting. LEGO put considerable effort into set design and marketing tie-ups with various brands, and leeching off these is where the Chinese cloners continue to be very naughty. Are us Europeans guilty of being True Barbarians and are now feeling the revenge of The Middle Kingdom? Or is greed a universal failing and the reality is "Communism My Arse"?

Set Choice

The main purchase driver for this report was a bit different from before. Some kits were ordered specifically from China to test out both new manufacturers and older favourites who had tried to make their products legal. As the Chinese clone market evolves, many companies have moved to produce quite good sets, and truly awful stuff is getting rarer. However, random purchases of new and second-hand rebranded sets from import companies were continued to provide cost-effective less serious reviews. Finding rubbishness over the past year was like shooting fish in a barrel.

Review Style

Communist LEGO reviews are not written in a clinical way. Many are embellished or bloated with various swearwords and rabbit holes to give variety to a seemingly never-ending shower of poo. This approach has baffled the brave Chinese who try to translate the reports to choose what to buy from the vast array of rubbish in their toyshops. If these vaguely desperate vanity-bubble inflating scribbles of some self-doubting Brit produce a smile or two, the rifling through kilos of sub-standard shite plastic has been worth it. Kind of. And I suppose the colour-coded tables are useful.



PeiZhi, LEGO and Brickarms all working together. Occasionally you **can** polish a turd.

Brand List 2018

LEGO is of course a global brand and has been the subject of many copies over the years. The US company Tyco were the first with 'Super Blocks' in 1984, after LEGO's brick patent expired in 1983. Almost every attempt at cloning has been inferior, mainly due to production costs being lower resulting in inferior grade materials and poor fitting pieces. Set design has generally varied from mediocre to rubbish. However, the invigorated factories of China are now churning out LEGO clones at a stupendous rate. It's worth noting that the potential Chinese domestic market is far larger than that of Europe and America combined.

There are many Chinese companies making LEGO copies, with new ones starting up at an astounding rate. Minifig copying seems to be endemic, taking advantage of enormous demand for collectable figure sets that LEGO cannot do due to contractual reasons. A brief trawl of AliExpress finds over 50 different companies making plastic building blocks, with probably at least half doing LEGO clones. Most if not all are based in Chenghai, the toy capital of China. Some companies source their products from each other and subcontract, so working out exactly who makes what is not always straightforward. Many are of random quality and there is a lot of chaff and little wheat. The following is an incomplete list of some of the more actively promoted brands. By the time you read this, there will be more. Many Far East websites list the keyword 'Lepin' above 'LEGO'. Quite a few of these companies have sprung up to solely serve the hooky minifig market. Most appear to have produced their own moulds, judging by the subtle differences in the minifig parts.

A lot of names have not been reviewed by the author but found from import websites, internet blog sites and video reviews, of which there are many. Many of those reviews are very comprehensive and form far more detailed studies than the 1-page summaries in this document, and are likely to reveal brands not in the following list.

NOTE: Brands and descriptions are subject to change, as companies and names appear and disappear. Many are flouting trademarks and copyright, and may rebrand every so often as part of this. This 2018 list has a few extra additions over 2016 and hopefully serves as a starting point for brand recognition and reference. Some of the older names are no longer used, but are included for historical reference.



China

Ausini – Manufactured by the Guangdong Ausini company, and has a very wide range of products generally matching the larger Chinese clone companies. Set design quite good, with railway kits probably the best available in China. They state they have an in-house design team producing 200 new products per year (although these may include other non-brick items). They appear to be well priced. However, minifig expressions have the mildly disturbing huge-eyed look typical of East Asian tastes, and the skin colour is verging towards the zombie. Interestingly they package in either English or Russian, giving some idea of their perceived markets.

BanBao – This brand (made currently by the Penbu Toy Factory) have mostly moved into themes where LEGO do not produce sets, and have new minifigs called Tobees that look a bit like characters from South Park. The plates and bricks are about 15% higher than standard LEGO and compatibility is helped by using a hammer. Kits include a large 1400-piece Long March 2F space rocket. They also market under the **BaBlock** brand name.

BELA – Brand of a currently unknown manufacturer, possibly also selling under the name **Jilebao**. Produces blatant copies of Ninjago, Bionicle and Hero Factory, Technic, Chima, and Friends sets. Have also been copying the Cars sets under the “Let’s Go!” theme, and Minecraft under My World. Another Dragon Ball Z minifig manufacturer.

Blocko – The brand name of the **Coco** Toy Company based in Nanjing, China, also marked as **Kimboli**. Their product range covers DUPLO, naval vessels (military and historic), farm and town, fantasy castle themes, and the military. The HUMVEE sets (both military and civilian) look particularly impressive. They apparently have 43 design patents listed in China. The minifigs are of a slightly different design with wider torsos.

Blue King Kong Toys – See **JLB**.

Bohzi – Minifig cloner which has copied the usual Star Wars and Superhero figures, but has also done the now rare Collectible Series 1 and 2. Passable quality. Beware of these fakes when buying second-hand. Of more interest are their Anime series.

Bom Bom – Brand name of an unknown manufacturer making blatant rip-offs of LEGO Star Wars (called Star War). Has amusing logo of a round black bomb with a smiling face on it looking upwards at the lit fuze, presumably representative of upcoming legal action.

Brick – A rather awful cheap copy brand producing small kits that appeared in the US a few years ago, but may have been rebranded to **IQ Block** after a few legal words (and damning website reviews).

CaDA – Brand of the **Double Eagle** company. Produces its own designs of technic kits, many with radio control chassis. Looks and feels professional, customer friendly, good value, and legal.

CB Toys – Currently unknown manufacturer. Makes mediocre blatant copies of Legends of Chima minifigs.

Chaobao – Currently unknown manufacturer. Makes copies of Tamiya model and radio control sets, but also includes a range of LEGO clones.

Chang Li – Currently unknown manufacturer. Relatively good quality copy brand making small city-type sets.

Coco – See **Blocko**.

COGO and **Little White Dragon** – Manufactured by the **Loongon** Animation & Toys Industrial Company Ltd. This company proudly states their product is compatible with LEGO and even shows off pictures of their factory machinery. Their range includes all LEGO sizes (Quatro, DUPLO etc.) and standard brick sets include pirate ships. They originally used their own name, but now market under both the COGO and the Little White Dragon brands and oddly seem to overlap some themes. Their products apparently meet European and American standards. COGO cheekily have ‘Expert to Enlighten Children’ written on the boxes. Loongon has invested in new manufacturing and launched the **Lepin** and **Xingbao** brands; COGO now use Lepin-class bricks.

COKO Bricks – Clone brand producing mainly DUPLO-type sets. They have an elephant logo and are available in Asia and Australia.

Concord Toys – See **Enlighten**.

Dargo – Another of the brands that copies minifigs, such as DC and Marvel Superheroes. Passable quality but some incompatibilities.

Decool – Bizarrely-named brand that specialises in Technic-based clones, including the supercar sets and Hero Factory robots. Recently has produced blatant Ninjago, Superhero, and Chima minifig clones, including many not available in LEGO. A new series for 2015 include 'Zombie World' – zombie versions of LEGO Collectible minifigs.

Diamond Blocks – See **LOZ**.

Donglin – This company makes **Riddle Toy Bricks**, suspected of being the origins of one of Poundland's **Quick Brick** types.

Double Eagle – See **CadA**.

Dr Luck – See **Ligao**.

Enlighten – The trade name of the **Zhongyue** Industry Company that makes many LEGO copies and has been one of the major brands in China for some years. Currently they market under the name **Concord Toys**. They make a full range of LEGO themes, and also a lot of military sets with camouflage patterned bricks (although they can be a rather startling green colour). Some more recent sets have begun to diverge from duplicates, although mostly the kit design is not as good as LEGO and rather blocky.

Everlasting Bioer Plastic Factory – oddly named producer of cheap bricks. Photographs suggest they are the most plausible manufacturer of the other version of **Quick Bricks**, although there is no direct evidence.

Fuh Yeah – See **IQ Blocks**.

Funny Toys – See **Peizhi**.

Gudi – Brand name manufactured by **Xin Le Xin**, who also make **SY**. Appears to be excellent quality, which is a turn-up for the books.

GX Toys – See **Weagle**.

Hawk Blocks – Cheap copy brand available briefly in the US. Not only was it badly made, it was a different size to all of the other clone brands. Managed to score 0/10 on a review site.

HELO – See **Zephyr Knight**.

HOLI – Stud name on some **Xing Qi Le** bricks.

Hui Mei – Export brand for the **Xing Dou Cheng** company. Concentrates on small impulse-buy kits. Some found their way into the UK via **M.Y Toys**. Awful quality.

Intelligence Bricks – Small designer-type sets found in the US, with the maker name **Xingda**. Bad Chinglish but original designs and quality found to be quite good according to internet reviews.

Intelligence Toys – See **Xin Qi Le**.

IQ Block – Was used by BLOCK Tech as a supplier. Different under-brick locking method that is almost incompatible with LEGO. Probably rebranded from **Brick**, judging by the logos and lack of quality. Also amusingly printed as **IQ Blook**.

IQ Blocks – Not to be confused with **IQ Block**, these are produced by the **Fuh Yeah** company and look to be DUPLO size. They may or may not be compatible.

IQ Blook – See **IQ Block**.

Jay Star – See **Jie Star**.

Jia Li Bo – See **JLB**.

Jie Da – This brand markets town and pink princess kits. They have two types of minifigs (possibly for home and export) – a standard clone shape, and an odd rounded figure that resembles small DUPLO. The company exports to Russia.

Jie Star – Also translated as **Jay Star**, this brand copies various themes including pirates. One of the companies that are imported into the UK and rebranded as **M.Y Toys**.

Jilebao – See **BELA**.

Jinrun – Produces mediocre minifig copies, blatantly ripping off themes such as Star Wars.

JLB – Expands to **Jia Li Bo**. Brand name for **Blue King Kong Toys** that produce many heavily copyrighted minifig clones. One of the rival Dragon Ball Z manufacturers. Also makes astoundingly hideous Monster High friendfigs, not related to the Mega Bloks figures.

Jubilux – This company market themselves under both the elephant logo Jubilux, and the four-plated **Woma** registered in Hong Kong. As with other brands they produce a variety of themes, some rather closely modelled on genuine LEGO (such as the pirate ships). They make their own Army range and a **very** pink princess castle theme. The 'Space Team' logo looks suspiciously Lucasfilm, although the kits themselves appear to be home designed. Woma and Jubilux are exported to many countries and can be found occasionally in the UK, sometimes rebranded as **BLOCK Tech** or **Blox**. The minifigs are similar in shape and size to LEGO but have moulded knees and weird heads.

Kanitong Toys – Copiers of DUPLO.

Kazi – The **Kaiyu Toys** Company is a rival to Enlighten, with a full range of LEGO clones branded Kazi. Their recent kits look to have had some design thought put into them, although earlier sets copy genuine LEGO or are fairly basic. Kazi appear to compete with Enlighten on cost, with inevitable quality issues. Kazi is also spelt 'KaiZhi', although for the UK, Kazi are probably not fully aware of brand-name irony.

KIDDIEBRICKS – DUPLO copy that was marketed by Asda in the UK.

Kimboli – See **Blocko**.

Kopf – The largest clone minifig manufacturer in China. Churning out over 1000 different figures, and typically adding 2-6 sets per month. Quality varies from poor to exceptional.

KSZ – Minifig-copying brand, cloning Pirates of the Caribbean, for example. May be the same as **XSZ**.

LEBQ – Minifig cloner brand copying the usual LEGO copyrighted brands. Also one the cloners making the hugely popular Dragon Ball Z sets.

LELE – Clone brand slavishly copying Ninjago, Bionicle, Ninja Turtles, Jurassic World, and even LEGO Movie minifig sets. Manufactured by **Qun Long**.

Lepin – Currently China's premier illegal clone company, copying almost every set ever made by LEGO and also stealing MOC designs off the internet. Owned by **Loongon**. Under litigation. Invested heavily in manufacturing capability and has mostly decent parts, although quality control is iffy and technical parts awful. Closely aligned with **Xingbao**, which pays for MOC designs.

Le Qu – This cloner manufactures cheap-looking DUPLO / Mega Bloks equivalents.

Leyi – made by the Shantou **Megafun** Toys Industrial Ltd. Their mottos include 'Products can be copied but not the value', and 'We highly value honesty'. Their stated selling point appears to be producing stuff that doesn't harm the environment or children (insinuating that their Chinese rivals do). A brief browse of their website shows a vast array of their own kits (including a 2000-piece aircraft carrier) but also many blatant copies of LEGO sets, including Star Wars and even using the LEGO and DUPLO names on the boxes. Rubbish quality.

Li Cheng – This brand is one of two (the other is unidentified as this went to press) which use the same product. The brand has a logo of three 1x1 plates (red, green, yellow) and produces a variety of town-based sets.

Ligao – Another copy brand with a somewhat amusing name, made by the **Wange Toys** Industrial Company. Previously also occasionally branded as **Riddle Bricks**, the **Wange** name itself, or used as a sub-contractor. They had a wide product range of its own designs which included DUPLO, town vehicles, and 1000-piece architecture kits such as Big Ben and the

Kremlin. Wange Toys launched the '**Dr Luck**' range but now market under its own name. Wange designed its own minifig to be legal.

Lingnan – Brand of the Lingnan Toys Co. Ltd, who also market **Zhi Ling**. Their website states 'It is all about imagination', which is probably the only sensible translation of any of the clone brands. Products are the typical range of town, boat, and pirate themes. Minifigs appear to have yellow heads and hands.

Little White Dragon – See **COGO**.

Loongon – See **COGO**.

LOZ – brand name made by ZhenFeng Science and Educational Toys. The company produces a huge number of sculpture kits based around **Diamond Blocks**, and are copied themselves by a few other Chinese companies. Many early LOZ sets are very blocky and reminiscent of late 1970s LEGO. The **Diamond Blocks** brand (marketed as **Microblox** in the UK by **BLOCK Tech** a few years ago) uses half size bricks to standard LEGO, sometimes with odd-looking half-scale minifigs. The sculptures in 9300 'Gift Series' of Diamond blocks has what has to be the strangest product line in China, ranging from (amongst others) a watermelon, a Minion, a toucan, Captain America, a piano, Bender, a Chinese vampire, Steve Jobs, and a toilet. Newer products include a Pirate-themed motorised fairground ride range with Znap-type blocks, although the minifigs seem closer to zombie pirates forcing the punters to stay on the rides.

M38 – Lug printing on newer **Sluban** bricks.

Megafun – See **Leyi**.

Microblox – See **LOZ**.

OK – Basic building sets available in the Far East.

Pengcheng – See **Plastic Toy**.

PeiZhi – Another brand marketed by **BLOCK Tech**. Their kits are either direct copies of LEGO or strange blocky creations reminiscent of those made with the leftover bits at your gran's in the 1970s. PeiZhi have also been marketed as '**Funny Toys**' to the mild amusement of some of their US customers. They are one of those brands that have 'contents may differ from artwork' on the boxes which doesn't exactly instil confidence.

Plastic Toy – made by the **Pengcheng** Toy Co. Ltd, who are subcontracted by others. Various kits are shown on their website with the box logos blurred out.

Pioneer Blocks – LEGO Basic clone sets of appalling quality, probably aimed at the US and Canadian market as the boxes have English and French writing.

POGO – A clone minifig manufacturer making 100s of figures. Quality is mediocre for most products. The company invests in its own moulds and produces unique parts. Copyright issues are eye-wateringly high, but many ranges are not found elsewhere.

Qiao Le Tong – A brand producing town-style sets which appear to have unique designs and some special vehicle pieces.

Qigao – This brand is only available in Asia and looks to be a close copy of Enlighten.

Qun Long – See **LELE**.

Riddle Bricks – See **Ligao**.

Riddle Toy Bricks – See **Donglin**.

Senno – This is the band name of the **Sen Nuo** company. These have a number of clone kit ranges, and appear to have reasonably competent box art.

Sheng Yuan – See **SY**.

SL Toys – Another minifig cloner, examples include Minecraft.

Sluban – Named after Luban the famed inventor, this company mainly copies old South Korean **Oxford Toys** kits (a copy of a copy?) complete with odd-looking 'legal' minifigs. They have a Europe-based export company based in the Netherlands with an easy-to-use mail-order website. There are many military kits which include a dark olive green colour, various town-based sets, and DUPLO clones. Some older sets appear rather blocky, but the website looks very professional and they even display building instructions. Train sets have black plastic tracks with half the curvature of the standard LEGO track (although they don't look directly compatible). Another subject is 'Redcliff', a mediaeval Chinese castle theme suited to their domestic market. Uses **M38** on newer bricks.

Star Diamond – Strangely-named brand made by the Lianhuan Toys & Crafts Company which started up in 1994. Has a relatively wide range of products and a very slick advertising campaign. They have their own kit designs, with extremely similar instructions to LEGO and identical minifigs. New sets in 2014-15 included transforming robot-vehicle-handguns. Excellent quality but high prices – and some colours fade after time. Star Diamond kits are not directly imported to the UK, but some are rebranded under **MY Toys**, and parts have been used by the UK-based **Click Brick**.

Subor – see **Xinh**.

SY – Expands to Sheng Yuan. Utter rip-offs of LEGO Friends, Super Heroes, and Star Wars minifigs, using the same artwork, names and designs. Made by **Xin Le Xin**. They have cheekily put a trademark next to the Friends writing. So-so quality and morals.

VIGE – Brand name of the **Wei Gao** company, producing DUPLO clone kits.

Wange Toys – See **Ligao**.

Weagle – Also known as **GX Toys** and manufactured by the **Zhi Ying** Toy Factory. They appear to have a wide list of products, but the website is currently inaccessible so may have been closed down or rebranded. Some designs have been imported into the UK by **BLOCK Tech**. The consensus amongst European reviewers is that they are shite.

Wei Gao – See **VIGE**.

Wei Te Feng – See **Wit Toys**.

Winner – Newish company specialising in its own designs of military and technic kits, amongst others. Iffy colour bricks but surprisingly good designs.

Wit Toys – These creator and DUPLO clones are made by **Wei Te Feng**. They occasionally have **Bela** on the box, but it is not obvious whether they are the same **BELA** copying modern minifigs or a completely different company. Set 8879 has the phrases 'Fully exert your inagination' and 'Amazing visual convulsion' on the front. Not sure the wording would make anyone who spoke English buy it. The DUPLO creations seen are motorised train sets with big figures having the standard Chinese zombie pallor and expressions. Really scary.

Wo Fu – Brand name connected with technic robots, similar to Bionicle.

Woma – See **Jubilux**.

Wonder Land – Branded series taking Friends clones into a VERY pink princess-style castle setting with wind-up musical boxes.

Xin Le Xin – Manufacturer of **SY** and **Gudi** Brands.

Xingbao – Company specialising in collector sets made by external designers and the semi-legal face of the **Loongon** and **Lepin** empire. Fairly good quality parts with only some quality issues, and exceptionally good MOC designs. Uses Lego-style minifigs in some sets.

Xingda – See **Intelligence Bricks**.

Xing Dou Cheng – See **Hui Mei**.

Xing Qi Le – Sometimes abbreviated to **XQL**. A cheap copy brand producing **Intelligence Toys** a few years ago. They may be responsible for, or be the same as, the much maligned **Zephyr Knight**, as the packaging and products look very similar. Stud names include **YIHE** and **HOLI**.

Xinh – Brand name of the **Subor** company, covering Bionicle and Hero Factory type technic robots, and poor-quality minifig clones such as Ghostbusters.

XQL – See **Xing Qi Le**.

XSZ – Brand that copies minifigs, may be the same as **KSZ**.

YIHE – Stud name on some **Xing Qi Le** bricks.

Yixing – The most likely manufacturer of BLOCK Tech Junior pieces, although no direct evidence.

Zephyr Knight – Awful cheap copy brand found a few years ago in the US. May be related to **Xing Qi Le** and **Intelligence Toys**. The bricks have **HELO** printed on the studs.

Zhi Hang – This company produces their own sets, typical of LEGO Basic and Creator kits.

Zhi Ling – See **Lingnan**.

Zhi Ying – See **Weagle**.

Zhiao – A minifig cloner, making various box sets of heavily copyrighted LEGO themes such as Ninja Turtles and Marvel and DC Superheroes. Also makes Manga sets, such as Kishimoto's Naruto series.

Zhongyue – See **Enlighten**.



Rest Of The World

For balance, there are various **non-Chinese** companies producing LEGO-type products, although almost all are probably made in China anyway.

Airfix QuickBuild – The brand of the plastic model company Airfix, covering LEGO-style bricks making realistic aircraft and vehicles. The sets are manufactured wholly in the UK, apparently to guarantee quality. That works. Parts are unique for each model with a few LEGO-type plates.

Best-Lock and **Cobi** – Best-Lock were originally a joint UK and German company (although registered in Hong Kong), and merged with the Polish-based Cobi a few years ago. Cobi produce a lot of military sets, McLaren, Jeep and Boeing-licensed models, and a girl-themed Italian pixie series that seems worryingly red-light district to UK eyes. Cobi were the source for some of the UK-based **Character Building Toys**, producing various themed kits including Doctor Who, UK Armed Forces and Scooby Doo – albeit with completely different minifigs vaguely similar to LEGO Jack Stone. **Chad Valley** also use Cobi-sourced bricks for their own range. Best-Lock mainly source from China, are the cheaper end of the range, and tend to sell in the US. Cobi is mainly made in Poland, but have some production in China. Best-Lock are licensed to produce US Army military kits, and recently acquired the rights to produce Stargate SG-1 and Terminator branded kits, selling themed minifig sets in a similar way to **Mega Bloks**. Wilkinson **Blox** range were mostly old Best-Lock or **Jubilux** kits. Asda have also used Best-Lock.

BLOCK Tech – This is an import company that supply many UK retailers and rebrand Chinese cloners.

Blox – Brand name of Wilco's range of clone LEGO. Have used **Best-Lock** and **Jubilux-Woma** in the past, sourced from **BLOCK Tech** and used the new tubbyfig, and now design their own kits with Woma parts.

Brik Tek – French clone brand, unknown supplier.

BTR – Produced some GI-Joe themed kits about 10 years ago. Minifigs were like small versions of Action Man.

By The Pound – Canadian brand made by Northern Technology. Sold as basic bricks in big buckets in the US.

Byggis – Swedish copy brand that has produced Super Mario, Flintstones and Jurassic Park themed minifigs and sets. Also may be related to the **Kloss** brand.

C3 Construction – US brand of loosely similar LEGO clone bricks who produce the Minimates figures.

Chad Valley – See **Best-Lock**.

Character Building – See **Best-Lock**.

Cheva – This is the brand name of the Czech manufacturer Chemoplast BEC. Products are vaguely similar to LEGO, but have different underbrick grab designs and straight-armed minifigs.

Cobi – See **Best-Lock**.

Construblock – A fairly new Spanish brand, originally appearing to use old **Oxford Toys** sets but branching out by having more unique minifigs similar to LEGO Jack Stone.

Cra-Z-Art – US brand of LaRose Industries LLC based in New Jersey, making the **LiteBrix** range of clear LEGO-type sets with... lights.

Funtastic – Brand company name for some Poundland products, using a variety of Chinese cloners either as sources for entire kits, or pieces for own designs.

Famoclick – Spanish re-branded **Cobi** products.

Ideal – Another South Korean company, formed by some ex-**Oxford Toys** employees.

Kloss – Swedish copy, may be related to **Byggis**.

Kre-O – See **Oxford Toys**.

LiteBrix – See **Cra-Z-Art**.

Mega Bloks – this Canadian-based company has been churning out their own bricks for years. They have licence agreements to make Halo, Call Of Duty, World of Warcraft, Need for Speed, Moshi Monsters, Hello Kitty, Barbie, and Smurf branded sets. Some parts are Improved over earlier products, but quality can still be decidedly random. Mega Bloks are made in China.

Ministeck – German company selling LEGO clones, most probably sourcing from **Jubilux-Woma** in China. A variety of themes, with the most interesting their range of train kits. They sell black railway track with curves double the radius of LEGO tracks. The minifigs appear to have yellow heads and hands.

M.Y Toys – UK import company that rebrands many different Chinese clone manufacturers.

Oxford Toys – This company is South Korean and has produced a lot of town and military stuff in the past. They trade under both the Oxford Toys and the **Kre-O** name. After being bought out by Hasbro they now make Transformer sets and have the rebooted Star Trek franchise. Their new Kre-O minifigs are distinctly different from LEGO minifigs. The standard kits are however very similar, and even have advertising with moving minifigs in the same way as LEGO.

Peacock – This is India's leading brand of hooky LEGO, making what appear to be throwbacks to the 1970s with older style pre-minifigs and the homemaker maxifigs. This should make them desirable, but unfortunately customer reviews seem to be united in their condemnation of atrocious quality and bad fit.

PEBE – The original Communist LEGO, made in East Germany from 1955 until about 1990. Slight different under-brick locking method, but compatible.

Rik et Rok – French LEGO type sets with different minifigs vaguely similar to Playmobil figures. Most sets are themed around town and rescue sets.

Super Blocks – See **Tyco**.

Topaz – French brand looking very similar to the Czech-based **Cheva** with straight-armed minifigs.

Tyco – The first LEGO cloner with **Super Bloc**.



THE REVIEWS

Scoring System

All comments are of the opinion of the reviewer only, and do not represent LEGO, Brickish, or any other person, organisation or company.

Communist LEGO is NOT a clinical study. It is an annual swearsy sum-up of some clone kit reviews chosen more for their ability to produce vaguely amusing write-ups than anything else. Proper reviews of clone sets can be found all over the internet, most of them far better than these ramblings from a half-arsed British AFOL. Yes, in here there are score tables and a lot of reviews over the years to compare with, but lack of finances, space, time, and waning enthusiasm results in a rather skewed cohort not entirely representative of the reality of the global building block economy. Motivation is mainly about the pleasure of finding a truly hideous, badly thought-out set and the subsequent incredulity of how some companies manage to stay in business in the cut and thrust Communist world of 100 LEGO cloners. I don't do clipboards.

The 2017 edition was limited to one long occasionally unbiased review of a train set from the evil Lepin. For this 2018 issue, it was decided to return to a wider spread of competent and incompetent sets, with more focus on minifigs. This mixed various new and second-hand small sets, some bigger kits chosen for their possible competition to LEGO, and a wealth of minifig genres. Very rubbish kits are becoming increasingly hard to find as production techniques and set design improve as each Chinese company tries to outdo the other. Rubbish kits are, however, still surprisingly common. Sometimes I struggle to understand why.

Older reviews of Communist LEGO are not included in this document. These can be combined from the 2014-17 versions for completeness, if you want to use up entire toner cartridges. The Immensely Strong Hand generation and the Angry, Angry Fireman are explained in these previous editions for those new to this series.

Kit and minifig reviews follow a similar one-page pattern but also depend heavily on what sort of day I had at work and/or alcohol intake. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder (me) and ugliness is not scored well, but mediocrity is most heavily punished. Evidence of bothering is appreciated; deliberate cheating or laziness makes me cross. These are *toys*, and if they do not make children happy, they should not exist at all. Likewise, the manufacturer.

Results are colour coded, and are split into the following categories, with the important Quality, Fit and Minifig scored twice:

Quality	- how well the bricks are made, including manufacturing defects;
Value	- the overall cost of the set compared to what is in the box;
Fit	- the 'grab' of the bricks against one another and to real LEGO;
Compatibility	- how well the parts would combine with real LEGO if ever given the chance (shudder);
Minifig	- the comparison of a minifig with a genuine LEGO minifig;
Design	- the overall skill and interest of the kit;
Instructions	- the size, colour, layout and helpfulness of the supplied instructions;
Total	- addition of all the above, with quality, fit and minifig being scored twice.

Minifig results have the following categories, with LEGO minifig Compatibility scored twice:

Hair / Headgear	- how well any head covering is made, including aesthetics;
Head	- print quality, colour, fit, size of head;
Torso Assembly	- print quality, arm joints, overall feel;
Hands	- moulding and ability to hold stuff;
Legs Assembly	- fit, movement, foot grab, print quality where applicable;
Quality	- overall feel and manufacturing competence;
Compatibility	- how much the parts can be exchanged directly with genuine LEGO parts;
Design	- effort and result of any free thinking;
Value	- cost vs. quality factor;
Total	- addition of all the above, with Compatibility scored twice.

The following is recommended as a helpful guide if thinking of purchasing clones. Basically, if it's green it's OK, but otherwise beware...

Explanation of colours, scoring and consequence:

Green: 90%-100%+: *no real problems at all. Be happy and build on. Have cup of tea, relax, and survey your masterpiece.*

Light green: 70%-89%: *some minor issues, but generally OK. Get mildly irritated. Have a cup of tea to steady nerves. Relax, it'll be fine from a distance.*

Yellow: 50%-69%: *some problems. Get annoyed. Have a cup of vodka to steady nerves. It'll probably be OK from a distance in poor light with some superglue and if no-one touches it. And it's in a display cabinet. Probably.*

Orange: 30%-49%: *some serious problems. Get angry. Tea, vodka and whale songs do not help to steady nerves. It looks bad, even in the dark. Take set back to the shop or attack it with a hammer.*

Red: 0-29%: *Show-stopping problems. Cry. Prescription medicine does not help to steady nerves. Non-prescription medicine does not help to steady nerves. Wonder how the miserly little set ever got out of the factory. Send multiple letters of complaint to shop, company, local MP, Chinese government, Ban Ki-Moon, and Daily Mail. Use home shredder for purposes unforeseen. Burn plastic shreds whilst cackling insanely. Jump up and down on ashes, apologise to neighbours and police officers, sweep up using dustpan and brush, and deposit into tiny urn. Have cup of tea, relax, and survey your masterpiece.*

The lowest overall scoring kit or minifig is the winner of the **Crappiest Available Clone Kit (CACK)** award.

The **Bare-Faced Cheek (BFC)** mark is given to the cloners who have blatantly copied LEGO's own products without even bothering to change designs or trying to sidestep copyright. Some of the more furious readers may wish to insert their own words to make up the acronym BFC.





ANKER Play – Bulldozer Pit (Winter 2017)

NEW!

2017 was a rubbish year for cheap block kits. As Sterling's value inexorably declined China seemed unwilling to send anything of worth to the UK and instead packed most shipping containers full of unappealing crap. I don't blame them. Hooky brick kits suffered. Most were tiny vehicle-based series without minifigs and of little interest, with no real value in reviewing - or just existing in the first place. Even new BLOCK TECH sets, those staples of questionable impulse buys, were few and far between. But then... Autumn saw alternatives arrive in Poundland.

The newcomer was ANKER Play. No logo was shown on the front except for two bricks with a 'COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER BRANDS' banner. Box design looked rakish with an angled lid on the left merging into nothingness on the right, along with a clear plastic window revealing a legal but mildly disconcerting square-headed minifig with non-zombie pallor. The contents were displayed on the box as computer generated, mediocrally drawn and strangely stretched to presumably make it less appealing. The ANKER Group seem to have designed the kit themselves as searching did not reveal any similar set, although it was strongly suspected that Woma produced the bricks and probably the minifig. As ANKER are based in the UK the odd title 'Bulldozer Pit' was a bit of mystery. 'Everything you need' was 1 bulldozer and 1 figure, so perhaps the builder guy was called 'Pit'. The kit was bought to find out how far competency or otherwise had migrated to the contents.

Inside the sturdy yet somewhat basic box was an inlay card holding the plastic holder for the minifig, and the instruction and parts bag. The instructions were neatly folded, very large, and well thought out. The parts bag held everything with only a few harsh warning notices about the evilness of plastic bags. Parts were revealed to be vaguely OK, with a relatively pleasing yellow hue, mostly sprue-mark free, and slightly weak grab. Assembly quickly revealed the large parts count of 57 was substantially filled by the use of 14 1x1 plates instead of a few larger ones. Everything went together OK except for the digger plate that was uselessly loose and fell off at any opportunity. This made play tedious in the extreme.



Unenticing CGI and real minifig. Why not just take a photo of the finished kit? Inside is well packaged... but there seems an awful lot of 1x1 plates.

Pit the minifig was a weird construct, having a square head with an open top, a slightly barrelled chest, and shaped curved legs. He was supplied fully assembled (full marks there) and luckily did not have the zombie skin shade shown on the box. Fitting Pit on the bulldozer did require a worrying amount of force, but removal surprisingly did not result in immediate destruction of the vehicle even though 1x1 plates were used extensively. This should have made the set quite enjoyable, but as the bulldozer blade thingy was loose any hope of trouble-free play would have to be bolstered by some superglue. Poor Pit. His torso print was woefully wonky and his head was indistinct. Still, Pit was the first seen of the blockheadfig, a new type being legal and marginally less awful than the BLOCK TECH tubbyfig.



Cheating with the parts count. Finished bulldozer with dodgy scoop and cheap feel, and Pit the square-headed minifig. Some flash issues...

ANKER Play had a reasonable go at making a £1 kit, and given the range of bricks had done an OK job. Putting up with using a craft knife, sandpaper and glue required for assembly was just about excusable, but increasing the parts count with 1x1 plates was dishonest. Bad show, guys.

Summary: Amateur, annoying, and a bit deceitful.

Scores	Bulldozer Pit
Quality*	70
Value	90
Fit*	70
Compatibility	80
Minifig*	50
Design	50
Instructions	80
Total	68



ANKER Play – Oil Rig Rescue (Winter 2017)

NEW!

Guildford has a Poundland. Yes, really. The success of the local university and spin-off high-tech companies has helped result in a vibrant catchment area that encompasses all tastes and wallets. My wallet does tend to tip more towards discount stores, so a curious visit was paid to see what Surrey could offer in the way of Chinese hooky LEGO. Happily the store was packed to the ceiling with cheapness, and another of ANKER Play's new £1 offerings was purchased. There were three themes – yellow for construction (see other reviews), blue for police, and red for fire.

OIL RIG RESCUE was a red kit, promising 63 pieces and that it BUILDS EVERYTHING YOU NEED! The front picture was another CGI construct, showing a miniaturised blockheadfig clutching the steering wheel of a jet boat. As the set was shouting loudly that potentially I could build that first class season ticket and automated wasp-destroying drone fleet I needed, it was opened the very next day at the crack of dawn.

Rapidly deflating expectations in the stark reality of a drizzle-strewn morning were accelerated by the two bags of parts and large set of instructions extracted from the box. As with many sets, the "BUILDS EVERYTHING YOU NEED!" printing was merely stating that the kit actually contained what was on the front and that amazingly no lying was involved. I suppose modern society has come to that. Still, the 63 pieces were mostly not 1x1 plates, so the size of the kit for the money was impressive. Construction began with the jet boat – a rather fragile affair that could've easily been improved by one or two 2x3 plates. Perhaps the back constantly falling off was part of the designer's brief. Next up was the oil rig. This was an interesting design, obviously quite small but making excellent use of a number of different parts. There wasn't any person to rescue from the rig; OIL RIG RESCUE presumably referred to rescuing the rig itself. The flame part was quite good, more detailed and larger than the comparable LEGO part. The jet boat steering wheel was the larger Ausini / Woma type, and most of the parts were guessed to be either Woma or a very similar manufacturer.



Slightly odd subject. Everything you need is inside, apparently. Inside is not world peace or immortality, but a lot of bits. And a blockhead.

The figure was the ANKER blockheadfig type, having a cheaper feel to the plastic than the rest of the set and sporting a creepy square hollow head. Our brave jet boat pilot did however have a helmet that worked quite well in disguising his squareness. Placing the guy in the jet boat was an exciting affair, with the leg fit a bit tight resulting in a couple of rebuilding exercises before he finally stood up properly. This was a bit annoying for playing on and off the jet boat, but to be fair the entire kit was fantastic value for £1, and although there were various niggles it worked very well. Buying two and combining them for two figures and a bigger oil rig and boat would be money spent. Money well spent is another phrase.



There's a lot in this kit for £1, and it's not terrible quality either. Flame piece and angle bracket not done in LEGO. Colour match a bit dodgy.

Overall this was a surprisingly good kit, even with non-optimal fit, mediocre colour match and weird minifig. Guildford obviously has a better class of hooky LEGO compared to other towns. I'm not sure it's on their tourism radar.

Summary: One of the best value £1 kits out there. Which is not saying much.

Scores	Oil Rig Rescue
Quality*	70
Value	100
Fit*	70
Compatibility	80
Minifig*	50
Design	90
Instructions	80
Total	73



ANKER Play (PeiZhi) – Police Car (Winter 2017)

NEW!

Kids Create was a brand released by ANKER Play under the Create & Build series in about 2015 and turned up in the 99p Store shops. This example was found unopened in a car boot sale. As a fairly seasoned clone LEGO spotter I guessed the contents were PeiZhi for three reasons: (a) the previous Kids Create were found to be PeiZhi; (b) the policeman minifig – especially the cap - looked very PeiZhi, and (c) the weird car had red front lights, a bizarre feature seen in earlier PeiZhi police vehicles. The CGI was presumably one of ANKER's first forays into hooky LEGO marketing and was competent, probably as PeiZhi looked like LEGO with a non-embarrassing minifig. POLICE CAR was bought from the stall along with a saucepan, two screwdrivers and a small wooden camel. I cleaned the saucepan, put the screwdrivers in a toolbox, and polished the camel. All of these tasks were much more important than making POLICE CAR. A few days later there was a choice between clothes shopping or PeiZhi. PeiZhi it was.

Contents and build were of no real surprise. A single bag of bits was found with some rather poorly drawn instructions that were usable enough. The PeiZhi parts lottery turned out to be one spare white wheel insert and a bit of broken black plastic. The figure had an incomplete smile that some would say was a realistic depiction of a policeman. The car went together with no problems, and although the plastic wasn't exactly great quality it did have adequate grab. The front lights were indeed bafflingly red. The result was a fairly basic vehicle into which the minifig could be sat without too much drama and be driven around without the horrid plastic wheels falling off. Compared to many £1 class kits this was quite an achievement. Also, the radio was made out of a good approximation of the soft plastic of real LEGO.



CGI proudly shows beams from red lights. Typical bag of PeiZhi bits and naïve instructions. "Car" and cop actually complete and vaguely playable.

Police guy had been lucky at the PeiZhi factory and had not only managed to get all of his limbs and hands, but fitted together tolerably well. Many of his compatriots over the years have turned up with varying amounts of limb loss or requiring glue. PeiZhi adopted a novel solution to left or right leg substitution – the legs are identical and have holes in both sides. This does of course make PeiZhi minifigs instantly recognisable. ANKER had put the huge 'compatible with other brands' sign over the guy's legs on the box; their later kits still used the hole-in-the-leg rendition for the blockheadfigs. Personally I use many of the PeiZhi minifigs from previous years as soldiers to fight against my enormous hooky zombie horde of crappy scary clone figures. Most of the earlier PeiZhi pieces have, however, met a less positive fate.



Police guy has most of smile missing. Spare wheel and plastic bit. Toy does drive around and for £1 not the worst kit available. But...

PeiZhi appear to have fallen out of favour with UK importers recently, perhaps due to their minifigs not being different enough from LEGO, perhaps due to their products being requisitioned to make landfill for islands in the South China Sea. Whatever the reason, ANKER Play switched to another supplier for their 2017 kits. At least their vehicles now don't get red front lights. This one might go to a charity shop and do some good for the world.

Summary: Polish the camel instead.

Scores	POLICE CAR
Quality*	70
Value	100
Fit*	80
Compatibility	90
Minifig*	70
Design	30
Instructions	60
Total	72



ANKER Play – Steam Roller (Winter 2017)

NEW!

The local Poundland shop stocked most of the new ANKER Play £1 kits in the Autumn. After several weeks of indifference I began to vaguely care and went to peruse their wares. The two yellow construction sets were the oddly named 'Bulldozer Pit' (qv), and 'Steam Roller'. The accompanying picture showed a small yellow tractor with a tiny roller on the front. It was suspected that the title Steam Roller was used as a generic term for such a vehicle, pulling on Great Britain's early 20th century industrial heritage where steam-powered road construction machinery helped in creating a comprehensive network of tarmac for the new-fangled omnibuses and horseless delivery lorries that contributed so much to the decimation of the rail network by the 1960s. Anyway, the box had a blockheadfig on display – this time sporting a very badly-printed hi-viz jacket and having some sort of major facial scarring. The CGI rendition for Steam Roller was particularly weird, with the poor construction guy stretched and having tubbyfig shirtsleeves, which he obviously didn't from the plastic window.

The 43 parts were found to include horrid yellowy-orange bits, different in hue to Bulldozer (and Pit). This was strange, as comparison of the two sets showed an identical manufacturer. Somehow Steam Roller seemed tackier with this colour. Building the little tractor revealed some less than adequate grab and a 1x1 plate with quite a bit of flash moulding still present. The roller design wasn't awe-inspiring either; perhaps using 5 or 6 round 2x2 plates instead of the supplied 3 would've distracted from the smallness of the set, exacerbated by comparison of the wheels shown in the front picture and reality. As if to rub it in, the wheels were a real sod to click into place, but at least they stayed on making for a drivable tractor that mostly held together. Bizarrely, the trans-red 1x1 cheeses supplied in this kit were of excellent colour and almost indistinguishable from genuine LEGO parts – almost every single other cloner produces horrid faded red examples (if at all).



Mediocre CGI and obviously badly printed blockheadfig. Contents are hideous yellow-orange. Finished toy, more like a garden roller. No steam.

The construction-themed blockheadfig had a good combination of colours and a worryingly scarred face with only one eye. As a concept this was quite adventurous and should have resulted in many interesting storylines. Unfortunately the execution of the idea was poor, with a very badly printed front torso and, even more disquietingly, a number of black marks on the rear that seemed to have been caused by in-factory ineptness more than a deliberate print. Or perhaps it was a result of the accident. Despite the minifig's bad luck in entering this world, he did fit well into the tractor seat and would happily drive his roller around flattening the carpet - although this would take about 4000 years as the roller was so very, very tiny.



Workman guy has bad printing, unintended marks on back, and an industrial accident. Poor 1x1 plate moulding, but clear red cheeses excellent.

Steam Roller was a bit like one of those obscure early 1980s ITV sitcoms that you watch again out of vague nostalgia and realise that while there are only four really good bits in the entire three series it is still better than any of the 308 channels on the digibox. Steam Roller had a number of mistakes and production howlers, but resulted in something that could at least be played with and wasn't a total disappointment.

Note: total.

Summary: Loosely worthy.

Scores	Steam Roller
Quality*	70
Value	90
Fit*	70
Compatibility	80
Minifig*	40
Design	60
Instructions	90
Total	68



BLOCK TECH (Woma?) – Beauty Salon (Spring 2018)

NEW!

The following pictures may upset those with a nervous disposition.

Initial analysis of hooky sets from 2017 and 2018 had revealed a plethora of boringly mediocre or even good quality stuff, some with excellent design. And then a trip to a toy shop one cold drizzly depressing January morning found some 2017 BLOCK TECH kits. Hoorah. One stood out – ‘Beauty Salon’, part of the “Girl’s Life” range. This claimed 197 pieces with two minifigs, and had been specially made by RMS for The Entertainer. Lucky them. It was half price, having initially been on sale for a wildly optimistic £11. The box had much detail about the contents and was trying to be friendly, although the marketing department seemed to have missed the extension of the centre girl’s smile which gave an, um... unsettling feel. Anyway, even at half price I paid far too much and took the singular Life of Girl home and opened it the very same afternoon, prepared to write a dull review of much improved BLOCK TECH quality and competency. Surely in 2017 they couldn’t have produced a dud?

Fish. Barrel. You may fire when ready.

The inner box was broken, dusty, and about three times the size it should have been. Extraction of the parts, helpfully bagged in three sizes, showed very cheap-looking pink bits and a vast array of 1x1 plates and bricks. I’d say the parts count could easily have been halved by using larger plates and bricks. Somehow the word ‘fraudulent’ kept popping into my head, but perhaps it was just a flashback from over-earnestly reading that dictionary whilst being shouted at by the doll-collecting man on the 7:32 from Woking. Anyhow, assembly required immensely strong hands, as most parts had epic Sluban-style grab. The trans round plates were particularly worthy of note, needing severe kinematic encouragement to fit, resulting in some splitting. And the windows were wrong. And the 2x4 black plate was loose. And the easel and board were nowhere to be seen. And...



A new 2017 kit. Surely there are no lies or subterfuge anymore? Gigantic box-bag ratio. Finished set is mostly what was promised. Nice flower.

The old BLOCK TECH tubbyfig had been re-designed into what is best described as a musclefig. To be fair, it *was* an improvement over the old with a much stronger arm-forearm join and a better torso shape. It was however a little unfortunate for the two therapists as they had the appearance of professional shot-putters. I suppose the profile sort of worked. What didn’t work was quality control. I have always wondered if my surprisingly good luck in finding mistakes in hooky sets is in fact planted by rival companies wanting to gain a commercial advantage. I suspect it is actually indicative of piss-poor mediocrity that stalks our post-millennial capitalist economies leading to an inexorable slide to destruction. Whatever the reality, one of our hapless beauticians had been ironically misprinted on the face to a massively high standard, immediately requiring me to visit the well-worn path to the nice institute with the free white coats and be reminded of the benefits of relaxing pastimes and... I think it’s happening again... nurse...



New musclefig on box is, in reality, astoundingly terrifying. Don’t have nightmares! Too late. At least this musclefig is less butt-clenchingly scary.

I can’t believe this isn’t a joke. Delightfully appalling to the point of suspicion.

Summary: Utter rubbish.

Scores	Beauty Salon
Quality*	40
Value	20
Fit*	40
Compatibility	70
Minifig*	10
Design	30
Instructions	90
Total	39

Eager to bulk out the 2018 Communist LEGO with another trite pointless review I hunted out a gem I'd stashed away for a rainy day. This particular set had been bought at a car boot sale for a very low price a couple of years ago, and had languished at the back of a cupboard ignored and un-reviewed for the very good reason that it was clearly rubbish. Amusingly, the set was on BLOCK TECH's US website to show off their design skill and product line. The real maker was the previously reviewed IQ Blook. This was not indicative of competency, quality or desirability.

Dragster GT was a larger BLOCK Tech kit with a pull-back motor and half a minifig. It came in the standard BLOCK Tech thin cardboard outside and thick badly-made inside box. The instructions were OK with a parts count included. Stickers had been provided and had not been applied when the kit was bought. The pieces looked and felt about average for a Chinese clone, with the characteristic IQ Blook underneath design (meaning very poor compatibility with any other clone or real bricks). Below average was the mysterious brown stain on the steering wheel bit (ewwww), and a bent technic blue axle pin. That's OK. Just sent us any old crap. We won't mind. We're British.

Assembly was fairly straightforward, with grab acceptable. Luckily the bent blue technic axle pin was a spare, so at least the car could be finished despite unfeeling customer quality checking. The one sticking point were the technic axles. These were a very tight fit indeed on the wheels, and to pull them off and on required some form of metal implement and some form of swearing. A considerable amount of subtle adjustment and hammering eventually got the axle-wheel combination to fit properly and allow the dragster to run freely. Whoever had designed the kit had made it so that by adding a little weight to the rear wing it would make the car balance to pull wheelies and look impressive if the motor had been powerful enough.

It wasn't.



Speed, technic, minifig – what could go wrong? Here's what you get (and stickers). Let's see if colours vary... yes they do. Contents seem present.

The naked minifig supplied did not have any legs and had a builder's hat as a helmet. The poor chap appeared to have two pockets, a radio, some buttons and a collar tattooed on his bare chest. He was probably meant to have a happy expression, but the eyebrows gave him a subtle forlorn look – not surprising since he didn't have any legs, clothes or a decent dragster. His left arm was excessively loose, but this was trounced by his hand which had no friction at all and had to be superglued in place. I wanted to give him a hug to make it better, but given the brown stain on the steering wheel this was best done in a bio-hazard cupboard with rubber gloves which all seemed a bit impersonal. So he got rammed on to his dragster for a race.



Finished dragster does actually go. Some mysterious brown stains. Yum. IQ Blook undersides. Rubbish quality control. Figure needed superglue.

Attempts were made to successfully play with Dragster GT to try to bring some reason for the set's miserable existence. This basically failed. It did actually work, but the motor was very weak making play about as much fun as chickenpox. I suspect the Earth Mother is now even more angry that the limited oil she has given to humanity has been frittered away on such pointless endeavours. We are heading towards extinction. There may be global eruptions soon.

Summary: Utter rubbish.

Scores	Dragster GT
Quality*	60
Value	90
Fit*	70
Compatibility	50
Minifig*	50
Design	80
Instructions	90
Total	67



BLOCK TECH (Woma) – Jet Ski (Summer 2018)

NEW!

One afternoon an aimless visit to The Works uncovered a partially hidden stash of BLOCK TECH sets. They were small. Really small. Investigation showed distribution by Dolgencorp LLC from the US, and it was presumed that The Works had bought a job lot of BLOCK TECH from across The Pond as opposed to the usual Manchester branch of RMS. There was a choice of 3 kits, £1 each. The miniscule size compared to UK equivalents probably reflected a US target cost of \$1. Jet Ski was chosen, not because it was the best, but because it was the one that seemed to most closely highlight BLOCK TECH's marketing approach in the US.

Front and back showed a tubbyfig happily riding the jet ski. The box had much written on its tiny, tiny outside, but the tiniest, in letters on the front less than 1mm in height, were the statements 'color and contents may vary from those illustrated', and 'figure not included'. I wasn't sure if the word 'illustrated' was the result of a vaguely clever play on words getting past rigorous quality control, or just plain ineptness. Leaving BLOCK TECH's potentially iffy proof-reading ability aside, I'd suspect that many an impulse buyer missed the tiny information about the minifig not being included, leading to less than tiny disappointment when the lack of figure became apparent. I doubt the experience enticed many victims back to buy more, but I suppose the US is a big enough place to absorb single sales. Or maybe it's standard practice and the locals are just used to it. Of course, one could fan the myriad of conspiracy theorists by claiming it's a subtle social experiment to condition the future US generation to expect disappointment and make them easier to control. Or just to make the current generation very, very angry. And maybe we could up the ante by suggesting the controlling force is from another country entirely and the US authorities are completely unaware of it. But let's face it, it's probably just another hard-nosed short-term business decision getting a quick 50c profit from making children miserable. Again.



Nice set - ooh, there's some small print. Let's zoom in on words of wisdom or otherwise. "Illustrated" makes so much sense. Jet Ski OK, I suppose.

Well, I dunno, it was a tiny jet ski and it was an OK design, albeit rather tiny. The quality of the parts was fairly dire, the colours vaguely matched those on the box, there was appalling parts count cheating with lots of rubbish 1x1 plates, it needed a hammer to fit it together, and the gaps between the plates made The Grand Canyon look like a hairline crack. I guessed the parts were from Woma, as they seem to have been BLOCK TECH's preferred supplier recently, but it's possible another Chenghai factory could've been responsible. At least the white curvy bit was well made.

According to the box it was 'another great product by Grafix'. Looking through the various dictionaries in my possession and all those online I could find no definition of 'great' that matched the product at all. Perhaps the word 'great' has been diluted so much in the US that it is sometimes used the same way that us English use the word 'pants'. We'll go with that hypothesis until evidence shows otherwise.

The box proved more interesting, and, quite frankly, better made and more play-worthy, than the Jet Ski. It had RMS International's US address and the website. RMS itself is a bulk supplier: the website did not show a full product line and instead invited customers to contact and discuss trade. The website also revealed that RMS have their own design teams. Presumably they cover the several brands that RMS market, and BLOCK TECH is one of these. Given the patchy and sometimes bizarre results, it came as quite a surprise that the BLOCK TECH design team was based in the US which does have numerous examples of excellence. Indeed, the box had a little round logo of the Stars and Stripes with 'designed in the USA', and I think it was intended to be a positive selling point.

The website showed a couple of sets to highlight BLOCK TECH's success in design. One was the Dragster GT; this is reviewed above and is not exactly BLOCK TECH's finest hour, nor would it appear that it was actually designed by them, being originally marketed by IQ Blook. Maybe it was designed by BLOCK TECH¹. Maybe just the box was designed by BLOCK TECH. Maybe it is 'great' too. A curious choice.

I suppose Jet Ski itself is OK, but I really can't see how anyone involved can feel proud.

Summary: Utter rubbish.

Scores	Jet Ski
Quality*	Great
Value	Great
Fit*	Great
Compatibility	Great
Minifig*	N/A
Design	Great
Instructions	Great
Total	Great

¹ To be fair, I did score it 80% on design.



BLOCK TECH (Woma) – Medical Response (Summer 2018)

NEW!

Ever the optimist, in summer 2018 I gave BLOCK TECH another chance. The Works had commissioned a whole bunch of kits, all priced at £3. These had various themes. OK, many of the sets were aesthetically challenged, but the boxes had quite well-designed covers. One of the most promising was 'Medical Response' under the Emergency Rescue banner. This showed two happy musclegifs, with a helicopter and a stretcher. Helicopters always tend to be good value as they are usually big for the number of bricks, and this one didn't seem to have blatant parts cheating with 1x1 plates. Since Medical Response was a relatively new kit, I assumed that there was a good chance that competency had crept into the BLOCK TECH design studio, and that the Chenghai factories were producing good clean bricks. Yeah. I assume a lot.

The package was at least quite user friendly, with the standard huge BLOCK TECH box-to-parts ratio disguised by a fold to grip the musclegif display area. The parts bag was quite small, but all seemed OK... until extracted. The familiar overwhelming collapse of hope enveloped my soul as a pile of dirty bricks and bits appeared. This time not only were there stained bricks (about 6 of them), but there were free black 'things' and a really long white hair from an undetermined species. Yum. A well-rehearsed move to the bio-hazard lab was deferred to imbibing alcohol instead, although this was more to bolster a will to live continue more than courage to touch the contaminated BLOCKS.

Pollution aside, quality was a bit patchy. Yellow was a hideous orange hue, white (when it wasn't mucky) was white-ish, but black was OK. Ish. The red was mixed – most parts were a slightly washed-out tone, with the 2x2 round bricks amazing good. The canopy was mostly not scratched. Control levels were rubbish with no grab at all, and the rotor hub was the opposite and hardly went round. Then we come to the design of the helicopter itself. It has been shaped to have the rotors behind the canopy holder plate, and as such the entire rear end was only held on by a bottom 1x2 plate. With normal Lego this would have been brave. With BLOCK TECH bricks this was just plain stupid as the grab wasn't good enough and the rear fell off with any type of play. All this could have been easily solved by moving the top 2x2 plate one lug forward. It would have made the chopper less ugly, too. But, no...



Box cover well designed, musclegifs not awful. There's a lot of space free inside the box. Finished chopper and stretcher look OK, but are not. Sigh.

Both musclegifs had reasonably good printing, but it soon became apparent that there were two show-stopping problems with them – they didn't fit in the helicopter, and they couldn't hold the stretcher handles. Some experimentation showed that taking the legs assembly off did let the figure fit inside the cockpit; unfortunately, the torso design meant there was no grab whatsoever so any flying produced a lot of rattling as the hapless legless pilot bounced around the inside. It was thought conceivable to force the stretcher handles into the musclegif hands, but this proved impossible without several metal implements working in parallel. After trying for a bit, I just gave up and went down the pub.



Musclegifs look OK, but are not. Grubby pieces galore. Does anyone wash their hands in the factory? Musclegifs do not fit in helicopter. Rubbish.

BLOCK TECH is becoming more and more responsible for my drinking habit. Please, please produce a kit that can be played with. Please?

Summary: Utter rubbish.

Scores	Medical Response
Quality*	40
Value	70
Fit*	70
Compatibility	70
Minifig*	40
Design	20
Instructions	80
Total	54



BLOCK TECH (Woma) – Rescue Engine (Winter 2017)

NEW!

One of the staple kits for any brick-based assembly range is the fire engine. For decades children have been happily saving hapless citizens with their brave red LEGO fire engines and firemen. One of the first Communist LEGO kits reviewed was the £1 Best Lock / Wilko fire engine set with the angry, angry fireman. There have been quite a few other £1 fire engine sets available since, with BLOCK TECH producing several over the past few years. However it continues to be impossible to match the angry angriness of the original Best Lock fireman minifig. This is a good thing.

Rescue Engine was found in early 2017. It seemed vaguely similar to one of BLOCK TECH's blind bag offerings back in 2015, but included one of their named tubbyfigs. Roy the fireman was depicted as a CGI character on the side, but hard-earned experience suggested the photo on the front was more indicative of his appearance. The fire engine itself was minimalist in the extreme, and was an interesting comparison with Wilko's Blox range example which was available for the same price, also with a tubbyfig. It must be assumed that BLOCK TECH source their parts from Woma as Blox do.

The familiar inside box had a bag of parts that were mostly the same shape as those on the photo but not the same colours. OK, there were red, white and black bits, but not all of them were as on the box front. In this case the real model was better coloured, which was good. The hinge brick was missing its top and instead had another base with a huge lump of moulding sprue still attached. This was bad for my set, and most likely for the next one which probably got two top plates, guaranteeing yet another disappointed child that BLOCK TECH seem uncannily adept at creating. This meant the ladder couldn't be fitted to the engine as intended, although the design was fairly poor so hammering it on top of the roof was acceptable and probably would have happened anyway.

Roy also got a spare forearm/hand; this was helpful as being a tubbyfig they tended to fall off with alarming rapidity.



The successor to the Angry Angry fireman kit. Roy looks happy enough. Somehow the fire engine has got worse, even without the wrong part.

Roy himself was supplied unmade and so was bravely assembled with strong hands. His printing wasn't too bad and the tubbyfig shape worked quite well for the fireman colours. Quality felt even cheaper than the bricks. The tiny fire engine was woefully undersized for any minifig, and even without the ladder it was obvious that to drive the vehicle required some dismantling. Removing the roof and ramming Roy onto the worryingly yielding chassis did produce an acceptable concoction, although the tubbyfig could not be made to sit fully upright. The fire engine looked more than a bit rubbish, and Blox appeared to have completely trounced the BLOCK TECH design department in working out what could be produced for £1.



Proud tubbyfig Roy and tiny, tiny fire engine. It's more like a skateboard than a vehicle. Here is a wrong part with epic sprue just to rub it in.

BLOCK TECH had predictably put disappointment in a box again. Sorry Roy, given the choice between you and the Blox fire engine, I'd choose nothing every time.

Summary: Utter rubbish.

Scores	Rescue Engine
Quality*	40
Value	50
Fit*	70
Compatibility	80
Minifig*	40
Design	10
Instructions	90
Total	53



BLOCK TECH (Woma) – Response Force (Spring 2018)

NEW!

A visit to one of The Entertainer toy shops had shown they'd commissioned a number of sets from BLOCK TECH in 2017. The very pink and very awful 'Beauty Salon' was bought because it was obviously going to result in a damning write-up. In contrast, 'Response Force' was picked because there was a chance that a fair and clinical review would balance the damning prose necessary for many other BLOCK TECH kits. To be honest, I didn't pay much attention to the box when I bought it, except that it was of a fairly mundane Police theme and that it was reduced to £3.50. This apparently boring but hopefully competent set wasn't opened until a particularly bone-sappingly cold Sunday when there was little else to do. With hindsight, little else had much to recommend it that day. Fish. Barrel. Now witness the firepower of this fully armed and operational battlestation.

The inner box was not broken on *three* sides and only had a *stupidly* large box-to-bag ratio. Once the bits had been poured on to the table with that characteristic cheap clink of rubbish clone bricks, the task of assembling the kit began. It started badly. The 'command centre' was even smaller than the picture on the box and used lots of 1x1 plates to cheat the part count. It was up to the giddy levels of old Best Lock disappointment, with the added bonus of a loose fit for the radar dish. The motorbike, amazingly, was unexpectedly good, and although it had hard wheels it worked well and even stood up on its own. OK, the antenna light was a bit weird, but the figure gripped the handlebars.

Finally there was the car. Ooh, what a gift. I've made some pretty dire stuff in the past, but this surpassed just about everything in its terribleness. The design was monumentally ugly, it had poor quality plastic, it was even more hideous than shown on the box, and for some unfathomable reason the front lights were red and the rear lights yellow in true incompetent PeiZhi style. I had to double check the instructions on this one, but apparently the result was what I was supposed to make. Now, one can speculate on how this abomination made it past evaluation and got into production, but I'm tending to discount passive ineptness in this case and reckon the most plausible explanation was a bet to see what was the worst design the creative 'team' could get past that new junior review guy. I just refuse to believe that this could have happened by accident in 2017. I suppose it could be a subtle incentive to get the recipient's creative juices working to make a better design, but my impression is that the whole set is the equivalent of those five big kids at school who surrounded you in the playground and chanted banal insults over and over again until Mr Jones came along and you ran away and hid behind the Portakabin to finish your Curly Wurly to make you feel better. Except this kit didn't have a Curly Wurly.



Looks a bit crap on the box. Reality is even more crap – that takes effort. Yet again parts count is 'modified'. Do I think of The Village People?

The musclegs had some fairly poor printing but thankfully no errors of poo-extracting proportions like Beauty Salon. The figures did fit into their vehicles without too much drama, but were cursed with the reality of being made by BLOCK TECH and thus rubbish. Each had an almost immovable left leg and slightly too loose right leg. Facial expressions were not inspiring, and although different not even up to BLOCK TECH's mediocre standard.



Car is utterly, utterly ugly. Motorbike is quite good. Hinge plate is self-assembly. 2x8 is mysteriously scratched. Two designs of 1x1 pate included.

This set is just plain awful. Its score is even worse than Beauty Salon, and I got *that* on purpose. I cannot begin to imagine how Response Force actually made it into production.

Summary: Utter, utter rubbish.

Scores	Response Force
Quality*	40
Value	30
Fit*	30
Compatibility	70
Minifig*	30
Design	0
Instructions	90
Total	35



BLOCK TECH (Woma?) – Snowman (Spring 2018)



One area where BLOCK TECH have appeared remarkably consistent is making rubbish Christmas sets. The advent calendar set from 2015² still ranks as one of the most striking, its direness having been covered not only by Communist LEGO but in YouTube land too. A chance visit to a discount store in January found another Christmas set, seemingly new out in 2017. This was a type of that perennial favourite Snowman with Pole, covered before. However, this version was larger and seemed a more interesting design. The Pole also didn't look like a graveyard cross, which helped in desirability. Snowman and Sign Post was rashly acquired and carried home in anticipation of terribleness.

The box had a slightly different design to most BLOCK TECH stuff. It had a scientifically incorrect but aesthetically pleasing 8-sided snowflake with MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR around it, and claimed the set was made by MC in Birmingham, not PMS in Manchester like most BLOCK TECH kits. Opening it showed a neatly folded set of instructions and a bag with the bits. These appeared to be Woma (or very similar) and included a bright yellow-orange sprue with not only the broom shown in the picture, but a spade, rake and pickaxe for making those nightmare snowman dioramas perfect for planting on your annoying little cousin after they'd inadvertently watched half of that scary early 1980s eastern European Christmas animation that's banned in every country except Finland. Compared to the BLOCK TECH Snowman of two years ago, this set was a major improvement.



This year's attempt by BLOCK TECH to spoil Christmas. Off to a bad start as everything seems OK. Parts are not brilliant quality but good enough.

Assembly was straightforward, with the mediocre quality parts fitting together with some force but well enough to not cause intense anger. The instructions were hell-bent on making Snowman the reverse image of that shown on the box, further feeding worries that The Mirror People were laughing at me behind my back every night and pushing needles into my skull to drink my soul until I complied. Actually, Snowman turned out to be quite a good rendition, and when completed it not only stood up but proved to be not rubbish and not frightening. The Sign Post however did not come with the promised 'Santa Stop Here' print or sticker and was just plain brown. It didn't really fit very well on the side brick either and got a stress mark when encouraged to do so. Conversely, Snowman's arms, copied off the LEGO robot arms, fitted nice and tightly on the side handle plates and were impressively posable with the broom or the other garden implements of terror. It was a bit annoying that the nose cone was trans-orange and not plain orange, but maybe glass carrots are all the rage in the Birmingham brick kit designer jet set. It's not an area I'm familiar with.



Finished set is fantastic value for £1, although no sticker (was it missing?). Mirror image to confuse adults. And a nice message too – aah!

For once, BLOCK TECH seem to have produced a genuinely competent Christmas kit. OK, it wasn't great quality, nor was it the best design ever, but for the price paid it was well worth the money. I should be disappointed that the set didn't allow me to rant on about bad hooky LEGO, but I'm not, because BLOCK TECH finally had made Christmas a vaguely nice time.

Summary: Not rubbish.

Scores	Snowman and Sign Post
Quality*	70
Value	100
Fit*	70
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	N/A
Design	80
Instructions	100
Total	80

² It was still for sale in The Entertainer in January 2018!

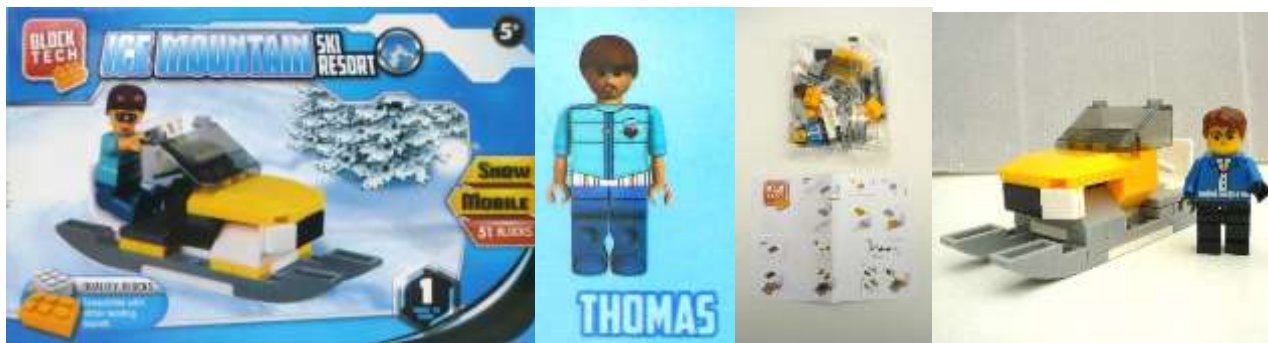


BLOCK TECH (Woma?) – Snow Mobile (Spring 2018)



I don't as a rule hunt out small BLOCK TECH kits any more. Many a visit to Poundland or a seaside souvenir shop has resulted in a banal and mediocre purchase to bulk out the Communist LEGO editions and joke about rubbishness. This set was bought at a car boot sale as a way of getting other stuff I really wanted cheaper as part of a job lot. 'Ice Mountain Ski Resort Snow Mobile' was thus a by-product and as such a bit superfluous. Still, as BLOCK TECH sets go, this didn't look too bad from the photos on the box. Granted there was a hideous tubbyfig, but the snow mobile itself seemed OK. It was guessed that this was one of BLOCK TECH's £2 class of kit.

The set was one of the series with named characters. The plucky snow chap was called Thomas, although his appearance in the photo and the CGI on the side varied a bit. Also, the phrase "Contents May Vary!" was printed on the back of the box – BLOCK TECH seems to have the impression that years of lying about what's inside is *funny*, which probably gives some insight into both the company's vision and values and my tendency to increasingly belittle its products at every given opportunity.



Looking forward to 51 blocks and tubby Thomas. Un-awe-inspiring bag with a hooky minifig. Finished snowmobile and hooky Thomas not awful.

Once the contents had been discovered hiding in the corner of the vastly oversized box, it became apparent that BLOCK TECH had actually supplied a hooky minifig of reasonably decent quality bearing a small resemblance to Thomas. The black gloves and snow goggles were much more suited to Alpine conditions than shirt sleeves and a hipster beard. The minifig was fully assembled except for the hair, which was a pleasant surprise. The parts were all found to be of OK quality and colour, tempered somewhat by the strange brown substance on the underside of the white plate. Yet again completely shite quality control seemed rife in at least one Chinese factory. Great. Anyway, donning the worryingly familiar bio-hazard gloves made assembly a tad more difficult, but snow mobile was finished without too many issues or serious infections.

The controls were quite cleverly done with two hinges, although fitting hooky Thomas to them and the snow mobile seat took effort and some re-assembly to get right. I gave up trying to sit Thomas down and let him stand up instead. It seemed easier. The trans-black windscreen and yellow parts were actually quite good, breaking a long tradition of BLOCK TECH rubbishness. The real gems were the 1x1 SNOT plates. There were 8 supplied and were coloured light bluish grey. LEGO currently do not make this piece, so as a bit of cheating for those MOCs this set was ideal. Snow mobile did then turn out to not be a complete waste of time... but I certainly wouldn't give it to a charity shop without a wash. Eww.



Here is Thomas' replacement. Here is muck on a 'new' plate. These 1x1 snot plates are VERY useful. There are 8 in snow mobile – not for long...

BLOCK TECH's continuing random set inventories are starting to get on my nerves. I suppose in this case the contents were better than the photos, but a mucky part in a new bag is way off decent nowadays. This set scores over 90% as it didn't actually have many other detracting issues. This doesn't reflect slowly building antipathy. I really can't be bothered to plead any more about doing a decent job. Sigh. At least I can get the SNOT plates, once they've been decontaminated.

Summary: Grubby.

Scores	Snowmobile
Quality*	80
Value	100
Fit*	90
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	80
Design	80
Instructions	90
Total	92



Blox (Woma) – Black Cab (Winter 2017)



Wilko's Blox range has continued to expand as the designers get to grips with producing some vaguely desirable sets. Some of them are just rebranded Woma kits, but others appear to be specially made for the UK market. One such kit is Black Cab, a rendition of the iconic London Taxi. This particular version probably represents the London Taxi Company's TX series. LTC is owned by the Chinese company Geely Automobile, so a kit made by the Chinese seems, well, apt. There has not been an official LEGO London Taxi, and although many MOCs exist the Blox design appeared unique. It used the characteristic Woma curved windscreens that are not a standard LEGO piece, which helped the shape of the rear. The kit did not come with any tubbyfigs, which was an odd choice. It also used large diameter thin wheels, giving it a slightly squashed and dumpy look.

Inside the box were three parts bags and a tolerably laid out instruction sheet. Blox use lines and coloured studs to show where to assemble the parts. This didn't work perfectly with the black parts, but wasn't anywhere near as bad as some of the other clone manufacturers. The build was fairly interesting as much as could be expected of black bits, with the diversion of converting the cab from left hand drive to the British right hand drive. I'm not entire sure how many London Taxis have ever been made with the steering wheel on the left, but less than 1% would be a fair bet. The design itself had one rear seat and two front seats. Minifigs would be acceptable although would look a bit small; the black cab was slightly oversized when compared to modern LEGO vehicles. Another oddity in the design was the white rear number plate – British ones are white on the front, yellow on the back. This suggests the Blox design team were actually Chinese, as is would be very unlikely anyone in the UK would make this mistake, coupled with the steering wheel on the wrong side.



Blox exclusive design, but no minifig, oddly. Lots of black parts, actually black. Finished taxi is not too bad, but badly spoiled by wobbly wheels.

The range of Woma parts include several pieces different from LEGO. The most useful was a 1x1 round SNOT plate, 50% of a plate thickness. This was used to hold front and rear bodywork in place. The studs had "C 3" on them. The flat 1x1 round tile was slightly domed; this was used as an indicator and would have been excellent if it wasn't a washed-out orange hue. The 1x2 cheese parts were 4 plates high as opposed to the 2 plate high LEGO version. Finally, the technic pins had a longer middle section. These were used to hold the wheels on. Unfortunately, the wheels were a very loose fit on the pins (the wheels were too thin) so that they wobbled excessively. The entire car design was great up to this point; the wobbly wheels spoil the otherwise excellent kit.



SNOT round plates 50% plate thickness. Flat round tile slightly curved. Technic pin different design to LEGO. 2x1 cheese is 4 plates high.

This type of kit is a new range for Blox. What is presented is a unique design, not available in LEGO, produced with half-decent bricks, at a very cheap price. Purists will of course not want non-LEGO pieces to pollute their pristine collections, but it would be simple to build a fully LEGO-bricked version which ironically would copy someone else's design for a non-LEGO set.

If only the wheels weren't wobbly, this would be OK.

Summary: Not quite a good kit.

Scores	Black Cab
Quality*	90
Value	100
Fit*	60
Compatibility	90
Minifig*	N/A
Design	90
Instructions	90
Total	84



Blox (Woma) – Fire Engine (Winter 2017)

NEW!

Blox is the brand name of Wilko's clone LEGO. Back in 2015 it got a makeover and switched exclusively to Woma to source parts and kits. They started by copying some of the earlier sets they had stocked (made by, for example, PeiZhi and Ausini) and also branched out by creating their own. The Wilko design department produced some professional boxes, and the instructions were very good. This would all have been great, if it wasn't for the very legal but very ugly tubbyfigs.

The 2017 Fire Engine was the spiritual successor to the earlier Best Lock-sourced fire engine with the angry, angry fireman. Even due to inflation and better quality (it would be almost impossible to be worse) the new set was still on sale for £1. New Fire Engine was very small. It was roughly the same idea as the old fire engine, but looked less rubbish.

The well-presented box had a single bag of parts and a bag of unmade tubbyfig. The fire engine itself was fairly simple to assemble with the slightly above average quality Woma parts, although in the long term experience has shown that Woma fades in the sun. Unfortunately the hinge part was mis-formed with an off-centre hinge and was very, very stiff. The ladder was not a tight fit on the hinge, so any attempt to move it resulted in instant detached ladder. This was quite annoying.



Wilko have found alliteration. Inside are parts and dismembered tubbyfig. Woma pieces are OK quality out of the sun. Disturbing body parts.

The tubbyfig was assembled using only strong hands, immenseliness not being required. The figure was of the same quality as the earlier Blox tubbyfigs, with the odd half arms still seeming to be falling off before even holding anything. The face print had a decent enough expression and a sort of chinstrap that didn't reach up to where the helmet was. OK, it was a tubbyfig and poor, but it scored a massive 40%, twice as much as earlier versions. The tubbyfig is now only responsible for about half the entire points lost by this set.



Finished engine is tiny. Figure is not too scary. Ladder looks stupid with driver – why not add a 2x2 brick or two? Arse end with dodgy hinge.

Fire Engine 2017 feels as the swansong of the £1 kit with a figure, as increases in production and transportation costs make them inevitably unviable. The Blox version should then be seen as the last gasp of that brief age of cheap hookiness that allowed a small playable kit for the cost of an entry to a crappy Morning TV phone-in quiz. Although flawed with mediocre parts and a tubbyfig, it is about as good as it could reasonably be, and way better than the BLOCK TECH versions.

Fix that tubbyfig.

Summary: Almost too small, but just about works.

Scores	Fire Engine
Quality*	80
Value	100
Fit*	80
Compatibility	90
Minifig*	40
Design	70
Instructions	90
Total	75



CaDA – Parade Car (Spring 2018)

Genuine
LEGO rival!

NEW!

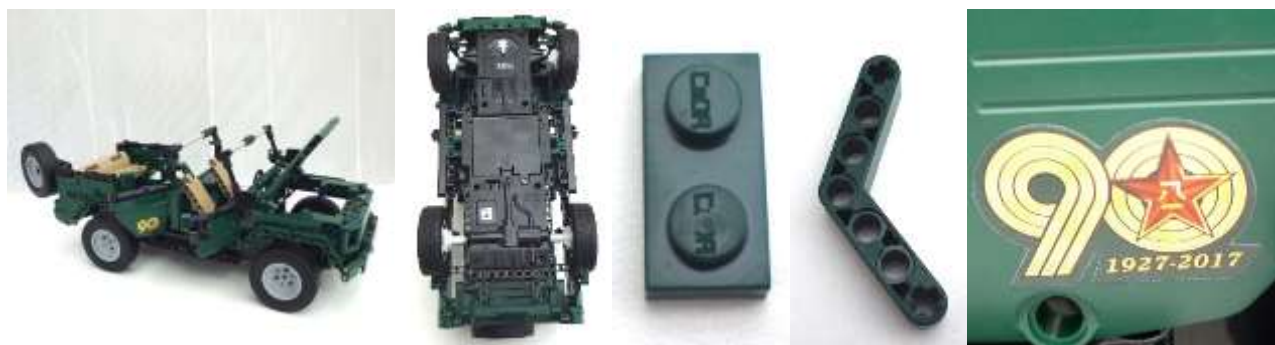
Technic is an area where the cloners have a lot of interest. Many copy the bricks, plates, axles and wheels, with a lot of companies just ripping off genuine LEGO sets. King of these is, of course, the evil Lepin, which has not only done almost all of the newer LEGO kits but has also marketed some very impressive but audaciously stolen MOCs. Most of the cloners (including evil Lepin) have quality issues making sets bloody annoying as well as dubiously legal. However, there are some newer companies that appear to be creating their own in-house designs. One of these is Double Eagle, a toy car manufacturer that recently started marketing the CaDA brand. Most of the larger sets shown on their website are effectively technic beam constructs on a radio control car chassis. One that was definitely original, for sale in various online shops (although oddly not on the official website), was 'Parade Car', a 2017 kit of a Chinese BJ80 4x4. OK, the real BJ80 is a copy of the Mercedes G-wagon, but CaDA's version was green and had a '90 1927-2017' sticker, representing a military version that headed huge Chinese army parades in 2017. Even President Xi Jinping rode in one. I doubt anyone outside China would come up with that. C51015 was ordered for about £45 with box and arrived slightly dented but with contents intact.

The box had a useful carry handle and held a plastic tray with parts and instructions. All the smaller parts were professionally sealed in bags with the CaDA logo. These were poured into tubs for ease of construction, and included lots of black 1x2 and blue 1x3 friction pins. The quality of all parts was remarkably good. The CaDA logo was on as many as possible, and although moulding marks were visible the feel and fit was basically indistinguishable from real LEGO – certainly far better than evil Lepin technic. The instructions were very professionally laid out, too. Not only were they easy to read and had sensible stages, the parts were used up logically and had measurements on each page so the correct length of beam and axle could be picked. Everything clicked together with no problems whatsoever and in about 2 hours one big green BJ80 was finished. And very nice it looked too.



Technic-radio control toy hybrid. Well packaged, well made, well designed, good price. Not boring to make - a big chunky patriotic drivable car.

The car had an opening tailgate, bonnet, and doors (the front two with latches). This was the summary of the moving parts, as the set was effectively a technic shell clipped onto the generic radio control chassis. It ran on a supplied 400mAh USB-charged battery pack; the radio controller needed the ubiquitous 2xAAA batteries (not supplied). Performance was not exactly rip-snorting and best described as a trundle, which was, to be honest, well-suited to indoor use. The steering motor was a bit noisy but the BJ80 happily drove around various rooms allowing 3-point turns and was perfectly controllable. The rear axle had spring suspension which made lumbering around the garden path a reasonable proposition. Patriotic Chinese children could join together and create their own slow-moving huge military parade, as CaDA also make a technic 6-wheeled lorry rocket launcher.



Stuff opens and shuts, but engine missing. Chassis could be used for anything technic. Own logo on parts. About as Chinese as could be.

I suppose, being *really* picky, there was no engine, the box showed lit headlights but was just artistic license, no mains charger was supplied, there were marginal colour variations in the red pins, it wasn't very fast – and no Xi Jinping was included. But although this wasn't a full-blown technic kit for the purists, it is almost impossible to mark it down. The quality is excellent, the design is new and well thought out, it's relatively cheap, it has excellent playability, there are several parts LEGO don't make, it's basically legal, and the company cares about customers. Would I get another of these? Yes, and with no feeling of guilt, either. This is an example of Communist LEGO coming of age. Maybe the genie is out of the bottle.

Summary: I can't really fault this set at all.

Scores	Parade Car
Quality*	100
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	N/A
Design	100
Instructions	100
Total	100



Cartoon Cars (Cartoon Blocks) – Cartoon Pickup (Winter 2017)

NEW!

Previous editions of Communist LEGO have occasionally reviewed Duplo or non-LEGO brick sets. The half-way sized sets have tended to use their own dimensions making them totally incompatible with anything else and potentially completely useless. CARTOON CARS was spotted in a closing-down sale of a gift shop and bought not only because of its cheapness but its strange appeal. The Pixar film 'Cars' has inspired many, many toys with its style of vehicle and facial expressions, and this was a prime example. It did not copy directly any of the characters but instead used the type of anthropomorphism that has proved so successful. CARTOON CARS was yet another rebranded set imported by KandyToys; interestingly, they chose not to market it under their M.Y brand name.

The box itself was very well made and presented. The 14 parts were printed on the outside. Inside was a sticker sheet and the bag of bits, all present and the same colour as on the outside. They were of a size halfway between DUPLO and LEGO with large chunky studs. The plastic was slightly soft to the touch which resulted in off-square parts. One of the orange curved tops had Kandy Toy's name and postcode printed on it. There were no instructions, although this wasn't exactly too much of an issue. The wheels and axles were a very tight fit. It is questionable that every 3 year old could put the chassis together, but once the wheels had been clicked to the axles and the axles clunked into place, the rest was, well, child's play. The stickers were good quality, and once applied produced the happy endearing little pick-up chap as shown on the box. There were two spare yellow nose or cheek stickers – these were probably for some of the other kits in the set group that shared the sticker sheet.



Two big for LEGO, too small for DUPLO, but I kinda wanted to buy this. Well made box, nice parts bag and stickers. 14 pieces as promised.

Testing the pickup showed it performed exactly as intended – a very playable car with nothing wrong. Time will tell whether it fades in the sun, but to be honest as it stands I can't really fault it. The scoring does not give it 100% as it is not compatible with LEGO at all, but as a brick-based young child's toy it's great.

I suppose not all reviews have to be damning.



Cartoon pick-up truck with stickers applied. Bricks are relatively soft plastic but suit toy well. Axles and wheels need a hefty click to assemble.

Summary: Makes me smile.

Scores	Cartoon Pickup
Quality*	100
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	0
Minifig*	N/A
Design	100
Instructions	N/A
Total	86



Click Brick (Star Diamond) – Dump Truck and Dozer (Spring 2018)

NEW!

Some random visits to local charity shops found these little kits. Click Brick, imported by FIA Toys, had been reviewed a few years ago, and found to be streets ahead of all other imported small sets as they'd managed to source Star Diamond as the supplier. Personally, I find that the only comparable clone manufacturer to LEGO is Star Diamond (until some of the colours fade), although Gudi run a reasonable second. Click Brick themselves seem to have dropped off the radar in about 2015-2016 and appear to be no longer trading. This could be due to their sometimes odd choice of kit design, ranging from the really good (tractor and spreader) to the rubbish and blocky (fire station). Their final releases were under the term 'Next Generation', and judging from the product leaflet they had refreshed their range to include small and medium sets with mediocre designs. Due to the high quality of Star Diamond bricks, the sets were probably put on sale at premium prices which, with lacklustre design, would have been an un-optimal marketing choice. The FIA Toys website no longer works.

Dump Truck and Dozer were part of Click Brick's construction line from about 2015, sized to be mini scale and including a very impressive mobile crane. Dump Truck and Dozer were less impressive and both used a minimal number of parts to create a tiny 8-wheel grey tipper or earth mover. Click Brick boxes were thick cardboard and included some very nice instructions and equally nice bags of Star Diamond parts. I'd forgotten how good the fit was, and although I was not exactly enthused by the design or colour, the sets were a pleasure to assemble as they were such high quality. Fit, tyres, wheels, colour, plastic feel – all 1st rate. Oddly, the rear hinge on the Dump Truck was supplied unassembled; putting it together was not exactly a chore though, and was just the right stiffness to pose the tipper. Also, Dozer seemed to have a design flaw where the rear wheels touched the inverted slopes and didn't go round very well.



Grey is a theme here. Logo bricks far worse than real ones. Contents are great quality Star Diamond. Unfortunately, mostly grey. Bored now.

The finished Dump Truck and Dozer were, well, OK. They presumably scaled well with the other sets available and could form part of a tiny construction ensemble. Grey was a bold choice for the range – the default for plucky LEGO builders is yellow, and grey didn't exactly seem inspiring. Also, the Dump Truck tipper bucket was not very deep, making play with any 'real' payloads minimalist in the extreme. More effort could've seen more usable products, but perhaps this partly explains why Click Brick seem to have withdrawn from the clone brick market. This is a shame: if they'd built on their Farm range, for example, and brought out some more well-designed machinery and buildings, I would have bought them if I'd seen them for sale, knowing they were made of top quality bricks. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with Dump Truck or Dozer, but they didn't stand out as desirable sets.



It's a dump truck. In grey. And a shallow tipper. It works well enough. Erm... here's the dozer. Not much more to say, really.

Nice but boring.

Summary: Top class bricks, uninspiring design.

Scores	Dump Truck	Dozer
Quality*	100	100
Value	100	100
Fit*	100	100
Compatibility	100	100
Minifig*	N/A	N/A
Design	70	60
Instructions	100	100
Total	97	96



Click Brick (Star Diamond) – Farm Tractor and Hay Rake (Spring 2018)

NEW!

Click Brick products, with their great quality Star Diamond parts, are increasingly hard to find. When actively marketed not many shops stocked them, and once the LEGO minifig trademark came into force, the sets with figures would have been dubiously legal. As it was, Click Brick seemed to have stopped importing kits around 2016. The last product line-up included a farm tractor that appeared half decent, and it was decided to try to acquire one. Internet auction sites were monitored carefully for months until the exact set was spotted for the correct price (OK, I found it straight away and was the only bidder). Farm Tractor and Hay Rake thus turned up without box and an unknown history.

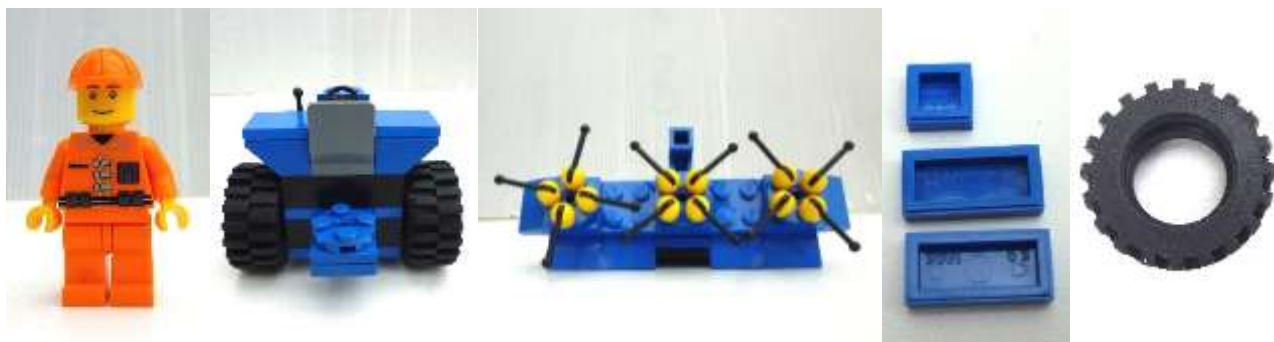
Time had not left this particular Farm Tractor alone as it seemed the front had suffered some minor sunblush. Experience with other Star Diamond sets has shown that pink fades after about 5 years, and it seems blue is another to add to the list (not that LEGO is immune from colour change). Anyway, the set was assembled using the excellent instructions and the Tractor and Hay Rake soon presented themselves on the kitchen table.



It's the hay rake that sells it for me. Here's what you get in the set – nice parts and an orange farmer. Agricultural product is quite good.

The tractor and rake were well designed and looked fairly good. Star Diamond's slightly stronger grab worked for the hay rake levers as they were stiff and mostly didn't fall from the horizontal. The rear connection between rake and tractor was only from one stud and this was a little fragile if knocked hard. The rake also had a friction hinge which did work, but the rake levers meant it couldn't be raised to the vertical whilst the tractor was off the ground. These minor gripes did not detract from a rather good Click Brick set.

The standard Star Diamond worker guy was included as the Farmer. This was a bit odd as a few years ago Kandy Toys under the M.Y brand had managed to market a Star Diamond tractor complete with a proper farmer. Perhaps Click Brick only had access to certain areas of the Star Diamond product catalogue. The orange chap was of great quality, at least as good as a LEGO minifig, and in some ways better (the quality is the same, but the legs move more). The branded Star Diamond tyres were also superb quality.



Farmer is a generic workman. Rear of tractor has turntable for attaching hay rake. Levers mostly stiff. Tiles look a bit sunblushed. Tyre excellent.

The tractor and hay rake kit has to rank as one of Click Brick's best, and usually would have made a really good alternate to LEGO. Unfortunately for Click Brick, LEGO farm equipment has been outstandingly well designed in the past few years, making the Click Brick set an interesting diversion more than a must-have. So, although there was nothing really wrong with this set, it just had had some almost unbeatable competition.

Summary: Very good, but not good enough.

Scores	Tractor and Hay Rake
Quality*	100
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	N/A
Design	80
Instructions	100
Total	98



COGO – Corpse Flower (Spring 2018)

NEW!

COGO is a separate brand name marketed by Loongon. In the past they tended to be the less worse block brand compared to actual Loongon sets. Recently Loongon have adopted a similar strategy by starting up two new brands – Lepin and Xingbao. Yup, according to court documents Loongon is the company behind the evil Lepin. The COGO sets, meanwhile, got a revamp from their older awfulness including a new Friends-ish range. Unlike evil Lepin, the COGO kit designers bothered to create their own designs and new minifig and Friendfig versions that were not copies of LEGO. We'll treat COGO here as a separate entity who are not tainted with Loongon's other misdemeanours.

The new COGO friends-type range covers similar themes to LEGO, with various pet, lifestyle and outdoor sets. One of the more intriguing translated as "Corpse Flower". Now, who wouldn't want a set called Corpse Flower? The term is a generic description for the large lily and rose types found in Sumatran forests; they produce a smell of rotting meat to attract insects and are the largest flowers in the world. This example seemed to be based around the Rose, but with added teeth for effect (what effect? This girl set might involve some consuming). The COGO set cost about £6 without box.

Parts were stored in slightly tacky-looking blue tinted bags, sorted by part size. Included was a Loongon packing slip and the instructions. These were OK to follow, but colours were tricky to see and a bit of guesswork was needed to get everything right. Part quality had been upgraded considerably from the previous crap to Lepin quality, complete with unbranded studs and popped boil scar moulding marks. Plant leaves were pale but acceptable. The build itself was enjoyable; the steps were sensible and apart from colour guessing were easy to follow. The small tree was finished first and was found to be overbalanced. The Corpse Flower was movable with hinge plates and a turntable. It too overbalanced unless carefully aimed upwards. The buggy was great, apart from slightly wobbly wheels (quite annoying given the good quality of everything else) and the headlights which were a poor shade of orange-yellow and looked and felt rubbish. A huge sticker sheet was provided that appeared to cover all new COGOFriend sets.



Natural choice for a present... Here's what you get. Flower is so big it doesn't balance. Some good detailing; green plastic is a bit pale.

The COGOFriend was supplied completely unassembled, with legs, trousers, skirt and arms all on sprues. The legs assembly was tricky to clip together but did allow separately movable legs (excellent) that were stiff and tended to fall off if not moved carefully (not excellent). COGO had decided to design clip-on leg coverings. Supplied were small pieces for a skirt, or longer ones for trousers. This should have been a success, except the skirts would not stay on without superglue and the trousers were a bit wide. The torso could rotate about 30 degrees each way around the hips, allowing more posing opportunities. Torso and head printing were not top quality, and the hair was hard plastic and felt a bit cheap. However, the finished COGOFriend was actually quite good: the overall effect was of a difficult arsy teenager and was just about different enough from a real Friendfig to be worthwhile. In some ways it improved on the Friendfig, giving more possible play settings along with a 'meh' attitude.

COGO seem to have spent some effort designing playable sets, and coupled with evil Lepin parts should have made an excellent kit. It was not quite there – the plants fell over, the COGOFriend kept losing her legs, the flower teeth would fall off easily, and there were wobbly wheels. But I dunno, I kinda liked my Corpse Flower.



Anatomy of a COGOFriend; whatever. Look – separate legs! Hooray. Face print is a bit angry and bashed. Spare parts look very Lepin...

Summary: Improvement on old COGO, just about legal, still a bit rubbish.

Scores	Corpse Flower
Quality*	90
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	90
Minifig*	80
Design	80
Instructions	80
Total	89



Decool – Caterham 620R (Spring 2018)

NEW!

BFC
Award!

Carl Greatix is a top chap, and his LEGO Caterham 620R is a fantastic creation. Obviously I won't let personal feelings get in the way of the review of this illegal copy by evil [redacted] [redacted] ing [redacted] arsehead [redacted] cheating [redacted] [redacted] Decool [redacted] s. Impartiality is my middle name.

Decool have been copying LEGO sets by the hundreds with apparent immunity for a number of years. Minifigs have been reviewed before: good quality but prone to fading in the sun. The LEGO Ideas Caterham 620R kit was available in yellow, although Carl's original design back in 2014 was dark azure and orange seen on the actual Caterham demo car. Decool decided that this was the better colour combination and swapped the yellow bodywork for the dark azure. It is not possible for the general public to get the required LEGO pieces in dark azure, so Decool bricks are the only way to make the car in this colour. Evil Lepin make a clone of the yellow one, although happily there is no reason to get it as the genuine LEGO article is still available for non-daft prices.

The evil Decool scumbag Caterham set was picked up for a little under £20 from China, and arrived as a sphere of bags with a wrapping of the suspiciously unbranded instruction booklet. The pieces were not supplied in assembly order and were instead packaged by size. One evening everything was duly opened and the 207 build steps begun. Assembly was, of course, an absolute joy as Carl's 620R is brilliant. Even with the unsorted bags, annoyingly bad instruction colouring and occasional iffy parts needing a hammer, the build took just over 2 hours from start to finish.



No maker's logo on instructions anywhere. Car looks great in dark azure. Flat studs give away hooky origins. Exhaust needs hammer to assemble.

The evil Decool scumbag parts varied in quality depending on colour. The dark azure pieces essentially felt the same quality as LEGO; the black was OK but a little duller; the technic parts were not bad and a far better fit than evil Lepin; the bright light orange bricks seemed vaguely translucent; the rubber tyres and hoses were excellent; and the yellow was basically shite and didn't fit. The few red parts were a decent enough colour but had a surprising amount of sprue bits left on them. There were no stickers, and, as with real LEGO Ideas sets, all marking was printed. The quality of these was quite good, although the orange on blue didn't really colour match and looked a little lacking. One black 1x1 plate (thankfully spare) had flash moulding on it, and a free lump of random plastic was included along with various amounts of coloured dust which was judged to be probably non-carcinogenic. There were some spare parts (mimicking the real LEGO kit) which could be stored in the boot (mimicking a real British sports car). An orange brick separator was included, although a lump hammer would've been more useful for whacking the shite yellow parts on and for pounding the exhaust together, which both required considerable kinematic encouragement.



Boot full of spare junk as any owner will know. Yellow parts mis-moulded and need vice. Some piss-poor quality control. And the orange thing.

This 620R made an impressive model in the colours that maybe the LEGO kit should have been in the first place (before it faded in the sun after about 4 months). Carl, I now owe you some pints to cover some stolen IPR. And Decool, so do you. Quite a few pints, in fact.

Summary: Decool stain the honour of the entire Chinese nation.

Scores	Caterham 620R
Quality*	90
Value	100
Fit*	90
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	N/A
Design	100
Instructions	90
Total	-188*

* All points deducted three times for being [redacted] [redacted] ing lazy disrespectful [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] arses.



Enlighten – Road Sweeper (Spring 2018)

NEW!

Dunno. Never turned up.

Summary: The Silk Road is littered with abandoned Enlighten kits.

Scores	Road Sweeper
Quality*	N/A
Value	N/A
Fit*	N/A
Compatibility	N/A
Minifig*	N/A
Design	N/A
Instructions	N/A
Total	N/A



Gudi – Cops N Crooks (Spring 2018)

NEW!

Gudi sets have occasionally found their way into the UK via BLOCK TECH, who rebranded them. Two Christmas-themed sets were reviewed a few years ago and found to be excellent quality. Browsing through Ali Express showed a wide variety of Gudi themes and prices. A police chase set, 9311 'COPS N CROOKS' was chosen to represent Gudi's normal product. This was supplied direct from China at about £4 without box.

Parts were in bags sorted by part size. There was also a sticker sheet that covered three of the police-themed sets. The bricks and plates were indeed found to be very high quality, with the Gudi name on the studs and a feel and fit basically identical to real stuff. Build of the set proceeded without hitch, with everything fitting together nicely and a few spare parts left over. The clear parts especially were of LEGO quality, with none of the rubbish-looking washed-out hues of many other companies. The motorbikes were very good, and tyres were well made and had the Gudi name on them.

There were two issues that made this set not perfect. The first was a bit picky – stickers. These are a continuing gripe with genuine LEGO kits, as the move to these to save on costs and the shift away from printed parts has been frowned upon by many LEGO purists. And me. Gudi had supplied a multi-set sticker sheet, which was useful for giving lots of police-themed stickers, but annoying as it rubbed in even more the cost-cutting they'd done. Of course, it would've been OK if they were top quality... but they weren't. Acceptable, but not great.

The second issue was the car design. All wheels are slightly wobbly, and due to the low ride of the design the Gudi police car had very small clearances between tyres and arches. This meant that the car could not be pushed along easily as the wheels jammed, which defeated the entire point of the set. Secondly, the low roof was (a) difficult to get on and off without pulling half the car apart, and (b) didn't fit over the police guy. The impression was that the set was designed on computer and not by hands-on building, and then rushed into production without proper testing.



Two N Crooks included with motorbikes. Parts in nice bags; sticker sheet covers three sets. Finished kit has good playability – if car wheels rotate.

The Gudi minifigs were supplied annoyingly unmade, although assembly was quite easy as the quality and fit was almost identical to LEGO. The red torsos had a marginal faded look, and the hands were very tight in the arms. Apart from this, the finished product was indistinguishable from the real item. This was great for compatibility but may be ungreat for Gudi's legal department when someone catches up with them.



Minifigs all but identical to real ones. Crook bikes superb. Police car flawed by low-fitting roof and wobbly wheels that rub on arches.

A strange kit this – quality second only to Star Diamond, great value for money, but with a fast good-looking police car that doesn't actually go. Almost there, but not quite. And there's the trademark thing.

Summary: Fantastic quality parts, flawed set design.

Scores	Cops N Crooks
Quality*	100
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	95
Design	60
Instructions	100
Total	95



Hsanhe – Corner Coffee (Spring 2018)

NEW!

BFC
Award!

The Hsanhe company is relatively new, and has a number of ranges. One area that the Chinese manufacturers have been quick to market is the town building. These range in size from nanoblock, microscale, small, medium, and large (akin to the LEGO modular buildings). Some are LEGO copies or stolen MOCs (hands up, evil Lepin), but others are genuine original designs, albeit looking suspiciously similar to well-known brands. Hsanhe produce micro, small, and medium modular buildings, and two of the smaller sets were ordered to investigate their design and quality. The 'Corner Coffee' duly arrived in a sphere of bricks, nicely packaged but without its box that was meant to have accompanied it along the Silk Road (probably now residing in one of the many settlements formed by lost Enlighten kits).

The parts were in three plastic bags, which were of thicker plastic than most companies (including LEGO) and with choking warnings in only Mandarin and English. The parts were sensibly mixed and seemed to be of high quality, about the same level or slightly better than evil Lepin. There were no stud markings and generally at least one had a moulding dimple. The main colour was a strange light tan with a slight translucent quality; this gave it an aura of cheapness, but it wasn't badly made at all. Assembly showed that the feel of the bricks was a tad less professional than real LEGO, and grab was slightly higher (this was quite nice). Everything fitted together well, and there were some spare pieces left over. Technic pins were provided to clip sets together. The windows were supplied dirty for some reason – although this gave the shop some realism it was slightly disturbing and quite how the Hsanhe factory managed to contaminate them remains unanswered. The stickers were mediocre quality; printing was OK, but one tore on extraction and the white was undefined.



Here's what you get – well packed in sturdy plastic. Finished kit, with weird bright tan colour. Interior is well detailed and door opens past seats.

The two minifigs were supplied half assembled and had to be made up with strong hands. They were remarkably good quality, with slightly harder grab than the real article. Printing on the torsos, legs and heads was error-free and well defined. The design was nigh-on identical to LEGO figures, making them dubiously legal, although swapping parts around showed that the dimensions were fractionally different as headgear was tight and the hand shanks did not fit well into LEGO arms. The figures were also a tight fit on the Hsanhe studs.



Minifigs almost identical to LEGO. Stickers annoying but work well enough. Grubby windows... yuk. Lacklustre photoshop job with dodgy copyright

Overall this was a remarkably good kit. There were a couple of gripes with the mucky windows and disappointing stickers, but as a design it was a great addition to any town and city scape. This particular size isn't really covered by LEGO³ and it appears that Hsanhe have hit upon an untapped market. Legality aside, this shows a maturing of Chinese brick set design and marketing that is, maybe, starting to edge ahead of Denmark.

Summary: Unexplained grubbiness and some dodgy legal issues.

Scores	Corner Coffee
Quality*	90
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	95
Design	100
Instructions	100
Total	97

³ Summer 2018 saw LEGO release micro scale buildings.



Hsanhe – Fast Food Restaurant (Spring 2018)

NEW!

BFC
Award!

The Hsanhe small shop range includes various well-known brands that are marginally sidestepped with the logos. Another of their sets is the Fast Food Restaurant, complete with yellow and red colours and a big 'M'. This was bought along with Corner Coffee to give a comparison – and because it was under £6 including postage. It arrived without box (as it should have) in under 2 weeks, remarkably described accurately on the packaging. At least some sellers are honest.

As with Corner Coffee, the parts were supplied in very good quality plastic bags, although Fast Food needed more bags for some reason. Parts were vibrant in colour and felt almost identical to LEGO bricks. Assembly was straightforward with excellent instructions. Grab again was slightly harder than LEGO which actually helped with the smaller internal detailing. Unlike Corner Coffee, the Restaurant windows were quite clean, and the fire hydrant was larger (there's definitely a water street furniture vibe going on at Hsanhe). Detailing inside the restaurant was great, and there were enough spare parts to make another burger. The sticker for the cash till was too large which was a bit annoying, and the 'M' stickers for the sign and hat did not show up very well as the backing was translucent and did not have enough white or yellow. When finished the kit was eminently displayable and playable, and of a size to suit wallets and small rooms.



Small restaurant with a big 'M'. Interior has great detail for the size and price. I wonder where this logo came from? Hat sticker doesn't show much.

Minifigs were very competent and essentially identical to Danish versions. Compatibility was not perfect with the hand shanks slightly oversize and the Hsanhe headgear being a tighter fit on LEGO heads. The Hsanhe legs when assembled were a bit stiff, although this did allow various poses to hold well so wasn't a complaint. The figures also were harder to sit in the supplied seats and to fit on to studs. As with the Corner Coffee, there were no errors in printing. The minifigs did impinge on that little trademark thingy. Quite a bit.



Minifigs are good quality, slightly tougher fit than LEGO. Comparison shows that hat and legs are tight, and hand shanks are a bit wider.

The small modular shop range is a good idea for the many Chinese families who are now living in cities where space is at a premium. It seems that the companies have worked out what their markets are and are moving to create products that are targeted at themselves as opposed to direct copies or almost identical versions of LEGO. This is Communism. Or Capitalism. I suppose should have paid more attention to Politics and Economics at school.

Summary: Great but a bit illegal in quite a few places.

Scores	Fast Food Restaurant
Quality*	95
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	95
Design	100
Instructions	100
Total	98



Kazi – Field Army 155mm 52cal Truck-Mounted Gun (Spring 2018)

NEW!

Khasi – n, pron. [kah-zee]. (slang): toilet.

The Chinese firm Kazi have been making hooky LEGO kits for a number of years now, using surprisingly poor quality plastic. They probably have no idea of the childish mirth their name produces in the UK (let alone Urdu-speakers, ho ho ho). The company produces a lot of military kits, and in the past couple of years have brought out a lot of models of actual vehicles, with many tanks and trucks. A browse of their latest offerings showed the 'Field Army' series, with four truck-based sets each with over 500 pieces. KY84037 and KY84038 were of a Russian air defence system (presumably aimed at the Russian market); KY84040 was some sort of engineering truck, and KY84039 was a truck-mounted howitzer that fired. This set was ordered (without box) for a bit over £10 and duly arrived within 2 weeks as the standard sphere of parts inside a bubble envelope.

The set was packaged into about 15 bags with "1" or "2" printed on most of them, along with two weapon sprues and a brick separator. The instructions explained not to empty all the bags at once, but to use them in order. It very quickly became apparent that this was a lie as all bags were needed from the start. Extraction showed that Kazi's quality had risen from 'atrocious' to only 'bad'. The plastic felt very cheap, the colour varied between part type, and there were numerous moulding marks and flashes present. Technic pins felt (and were) exceptionally fragile, and the axles were a very loose fit. Conversely, the brick and plate grab was of Sluban mightiness, which with Sluban's improvement in quality meant that the task of creating 100 million angry militaristic children with immensely strong hands had passed to Kazi. The plastic brick separator should've been titanium.

The annoyingly unmade minifigs were put together first. It wasn't a good start. Between the two they had three left legs and one right one. The figures themselves were engaging enough and all parts were fully swappable with LEGO minifigs. Then started the assembly of the gun truck and jeep. This was a long, long effort, not helped by the instructions which, although very well laid out, did not give enough contrast between dark green and black. The truck was slowly made in sections and finally put together with only one part breaking. The parts count was wrong too, so the jeep got a 1x6 plate instead of a 1x5. The huge truck gun itself could fire the frankly dangerous supplied grey 1x3 rods; however, the fit was so bad on the technic parts that it had to be glued on to stop it falling off. Eventually, everything was finished and the truck with its slightly weedy wheels could be set up to fire.



Loads of parts. Do not make without a lot of light. Finished kit – best visual match is a Denel 'Condor'. Kazi quality control not exactly 100%...

Normally this is the part where I lay into the clone company for inflicting shite on us European savages and make some reference to the Plastic Apocalypse. But I'm not going to this time, because this kit is an excellent design. Whoever put this together used very clever SNOT techniques, had a great eye for detail, and used parts in odd ways to create something worthwhile. As I went through the build, I was continually impressed with the quality of the design. I cared about this kit. I wanted to finish it. It didn't matter that the parts were rubbish quality, that some were missing, and a hand file and glue were needed. This was a product of a brick virtuoso, and I wanted to be part of it. I suspect Kazi don't make the bigger tyres needed to do the truck justice, so I swapped the tiny rubbish Kazi tyres for proper LEGO versions that I reckon the designer really wanted. Job done.



Clever use of bricks to make 5 stud-wide jeep. Deployed working gun great, if fragile. Legs use blades. Proper LEGO tyres make kit awesome.

Summary: Model kit - requires glue, file, and craft knife.

Scores	155mm gun truck
Quality*	50
Value	100
Fit*	80
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	90
Design	100
Instructions	90
Total	83



M.Y (Ausini?) – Girls Brick Set, Buggy and Signpost (Winter 2017)

NEW!

M.Y are the block brand name of Kandy Toys, who tend to import Chinese sets as is and sell them in their range. This provides the consumer with a challenge, as their suppliers have ranged from the top quality Star Diamond to the utterly shite quality XQL (see Communist LEGO editions passim). Many a poor child has probably been forever disappointed with a bad choice in the M.Y lottery.

GIRLS BRICK SET had been adorned on many pink boxed Kandy Toys products, who had apparently decided to dispense with any attempt at possessive apostrophes so that the BRICK SET could be enjoyed by one or more GIRLS without prejudice. One small square-sized kit group were found, each priced at £1.69. These appeared reasonably competent due to consistent spelling and believable photos. Each set had a girly theme with a minifig, unashamedly copies of LEGO minifigs and potentially not 100% legal. It was guessed that these were probably Ausini or perhaps Jie Star from the design and the minifigs, but unlike earlier Ausini minifigs it appeared that the skin tone was not bottom-clenchingly scary. No kit match could be found on the internet so Ausini as the manufacturer is only guessed at. The buggy was chosen as it gave a good combination of playability coupled with a huge-eyed minifig guaranteed to bore into the soul and turn the brain to mush.

The box had a professional rip-off tab to open the box, which would have been impressive if it had worked. After getting out the scissors the inside produced a nicely-folded set of instructions and a bag of parts. Emptying this showed the pieces were of above average quality, almost certainly Ausini or, if not, of comparable design. Assembly was trouble-free and produced a very playable buggy and a signpost with foliage. The rubber tyres were good, and the overall effect was almost LEGO-like. The signs were printed in an orange hue, and the red cone for the buggy to carry was not quite a full red and was a little washed out. The medium blue colour was vibrant.



Little pink set from M.Y. Which random supplier will it be? Polish the first warning language. Parts surprisingly good. Figure surprisingly unsettling.

The minifig was supplied unmade which, as mentioned many many times before, was bloody annoying. Un-dismemberment was not too tedious and resulted in a perfectly usable minifig of high quality. The face print was very East Asian with characteristic large eyes with white highlights, small mouth, and cheeks. This suited the hairstyle which was a cut above most clone attempts. The buggy pilot had a healthy pink skin tone and was attired in some form of light pink onesie with a hypnotic disk or a lollipop with a bow. She was a tough fit on the studs but could be made to hold the handlebars without too much effort.



Finished set is good quality and a good size. Rear of buggy carries a single red(ish) cone. Minifig with dubiously legality and big, big staring eyes...

Summary: BIG eyes.

Scores	Buggy and Signpost
Quality*	90
Value	100
Fit*	90
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	90
Design	80
Instructions	100
Total	92



M.Y (Ausini?) – Girls Brick Set, Jet Ski (Winter 2017)



Two small GIRLS BRICK SET kits were bought. The second was a jet ski, having a paltry 28 pieces as opposed to the buggy's 43. The on-box photo showed a less Manga-ish minifig and promised a new type of handrail not available as a LEGO part. It was hoped that the jet ski was a more stable design than the ANKER Play version, which had a tendency to break apart with any simulated wave. A jet ski that can't go fast is no fun.

The jet ski square box had a rip-off tab that actually mostly worked, and the single bag of bits with unprofessionally unmade minifig and the instructions fell out. As with the buggy, the parts looked and felt surprisingly good quality and had vibrant colours. As there were not a lot of bits (the parts count included the 8 minifig pieces) construction was rapid. The jet ski was not particularly robust, held together only by one stud of each of the 1x4 plates. Three blue pieces were supplied to create a bow wave for the jet ski which did hold it together better. More adventurous GIRLS could just attach the 2x4 plate to the underneath and solve the issue completely.



Tiny GIRLS BRICK SET. Let's assume this is a jet ski. Parts all present and correct, and the same colour! Minifig in multiple pieces, as is sanity

Jet ski's minifig was put together with fairly strong hands, not immensely so. Quality was not quite 100% as one of the arms was slightly looser than the other, but the finished result was very close indeed to a real LEGO figure. The face printing resembled some type of cartoon with large eyes and a single-sided nose. Coupled with the green butterfly torso and the dark brown hair the effect was different and would probably be a favourite for many GIRLS. The leg assembly was very, very ORANGE, worthy of Michael Portillo's TV railway presenting wardrobe. The minifig could be made to hold the handlebars and stand up in the jet ski. Of course, it was all but identical in shape to the trademarked LEGO version, so legality might be a bit iffy.



Set is good quality and includes bow wave. Side handles are not made by LEGO; jet ski is a bit fragile. Printing OK and not too nightmare-ish.

Jet ski was a success. I doubt many GIRLS have been disappointed with this kit. Kandy Toy's small GIRLS BRICK SET range seem to be an excellent way of acquiring some interesting girl-themed clone minifigs that are different in colour and style to genuine LEGO minifigs.

Summary: Weird head.

Scores	Jet Ski
Quality*	95
Value	100
Fit*	100
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	90
Design	100
Instructions	100
Total	97

M.Y had produced a range of GIRLS BRICK SET kits. One version was found in a discount seaside shop marked down by 50%. The original price was over £4 which was a bold selling strategy that may not have been entirely successful. The photo on the front showed it to be a Friends copy with a truly terrifying zombie-hued Friendfig staring blankly across a kitchen. It was guessed that this was one of Kandy Toy's more bargain suppliers, and the promise of a zombie Friendfig was far too much to resist. Also obvious on the box were two sides proudly stating GIRL BRICK SET as opposed to GIRLS BRICK SET, adding to that petty Communist LEGO warm glow comfort zone of lacklustre quality control even on such trivia as simple proofreading. Great stuff. Add to shopping basket, even for £2.

Internet searching found that the M.Y set was based on one of the 'Good Friends' kits produced by Weagle. Good old Weagle has been a staple content of Communist LEGO as their dependable awfulness coupled with their position in the alphabet guarantees a less than boring review near the end of any edition. Box contents were dumped unceremoniously onto a table. There were some small instructions, a Friends-themed parts sprue in yellow, a bag of parts, and a bag of unmade Friendfig. Some of the pieces were in pastel colours, and it would appear that as with other cloners, Weagle had to invest in some less than rubbish plastic mix to produce them. This meant that average quality was not pants, leading to considerable disappointment as Weagle had moved from outstandingly crap to boringly mediocre. Assembly of the kitchen showed that a little thought had gone into the design, and as a playable toy it wasn't a complete failure. The sprue, although a slightly sickly yellow, did give more utensils than shown in the photo and a microphone to combat those cooking and cleaning blues prevalent in many Chinese interpretations of modern Friendfig life.



GIRLS BRICK SET this time is a Weagle 'Good Friends'. Photo is of zombie Friendfig – here's hoping... Oh. Skin tone normal. Just appalling quality.

The Weagle Friendfig had a fairly normal skin tone, which did deflate somewhat the expectation of total awfulness. It was supplied unmade and constructed differently to the genuine LEGO type. Assembly did require immensely strong hands. Two hairpieces were in the bag, both an identical atrocious shade of orange in, for some reason, probably the worst quality plastic yet reviewed. The head and torso print were not exactly brilliant but were far ahead of anything previously seen from Weagle. There was some flash moulding left on most of the body parts, especially the head which gave the effect of a chinstrap. Flash moulding was also evident on a few pieces. The two kitchen seats were totally the wrong shape for a Friendfig and the only way to keep it on was to balance against the table – as had been done in the box photograph.



Lots of pieces, not all awful quality. Definitely an orangey-yellow vibe. Printing better than BELA but still iffy. Plastic moulding terrible, of course.

This set was not exactly great, but for Weagle it was a huge improvement. An hour with some small pieces of sand paper and a spare LEGO hairpiece would result in a half-decent set. In this case the stuff inside the box was better than the stuff shown on the box. Quite an achievement for Weagle.

Summary: Reeking of cheapness and a bit rubbish.

Scores	Kitchen
Quality*	40
Value	60
Fit*	70
Compatibility	70
Minifig*	60
Design	70
Instructions	90
Total	63



M.Y (Ausini?) – Space Craft (Spring 2018)



SPACE CRAFT was a chance find in a local store, hidden away and a bit dusty in the corner of the toy section. It was guessed that in the M.Y hooky Chinese block manufacturer game, this example was probably medium-high quality due to its exorbitant price of £1.99. It has to be said that the design was not awe inspiring nor exactly desirable, although the strange cone torture device part appeared unique. The box was the same size as the small GIRLS BRICK SET kits, giving some chance that Ausini might be behind it. However even after many minutes of half-hearted internet searching no match for SPACE CRAFT was found.

SPACE CRAFT was opened one weekend when nothing was on telly. The rip-off tab actually worked and the bag of parts and nicely-printed instructions fell out. Whoever the manufacturer was appeared also responsible, as guessed, for the GIRLS BRICK SET. The quality was very good and the CRAFT was assembled with no problems at all. The yellow was actually yellow. The wheels were quite a tight fit to get on, but the excellent tyres and smooth running wheels gave great playability.



M.Y lottery for 'SPACE CRAFT'. Parts in unassuming dangerous bag. Finished CRAFT is really a buggy with a cone. It's, um, a vehicle.

SPACE CRAFT was not a flying space craft, but a vehicle made up of random parts with a cone on a hinge.



Very good quality parts with various moulding scars. Wheels are excellent. Cone thing not found in LEGO. Rear end of buggy thing.

SPACE CRAFT was also a bit boring after being made. There wasn't much more to write about, so I won't.

That's about it, really.

Summary: A bit overpriced and a bit weird.

Scores	SPACE CRAFT
Quality*	100
Value	60
Fit*	100
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	N/A
Design	70
Instructions	100
Total	91

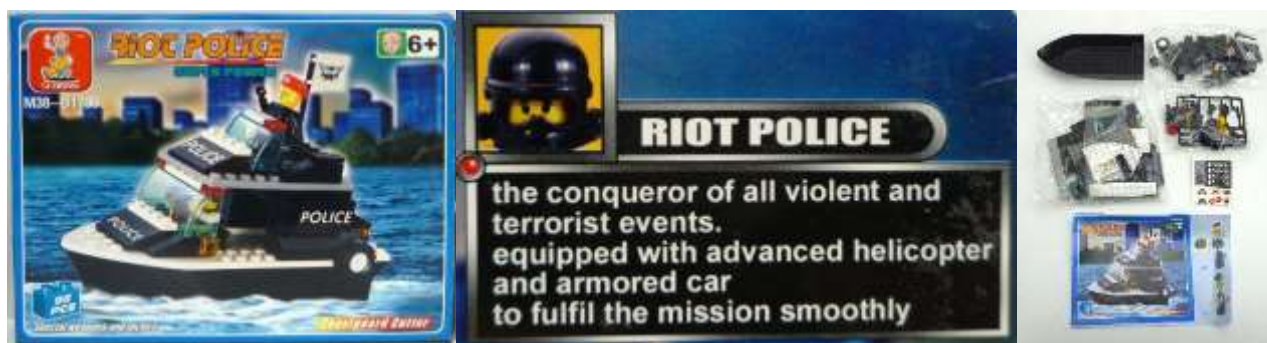


Sluban – Coastguard Cutter (Winter 2017)



Sluban is a well-known make in China and even has a European distribution centre. The company has been going for some time and originally excelled at copying South Korean Oxford Toys kits, along with their design of minifig. As with Oxford, many of Sluban's most successful sets were military based. When Chinese demand rocketed, Sluban expanded more into their other themes including many town-based sets. A previous Communist LEGO review of their military gun truck showed Sluban to be badly made with terrible minifigs, and required immensely strong hands to assemble. Sluban have, in the past year, replaced all their older minifigs with a new design to presumably circumvent any trademark issues... which apparently Oxford Toys don't have, as they continue to be sold in the UK with the older design.

Coastguard Cutter has now been discontinued. It was found in two forms, both at car boot sales. One was a genuine Sluban version, the other a slightly re-branded import all but identical without the Sluban logo. The RIOT POLICE theme (also not made any more) seemed to be only a small step down from the Sluban military sets, with the promise of conquering violent and terrorist events in smooth missions. The black police boat had two officers with a large arsenal of machine guns and ammo, ready to quell any protestors with extreme force. There was one set of handcuffs as well, just in case one rioter survived the inevitable slaughter produced by 100 million militaristic angry Chinese children with immensely strong hands conditioned by years of state-sponsored Sluban limpet-class grab and rubbish quality control.



Super Power riot police. The boat guy gets a red cap, the others get advanced helicopter and armored [sic] car. Parts only just fit inside box

The box design was similar to BLOCK TECH with a slide-out tray made of very cheap brown cardboard. Everything was squeezed into the tray very efficiently and the instructions screwed up underneath. The parts were surprisingly poor quality, approaching Weagle in their awfulness. Assembly was a challenge due to badly-thought-out instructions and the characteristic Sluban stupidly tight fit requiring immensely strong hands and immensely strong motivation. The stickers were mostly not shown in the instructions and had stupidly strong adhesive, so there was only one chance at getting them straight. Not that I cared by that point as I was so angry at such a rubbishly-made kit. The boat hull was watertight and would float, although when finished the Cutter was top heavy and would capsize in under a second if placed in the bath.



Blissfully happy SWAT member and annoyed helmsman. Arsenal to suppress dissidents wielded by red cap guy. All parts scarily interchangeable.

The minifigs were of the older Sluban design, with almost identical heads and torsos to a LEGO (and Oxford Toys) minifig. They were very bad quality: there were numerous flash moulding bits still present, and the helmet guy's hands almost fell out of his arms. Experimentation showed all parts were interchangeable with a real LEGO minifig, but quite why you'd ever want to combine the two is beyond sanity. The red beret was the same as the M.Y boat kit reviewed in 2016, confirming that Captain Sensible is, in fact, Sluban.

Long Summary: Reasonable sized kit requiring unreasonable construction strength. Allows malevolent patrol missions with the threat of comprehensive kinetic suppression of anyone not conforming to the Party Ideal – and all from beautiful canals. Shit quality. Doesn't float very well. Sluban has been partly responsible for lowering the Doomsday Clock to 2 minutes to midnight.

Concise Summary: So crap it made me angry.

Scores	Coastguard Cutter
Quality*	50
Value	80
Fit*	60
Compatibility	80
Minifig*	50
Design	70
Instructions	60
Total	61



Sluban – Army Jeep (Winter 2017)



Sluban market a lot of military sets, many almost direct copies of South Korean Oxford Toys. The army ones are popular and have a special olive-green colour unique to Sluban. The bricks can be useful if building military MOCs where the colour is needed, although quality was decidedly dodgy for early parts with a slightly rippled finish not uncommon. Recently Sluban replaced their older minifigs with a new design, although most of the sets themselves stayed the same. In late 2016 a few Sluban military kits were spotted at a Toy Fair, and Army Jeep was bought. It was hoped that Sluban quality had improved, and that as a gesture of commitment to World Peace the parts didn't need a hammer and the ongoing creation of 100 million disappointed militaristic Chinese children with immensely strong hands had been abated. Some hope.

Extraction of the parts and the build showed that the pieces were better than before, although this wasn't too hard to do. The newer moulding machines had produced some reasonable quality dark olive green plates with "M38" on the studs. The visual cue of a marked stud somehow improved the feeling of quality (rightly or wrongly), and putting the kit together wasn't horrible if a little tough. Immensely strong hands were finally not required. The jeep itself was a bit oversized for standard LEGO minifigs and blocky in design. I don't know, it just didn't inspire. The 'tyres' were awful: solid and unforgiving. A sticker sheet was provided, but ennui stemmed any wish to apply them. Despite the improvement in the plastic from earlier Sluban offerings, the jeep still felt cheap and liable to fall apart, no mean feat for such an all-but indestructible collection of China's best anger-inciting super-interlocking bricks. Somehow, Sluban had made me feel cheated and angry, but not given me training to crush golf balls with my bare hands.



Doesn't look too bad. Not sure moving rearview mirrors are a major selling point. Parts are of varying quality - green good, trans bad, black meh.

And then there was the minifig. This was completely new, but quite why Sluban had decided to re-design it in this way was not immediately apparent. What was certain is that no-one will ever contest it in court because it is just so wrong. OK, the construction of the minifig was clever, with the head attached to a long shank that fitted inside the torso and connected the leg assembly allowing it to rotate around the hips. The look of the minifig was however less clever, with a hugely oversized beret, a round bulbous head with a daftly effeminate face print, strangely shaped arms and torso, and a cheap set of legs. Looking at the rest of their kits, the head shape can be mitigated by hair or headgear, but many characters (especially female ones with skirts) look ridiculous with the massive legs. I'm now having terrifying flashbacks to the 1970s where horrid brown nylon flares were forced on a suspecting public. Actually, the 1970s had many utterly shite plastic toys, so perhaps Sluban are doing the retro thing in full. It's worked for me. I'm adopting an appalling fashion sense, buying a brown car, using a worthless currency, and going on strike. More.



Finished jeep vaguely passable but I feel cheated somehow. Shiny tyres dire. And... what possessed Sluban to come up with this? Words fail me.

The guys at Sluban ought to be commended for adequate set design, a well-made website, the rapid creation of a fully legal minifig, and a good variety of themes to appeal to a large demographic. If only they didn't still lazily copy Oxford Toys I might bother.

Sluban have redesigned their sets and minifigs and now have better quality, all to become more rubbish.

Summary: I absolutely do not want to buy another Sluban kit. Ever.

Scores	Army Jeep
Quality*	90
Value	70
Fit*	90
Compatibility	90
Minifig*	40
Design	70
Instructions	90
Total	76



Wange – Snowmobile (Spring 2018)

NEW!

Wange are one of the many medium-sized Chinese cloner companies that have been quietly improving their products over the past few years, moving on from the terrible Ligao brand via 'Dr Luck' to eventually market under their own name. They cover the usual standard themes and have a good variety of sized sets, including some very impressive buildings. They are also one of the few companies that bothered to keep themselves legal, and responded to the minifig trademark issue by designing their own version with modified torso, legs, and a square head. We'll call them Blockfigs to differentiate them from the ANKER Toys version. From photos Wange seemed a good bet for traditional Communist LEGO diatribe about mediocrity and scary figures. 'Police Snowmobile' was ordered for about £3 without box.

Surprisingly, Wange had done rather well. The set was supplied in good quality plastic bags with warnings in English and two versions of Chinese. Once opened it was obvious that Wange bricks were very good quality and that the Blockfig was far better than expected. Both the snowmobile and car were assembled with no problems. Grab was just about right, the plastic felt excellent quality, the trans pieces were well coloured, the tyres were great and wheels not wobbly, and the snowmobile front nose was PRINTED with the police logo! Wange studs were blank and had a slightly rough feel, which made the trans studs a bit opaque. Also, the handlebars were a loose fit on the vertical clips. Given the high quality of every other part, it was unclear whether this was intended or not. It was a bit annoying, but the Blockfigs would happily sit in their vehicles and hold the bars.



Brave policemen and naughty criminal. Actually, only two figures included. Blockfig looks a bit weird but isn't. Finished set surprisingly good.

The Blockfigs looked in pictures to be 'unsettling' in standard Communist LEGO speak, but reality showed that when assembled they actually worked very well and were one of the best legal minifig alternatives around. They were, of course, supplied unassembled which at least didn't require immensely strong hands to fix. The top half was good quality, albeit with slightly tough hand-arm fit, but the legs felt quite poor even though they went together OK. This was a bit strange as all other Wange pieces seemed excellent quality. The Blockfigs fitted well into their vehicles and would do everything demanded of a standard minifig, although the legs were a bit stiff. The headgear was (of course) not compatible with anything other than the Blockfig head. Playability was excellent, and the super policeman would easily show the justice spirit of the police for the world.



Anatomy of a Blockfig. The design works, but legs are poor quality. A few spare pieces – studs are a bit dull. Set is almost excellent. Almost.

Wange seem to have come up with a surprisingly good product, with excellent quality parts, competent enough design, and a legal figure that doesn't induce panic attacks. Of importance is also the printed parts – Wange actually care enough to use this slightly more expensive method to make a 'premium' quality product. There are a few flaws, but overall this set scored very highly. Wange would thus appear to be one of the top runners in the legal clone market.

Well done, Wange. Just fix those legs.

Summary: Legal, but a bit square.

Scores	Police Snowmobile
Quality*	95
Value	100
Fit*	95
Compatibility	90
Minifig*	90
Design	100
Instructions	90
Total	94



Winner – Row Crop Tractor (Spring 2018)

NEW!

The Winner brand is a mostly domestic Chinese toy seller that has recently expanded into more specialist areas. The name probably seems perfect from a Chinese point of view, although us Brits will most likely think of such phrases as “Calm down, dear...” more than associating it with success. Fickle cultural points aside, Winner have produced some fairly desirable kits, including some specific Chinese, Russian and US military sets, and their new ‘Technique’ range. These technic sets include agricultural machinery, scooters and motorbikes, and classic cars such as the Morgan 3-wheeler. They appear to be Winner’s own designs and on paper look very well detailed. Although there were many that looked to be a good build, the most cost effective was the red tractor. This was ordered from China for about £12 without box and arrived in the traditional bagged sphere of parts.

The set was probably based on a certain model of Row Crop tractor, although at time of writing I have not found an exact match (most likely a 1940s Fordson Major, but there are others). The Row Crop design has a very narrow front wheel assembly, and although there have been many LEGO tractor kits, none have covered this style and there have relatively few MOCs. Winner set no 1281 was supplied in 5 bags containing various sizes and types of parts. Extraction immediately showed that the plastic colour was terrible – the red was washed out, akin to old Best Lock, whereas use of pearl silver and pearl gold for other parts made everything look tacky. On the positive side, the black was OK and the tyres were of good quality. Winner supplied a black brick separator, noting that this was of minimal use as almost every single piece was held on by technic pins or axles.



Technique sets are new for Winner from 2017. Kit supplied in vaguely sensible bags. Finished tractor is well designed, but colour looks naff.

The instructions were well laid out and relatively easy to follow, although the differences between black and grey colours were a little tricky to see. The stickers for the bonnet and grill were OK and easy to position, but a bit shiny when applied. The moulding quality and fit of the technic pieces was surprisingly good, so although the kit looked bad quality it was actually a real pleasure to build. Features included steering, a single-cylinder engine connected via a sliding clutch, and an opening bonnet. The single problem with fit was a seat part where the fit was loose on a blue axle pin – ironically the very last piece to be put on. The design made the engine a little stiff to move, but this could be solved in true technic fashion by playing around with tolerances. The steering was also a bit ad-hoc due to use of a worm drive, but this probably matched the worryingly precarious stability of the real thing.



Opening bonnet, working steering, engine with clutch. All spoiled by poor colours. Dodgy steering and stability completely realistic. Black thingy.

As an interesting technic design, the Winner tractor is great. It is also one of the very few sets reviewed where clone technic pieces fit together well, resulting in a unique model that appears fully legal and in theory a rival for LEGO. However, the red colour is just awful, and is even more obvious when compared to any LEGO set. This is a case where it would be most worthwhile copying the design using real LEGO parts; an interesting reversal compared to most clone manufacturers. This set is thus quite hard to score, as apart from the appalling colour it is a genuine alternative to LEGO.

The fade test of 6 months in the sun showed remarkably little colour change. Would I buy another if it was for sale in the UK? If the colour was improved, definitely. Having reviewed this one? Not sure...

Summary: Excellent design, woeful colour.

Scores	Row Crop Tractor
Quality*	80
Value	100
Fit*	95
Compatibility	100
Minifig*	N/A
Design	100
Instructions	90
Total	93



ANKER Play – Superheroes Collection! (Winter 2017)

NEW!

Poundland's new Autumn 2017 block range was supplied by ANKER Play, with a number of £1 construction kits having one Blockheadfig each. Also available, in the tradition of the BLOCK TECH tubbyfig, were packs of 4 figures. The ANKER Play Blockheadfig had competent torso and legs, with a hollow square head. Despite many minutes of uninspired internet searching no Chinese clone company could be directly linked to the ANKER Play sets or figures. Superheroes Collection! was the ANKER Play design group's attempt at entering the already crowded superhero market. The UK does not really have a legacy of 1940s caped crusaders, with aspirational do-gooders tending to be along the lines of Sherlock Holmes, Dan Dare, James Bond and Judge Dredd more than leotarded flying uberhumans. However, constant pressure from across The Pond has infected the youths of today with some appreciation of groups of flawed good guy individuals overcoming their differences for huge lucrative marketing opportunities saving the planet from flawed bad guy individuals.



Red Rage, Arrowhead, Centrum, and Green Force. Protecting citizens by making them hide indoors quivering with fear from superhero hideousness.

Four unique superheroes had been made to overcome copyright issues and to make the ANKER versions worth considering. They were Red Rage, Arrowhead, Centrum, and Green Force. The theory behind this was sound. The execution of it was less sound. They were cheap and very weird.



Our brave chaps are cheap quality and oddly shaped, but legal. Heads are just hollow - no hair or hats supplied. Hours of fun for blockheads.

Some people may be inspired to buy these by seeing them through the box. I am not one of them.

Summary. No. Just no.

Scores	Red Rage	Arrowhead	Centrum	Green Force
Hair / Headgear	0	0	0	0
Head	20	10	20	10
Torso Assembly	40	40	40	40
Hands	60	60	60	60
Legs Assembly	20	20	20	20
Quality	30	20	30	20
Compatibility*	10	10	10	10
Design	60	50	60	60
Value	80	80	80	80
Total	33	30	33	31



BLOCK TECH (Woma?) – Action Heroes (Spring 2018)



One damp cold morning I was pointlessly traipsing around a half-empty shopping mall to escape the soul-dissolving drizzle. Gina G started blaring out from the tannoy. Unfair. To combat this muzac hell-pit of eternity, I ducked into a local discount store ooh ah just a little bit to come face to face with a previously unseen BLOCK TECH figure set. ‘Action Heroes’ was presumably a belated attempt to cash in on the massive superhero market. The box revealed it was a 2017 product, and had the newer musclefig upgrade from the earlier tubbyfig. The exorbitant cost of £3 was judged worthwhile to delay shopping centre zombification ooh ah a little bit more, and was added to that day’s haul of junk. I went outside and embraced the drizzle.

The set proudly boasted 10 figures and encouraged the reader to collect them all. It was damn obvious that what was actually being bought were five Action Hero twins. This was doubly annoying as (a) at the price of £3 the figures were about 15% higher than the normal cost, and (b) there are very few instances of superhero twins as most stories nowadays revolve around the juxtaposition of the lonely self-made good guy reluctantly joining a team and randomly splitting up again to give the sequels some sort of purpose. In my limited experience with such genres twins tend to be a Nazi supervillain thing, but hey, perhaps BLOCK TECH were supplying spare Hero bodies as their build quality was so appalling.



Hope you like them twice as much. No names supplied, so we’ll guess at The Human Lighter, Dudpool, Dr Bronx, Damp Squall, and Botman.

New BLOCK TECH kits seem to have dropped the naming of the figures inside, a bit disappointing as it was about the only good point from their previous branding. The identities of our 5 hero twins were thus a bit of a mystery, which somewhat went against the whole point of being an Action Hero in the first place. As with ANKER Toys, BLOCK TECH’s budget did not allow licensing with any franchise holders, so being honest and wary of litigation they’d made figures a *bit* like the ones in the films. Three were fairly obvious (“The Human Lighter”, “Dr Bronx” and “Botman” – I’m sure you know who I mean), but the other two I wasn’t quite sure of, so let’s have “Dudpool”, and “Damp Squall”. The choice of “Dr Bronx” from the “Clockmen” was particularly odd, given the very adult-themed storylines and 18 rating of the 2009 film. I doubt many adults would ever consider buying BLOCK TECH for their collections; Bronx’s real version as a knock-off minifig is available from any number of hooky Chinese suppliers, and BLOCK TECH suggest an age range of 6-12. I suppose the 2016 rebooted return of the light blue naked comic book guy was a success. Weird.



New musclefig shape suits Action Heroes, but still tubby. Round plate covers hole in head. Slightly bigger than minifig; legs don’t fit LEGO torso.

The musclefigs had the tubbyfig hollow head, but BLOCK TECH had done the decent thing with the bald guys and given them a round plate to cover up their empty skulls. This worked quite well for the look, with the added bonus of not having terrible quality hairpieces or helmets. But the musclefigs were still rubbish, with heads that were randomly immovable or loose, a tight left leg and free right leg, forearms that fell off if played with, too many moulding flashes, and cheap quality plastic. All this, coupled with being forced to have two of each Hero because BLOCK TECH couldn’t be bothered to come up with five more, just added to feeling of despair from an already crap day. I never want to play superheroes again.

Summary: Poisoned with laziness.

Scores	Human Lighter	Dudpool	Dr Bronx	Damp Squall	Botman
Hair / Headgear	N/A	N/A	N/A	40	40
Head	70	70	70	60	40
Torso Assembly	60	60	80	70	60
Hands	20	20	20	20	20
Legs Assembly	30	30	30	30	30
Quality	50	50	50	50	50
Compatibility*	10	10	10	10	10
Design	60	60	70	60	50
Value	50	50	50	50	50
Total	40	40	43	40	36



BLOCK TECH – Mean Streets (Spring 2017)



Once their tubbyfig became the standard, BLOCK TECH decided to branch out into all kinds of types to suit the needs of imaginative children. Unlike LEGO, they marketed a number of minifig-only box sets, ranging from 4-packs right up to a huge 50 figure pack. These were ranged into the usual areas such as fire, space, police, dinosaur hunters, and beach. One that caught my eye was 'Mean Streets', a refreshingly different named set which seemed to promise a grittier reality of council estates, unemployment and depravation. Flipping the box over exposed that in fact the four tubbyfigs were intended to pilot fast cars and not attack the local vicar with spoons. Still, Mean Streets was bought for an unstartling price of £1 from Poundland.

The four characters were of course supplied assembled, which helped enormously in giving me strength to care about the contents at all. They were pressed into a shaped plastic internal carrier, with a coloured cardboard piece to give the display some depth. Extraction was not the most challenging task of my life, and did not fire explosively across the room. It was a pity that someone in the BLOCK TECH marketing department hadn't come up with some names for them; one of the more competent changes made by BLOCK TECH had been to give their themed tubbyfigs names. Apart from anything else, it would be interesting to see what they would have been given. Personally, I decided on Shaz, Lee, Chantelle and Gaz, but then I'm an Essex lad and a bit biased towards clichés (this is probably a cliché in itself).



First impressions are of substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and homelessness - but no, it's endlessly looping the High Street one-way in a Corsa.

The tubbyfig printing was a bit less basic than the earlier types and was reasonably well executed. Shaz and Chantelle shared the same hair and [hideous] faces, and careful torso print design had mostly hidden the tubbiness. Whether a swimsuit was the best choice for doing 80 past The Kursaal on Friday night in November with a greasy shish kebab dribbling chilli sauce is open to question. Perhaps Chantelle's slammed Clio had finally got its heater fixed. Lee and Gaz had varying amounts of adolescent facial hair, and to be honest would look a little out of place donutting around the A419-A420 roundabout at 3am in the Scooby pumping out 14kW of sub-20Hz Dubstep causing imminent structural failure of every road sign within a mile radius. Still, as placeholders for tales of provincial joyriding and small-scale vandalism our four tubbyfigs were far more suited than most official LEGO characters that exude banality and compliance to the suburban norm. And the suggested age range of 5+ could be argued to be apt (below this age most find the pedals hard to reach).



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(PRUEBEME!)

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Tubby torso printing OK. Arms loose of course. Pink racer not that well attired for a drizzly February Saturday night. Ooh, here's temptation....

Naturally there was one big problem with the BLOCK TECH set. It contained tubbyfigs that were completely rubbish. Stiff legs, arms that fell off, heads that didn't move easily, poor quality plastic and an overall aura of failure were included as standard. Given the subject matter this could be seen as an advantage, but only those brave enough to rebel against decency would want to pollute their LEGO collection with these. So, maybe job done. Perfect.

Summary: Hideous.

Scores	Shaz	Lee	Chantelle	Gaz
Hair / Headgear	30	30	30	30
Head	30	30	30	40
Torso Assembly	30	30	40	40
Hands	50	50	50	50
Legs Assembly	30	30	30	30
Quality	50	50	50	50
Compatibility*	10	10	10	10
Design	50	50	60	50
Value	70	70	70	70
Total	36	36	38	37



Blox (Woma) – Police Accessories (Winter 2017)



Blox is the brick clone brand name stocked by Wilko in the UK. In 2017 Blox got its third refresh. New sets appeared: some rebranded Woma kits, and some exclusive Wilko designs. Tubbyfigs were still available, but... something had happened. Previous printed figures had been hideous in the extreme, with poor quality and dodgy expressions. The newer tubbyfigs kept the same amusingly dumpy shape, but someone had gone overboard to create a less rubbish look. This time the faces were happy and had white eyes, and torsos were made to look like something the UK would recognise.

One winter visit in 2017 saw the local Wilko store with a number of tubbyfig packets for sale. Half of them were the older designs, with various generic themes such as racing drivers and space dudes. The newest packs included tubbyfigs with accessories – vaguely mimicking LEGO town starter packs. Blox had decided to go for bubble packs of two figures with a few handheld utensils. The most promising of these was 'police accessories', containing two UK-themed police officers (one female, one male), with traffic cones, handcuffs, radio and pistol. The firearm was an odd choice as British cops don't tend to get tooled up as standard, but as it was suspected that (a) the sets were designed in China and (b) the boy demographic would demand it, only one eyebrow was raised. Police Accessories was priced at £2 which was a bit of a mark-up on the standard tubbyfig packet (4 figures for £1).



Figures based on UK police... except most don't carry handguns. Very odd inclusion. Tubbyfigs have had a printing makeover and are not shite.

The tubbyfigs were of course supplied assembled (hoorah) and once the packet was opened without ricocheting the pieces off the ceiling the huge task of fitting the trans-orange studs to the red cones was attempted. OK, not the most taxing build ever done. Close inspection of the tubbyfigs showed a lot of effort had gone into making the new torso print and the heads. The police torso used white shirtsleeves with a fluorescent yellow/green colour to produce a well-balanced figure part representing typical hi-viz wear. Current technology or cost available to Blox seemed to not allow printing on the rear, but it was a start. The head prints were a big improvement on the earlier designs, with none of the pent-up rage or psychological hatred vibes reviewed previously. Both the male and female prints were friendly and used colour; although the male was slightly off-axis the nose and ears on the tubbyfig head now worked properly. The black caps were also about the correct size.



Tubby torso printing good, but arms still annoyingly loose. Head prints now friendly. Moulded noses and ears; hollow head to scare children.

Blox have tried to improve on their terrible, hideous tubbyfig, and for the police seemed to have succeeded. OK, they're still tubbyfigs with loose arms and awful legs, but progress is being made. The figures are now play objects as opposed to things of nightmares. Well done, Blox, keep it up.

Summary: Tubbyfigs almost verging on the desirable.

Scores	Police (Female)	Police (Male)
Hair / Headgear	70	70
Head	90	80
Torso Assembly	70	70
Hands	50	50
Legs Assembly	30	30
Quality	60	50
Compatibility*	10	10
Design	50	50
Value	70	70
Total	51	49

The Chinese hooky minifig industry is vast. With no apparent restrictions on copyright or trademarks, and a gigantic internal and global market, thousands of different figures exist with hundreds now being added every month. It would be impossible to even scratch the surface of each company, let alone all of them, but a statistical sample was taken of a couple of the bigger players who had not been reviewed previously.

Kopf seems to be currently the largest manufacturer of collectable minifigs. It tends to bring out roughly 4 new ranges every month or so, each with 8 figures - some copying LEGO directly, but most using themes such as superheroes, TV and film series, historical figures, military, and local interest subjects such as the Terracotta Army or Anime. For the collector these are particular desirable if unique, as many are not even made by the various bespoke Western companies modifying genuine LEGO minifigs. Of course, another major attraction is that the figures are very cheap indeed compared to the genuine article; quality is not so much of an issue as most will only be displayed and not played with much.

Three Kopf minifigs were initially sourced from a UK importer. These were roughly £2 each, although ordering direct from China sees the price drop to about 65p (less than \$1). The three picked were Ronald McDonald (version 2), Donald Trump, and Elvis. The figures arrived overnight and were packaged in the standard plastic bags mostly unassembled. Putting them together showed that they were made of mediocre quality plastic and had questionable arm-torso fit, although when finished they were able to function as posable minifigs and looked OK.



Here is Ronald. He's lovin it. There may be trademark issues. Donald has two faces, happy and angry. Elvis has a chest and an uh-huh expression.

Ronald was, of course, instantly recognisable and was of OK quality. The yellow was marginally washed out compared to real LEGO, but the red hair had strong colour and the figure was worth it just for this one piece which is not available from LEGO in red. The torso and arm printing was surprisingly good; this is probably due to Kopf's massive turnover in new designs requiring high quality printing machines that can be rapidly reprogrammed. Ronald's tile was not inspiring with the supposedly yellow 'M' and slogan looking rather orange. Donald was copied from miniBIGS and had a dual-sided head: one side was recognisable angry, with the other having a smile strangely reminiscent of Emperor Palpatine. Donald had a 'Make America Great' cap, some yellow hair of questionable quality, and a blank grey 1x2 tile for no apparent reason (the miniBIGS version had a blank white 1x2 tile for no apparent reason). Elvis was a copy of a Minifigures.com design. He had a different internal torso and legs assembly to the others, but his printing was very good and he had a sparkly cape. He got a guitar and microphone, but no burger.



Parts mostly interchangeable. Leg assembly has evolved and is a bit different to LEGO. Two torso designs are also not quite the same.

Swapping pieces over with real LEGO showed a marginally tighter head fit and shorter hand shanks. Apart from this, parts were interchangeable. Kopf seem to be expanding into many genres, and given their past history will probably continue to punch out many niche minifigs for years to come.

Summary: Tolerable quality collectable minifigs. With just a few branding matters.

Scores	Ronald	Donald	Elvis
Hair / Headgear	100	90	100
Head	100	80	80
Torso Assembly	80	80	90
Hands	90	90	90
Legs Assembly	90	90	90
Quality	80	90	70
Compatibility*	90	90	90
Design	100	90	100
Value	100	100	100
Total	92	-89	-90



Kopf – Scotty, Edward, Tom, Michael, and Robocop (Spring 2018)

NEW!

BFC
Award!

Kopf's inspiration for its ever expanding product line now heavily involves searching the world for bespoke minifigs and copying them. Most of the custom minifig companies are small concerns with a few employees at best and cannot hope to match a Chinese cloner. They are easy targets for cloners such as Kopf who can spot a good figure and reproduce it for less than 10% of the cost.

Five figures were reviewed to plot Kopf's improvement in quality control and despicableness with time. The first four minifigs had been copied from Minifigures.com, a small UK company. The first two were from their Star Trek Original Series line: Scotty, and Edward Rayburn - a hapless redshirt who actually managed to survive one episode before the inevitable happened. A total of six Rayburns were ordered so as to swap heads and hair for real LEGO and create a small army of Enterprise goons. This also gave a good spread to average out quality analysis. It would seem that Kopf's Star Trek series was one of their first, as the quality was, quite frankly, awful. Even before getting the unassembled crew members out of their bags I got the modelling tray, craft knife and sand paper. Figure manufacture thus consisted of tidying the sprue bits and many annoyed minutes until legs, arms and hands fitted vaguely well. At least one hand shank bent on assembly, but each bag had one spare. Overall, the skin tone was anaemic, the hair badly moulded, and the red a terrible translucent hue. Comparison with actual Minifigures.com Star Trek figures showed a huge gulf in quality.



Scotty and Edward Rayburn (a hapless redshirt) copied from Minifigures.com and are terrible quality – but only 67p each.

Tom Baker was the fourth Doctor Who, and this version was well designed by Minifigures.com with characteristic scarf and coat. The Kopf version was far better quality than the Star Trek figures and had a very close match with skin tone and plastic feel and colour, although the hair was a bit undefined. Michael Jackson was not quite so good, with red a little translucent. Michael's arms were printed and he was supplied with arms and legs attached; this presumably was part of the printing process used by Kopf.

Robocop was copied from a US company, The Fig Factory. Their description of the figure highlights the complex printing used, with all-round head and torso designs – something which LEGO does not regularly (if ever) do. Interestingly, Kopf had risen to the challenge and produced a stunningly good minifig. Although very slight mismatches could be seen if very closely examined, Robocop was probably the best clone minifig I'd ever seen, matching LEGO quality in the figure itself and surpassing LEGO in print complexity. And all for 78p.



Tom Baker and Michael Jackson copied from Minifigures.com and are passable enough. Robocop copied from The Fig Factory and is first rate.

Soon the cloners will run out of IPR to steal and will have to exclusively market their own designs. Until the trademark man catches up with them.

Summary: Random quality, constant despicableness.

Scores	Scotty	Edward	Tom	Michael	Robocop
Hair / Headgear	70	70	90	80	N/A
Head	70	70	100	100	110
Torso Assembly	70	60	100	90	110
Hands	70	70	100	100	100
Legs Assembly	60	60	90	90	110
Quality	70	70	100	90	100
Compatibility*	100	100	100	100	100
Design	90	90	100	90	100
Value	100	100	100	100	100
Total	-80	-79	-98	-94	-103

Kopf – Wayne, Hell Boy, Clubber, He-Man, Skeletor, Bob, David (Spring 2018)

The minifig clone industry in China is a good example of a short-term design and manufacture battleground. Each company has to compete with many others to produce new designs almost every week. The sheer number of new figures needed to keep pace with the competition has almost exhausted the supply of LEGO, custom, and MOC minifigs to copy. So something drastic has occurred... the companies actually design their own stuff. Some vaguely unique Kopf figures were ordered to test this out.

Batman was a blatant copy of one of the LEGO minifigs from the Batman movie. He was included here as I couldn't fit him on any other page. Kopf's interpretation has decent printing but the whole flesh tone was too light and just looked cheap. Yuk. Hell Boy however was very good. He wasn't based directly on any figure I could find, and had excellent red colour, good printing, a great cape, and a big hand and AK47 to mash the bad guys. Clubber Lang, Mt T's character in Rocky 3, also seemed to be a new design and was well executed. His Mohican was copied off a custom minifig design and not LEGO. Kopf had released a Masters of the Universe set about the same time that their arch rival Pogo had made its own. Pogo's minifigs used in-house mouldings for headgear and armour, whereas Kopf had mostly used existing parts. He-Man suffered from a pale skin tone, although quality was OK. Evil Skeletor had no problems with colour or quality and was epic.



Batman a bit pale. Hell Boy great quality and design. Clubber Lang OK too. He-Man looks cheap and anaemic, whereas Skeletor excellent.

Then came Bob Ross. Initially he seemed an odd subject for a Chinese cloner, being a talented semi-hippy artist from the 80s and 90s popular on US TV. However, the extra head included with the minifig revealed he was actually made to cash in on an irreverent trailer for the Deadpool 2 movie from November 2017. Bob himself probably was copied from the LEGO Ideas site, although there have been many almost identical MOCs spread across internetland. Quality-wise, he wasn't perfect as there was a sprue mark on the back of his hair.

David Beckham was part of a football-themed series. Here there seemed no direct source he was copied from, and it appears all were designed in-house. Printing on David was excellent, although his legs were not coloured on the top as the legs were assembled before ink was applied. He came with a printed football. Again, hair was a little less defined than real LEGO, and his white torso seemed a tad translucent.



Bob Ross? Really? Ah, watch the Deadpool trailer, and it all makes sense. David Beckham is not great quality but very recognisable even for me.

I may be wrong here, but the minifigure cloners might actually have some design teams of their own now. And they seem to have some talent.

Summary: Less random quality, less stealing.

Scores	Batman	Hell Boy	Clubber	He-Man	Skeletor	Bob	David
Hair / Headgear	100	N/A	100	80	100	90	90
Head	100	100	100	90	100	100	100
Torso Assembly	80	100	100	90	100	100	100
Hands	80	100	100	80	100	100	100
Legs Assembly	80	100	100	90	100	100	90
Quality	90	100	90	90	100	95	90
Compatibility*	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
Design	100	100	100	90	100	100	100
Value	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total	-90	98	97	89	98	97	95



LELE – Lone Ranger Soldier (Winter 2017)

NEW!

BFC
Award!

The Chinese clone minifig enterprise is massive. There are a huge number of companies making hundreds of knocked-off copies of almost every licensed franchise and theme available to LEGO - and anything else they can find. The East Asian market has also diversified into making unique themes that cannot be found elsewhere, such as the military, films and stories. Almost all of the clones use the trademarked LEGO minifig shape and so technically have legal issues. The quality of the products varies from rubbish to excellent, and even from a single company it seems to be a bit of a lottery.

LELE are one of the main players in the mediocre clone minifig copier cartel, blatantly ripping off many lucrative LEGO franchises with apparent immunity. Some of their products were reviewed in earlier Communist LEGO editions and found to be quite bad, with cheap plastic and terrible printing. Lone Ranger Soldier was spotted in a car boot sale, unopened in its original box. Clone collectable minifigs do not usually get to the UK with their boxes as shipping costs are much cheaper for just the figure. 'Soldier' from the less than hugely successful 'Lone Ranger' franchise was bought to see if LELE could actually produce something not crap.



This is 'Soldier', one of a group of 8. He is an angry, angry soldier. In the box are the stand, pointless diorama, and pointless collector cards.

Typical of LELE, there was an unassembled minifig, pointless display, and three collectors' cards inside the box. These were well presented if rather superfluous for most customers. Once the figure and display was assembled, the result was rather surprising. Here was a LELE minifig that was quite good. Careful examination of the soldier guy revealed good skin tone, excellent printing, and a professional feel to the figure and accessories. Included was a spare hand. The LELE-themed 4x6 tile/plate was useful to stand the angry, angry soldier with his arsenal of weaponry.

The three cards did not have any statistics and instead only had pictures of the characters in the set. 'Soldier' was included, but was named 'Captain'. If he had got a promotion, it didn't improve his mood.



Angry angry soldier is surprisingly good quality. He has 2 spare pistols, a rifle, a spear, and a spare hand. According to the card he is a captain.

This LELE range seems to be well made and could form a useful method of getting a lot of Lone Ranger minifigs. Unfortunately for LELE's export potential, the film bombed so the genuine LEGO figures are quite cheap and there's no point in buying LELE. Unless you want the collectors' cards. Which you probably don't.

Summary: Not bad, actually. Very illegal, of course. And very angry.

Scores	Soldier
Hair / Headgear	100
Head	100
Torso Assembly	100
Hands	100
Legs Assembly	100
Quality	100
Compatibility*	90
Design	100
Value	100
Total	-98*

* All points deducted twice for copying. Again.



M.Y – Military Characters (Winter 2017)

CAACK award
winner 2018!

NEW!

Kandy Toy's M.Y brand has a large number of themes and suppliers. These can be found in various discount stores across the UK, with stock changing as older sets get sold off or rediscovered in abandoned ISO containers washed up on the beach. A chance visit to a shop near Christmas found some dusty bubble packets with minifigs dumped in the corner of a shelf with faded price tags. The figures were typical of older Chinese legal types with cheap looking plastic and disturbingly unhealthy skin tones (for us Europeans, anyway). In true Communist LEGO style a 'Military Characters' pack was purchased even though it was obviously quite poor value and awful. The picture of the two happy dancing soldiers on the rear was much appreciated on a typical British drizzly cold December morning (I'm thinking "Stayin' Alive" or "Agadoo"). I joyously skipped home with my prize. Or was that a dream?

Despite some internet searching the exact manufacturer was not found: almost every Chinese cloner now makes something half-decent as they have come to realise what sells and what doesn't. It was suspected that these figures dated from a few years back and were old stock. The source was guessed to be Loongon. Perhaps all on-line traces had been wiped by The Authorities to protect the reputation of China. I know I would.



The friendly face of the zombie army. Four military guys and four 7' guns. Saying "thank-you" honestly to Auntie Florence is all but impossible.

Once the four Characters and their weapons had been forcibly extracted from the surprisingly tight plastic, their true horror was revealed. The plastic was cheap in the extreme, the colours were awful, the printing was mediocre, and the overall effect was a 3D portrayal of the word 'disappointment'. On the plus side, they did stay together and the hands could just about hold the guns, so they weren't a complete loss. However, unless REALLY desperate for soldier minifigs, the most likely outcome would probably be a disappointed child. Not outwardly, perhaps not straight away, but reflecting a few months later they would raise questions about how much their grandparents really knew about how to make them happy.



Anatomy of terrible M.Y zombiefig. Cheap plastic, awful colours. Torso is surprisingly robust. Legs look and feel like failure. They work. Just.

Military Characters is plausibly part of a covert plot to seed generational discontent in families across the UK to accelerate the break-up of society and allow an eventual unopposed takeover and rule by The Middle Kingdom. Or perhaps The Lizard People.

Summary: Astoundingly crap.

Scores	Brown Soldier	Green Soldier	Grey Soldier	Black Soldier
Hair / Headgear	30	20	20	30
Head	20	10	10	10
Torso Assembly	20	30	30	10
Hands	10	10	10	10
Legs Assembly	10	10	10	10
Quality	10	10	10	10
Compatibility*	10	10	10	10
Design	20	20	20	10
Value	30	20	20	30
Total	17	15	15	14



Pogo – Watto, Captain Britain, Ripley, Alien (Spring 2018)

NEW!

BFC Award!

Pogo is currently the arch rival of Kopf, and the two companies release a number of new series every month to try to stay ahead in the clone minifig market. Kopf tend to use existing parts and rely on high quality printing to produce new figures. Pogo is more adventurous and has a team of modellers who design and manufacture new parts if required. Both companies do, however, still shamelessly rip off both LEGO, MOC and custom minifig designs with near immunity.

First up was Watto, a complete clone of the LEGO version. His rubbery top piece was found to be well made with good printing; he resembled a second-hand LEGO figure and was OK. His hands were very slightly off colour. Captain Britain was a unique design and was bought as he was one of the very few UK superheroes. He was quite poorly printed, with OK quality plastic but smudges around the edges of the torso print. The head print was a bit dark. Ripley was copied from a Minifigures.com custom figure. She came with a M41A pulse rifle, slightly vague hair, and looked more than a little pissed off. The torso print was quite good, although the left leg print was off-centre. I guess she don't like the cornbread either.



Watto is competent enough. Cpt Britain has poor printing but patriotic. Ripley copied off Minifigures.com version and has printing on arm sides.

The real reason for getting some Pogo characters was the Alien. Pogo had designed and created its own pieces to make up the figure; three types of Alien were available, and four of the largest were bought. Alien had a bespoke head and jaw which clipped together, a new shoulder/tail piece, new legs, and used a modified black skeleton torso with robot arms. Assembling his head and jaw was annoying, but everything else went together well and the finished endoparasitoid extra-terrestrial xenomorph could be posed to a limited number of positions if clipped to a baseplate. Quality was very good, with the black head having a scary shine and no sprue marks visible. Alien stood about 1.5 minifigs high. Astoundingly each Alien was bought for only 78p, making a large army of the critters easily affordable. Oddly, Pogo had not copied any of the Aliens Marine Corp figures made by other custom minifig companies – at least, not when this version of Communist LEGO went to print – severely reducing scope for inserting a number of memorable quotes. Maybe the Evil Lepin will rip off a MOC Dropship next year. [Has anyone done the Sulaco? I'd buy that to nuke the entire site from orbit. Just to be sure.]



Anatomy of an alien. New mould for head, jaw, tail and legs. Assembled Geigerfig. Scary quartet costing £3.12 including postage. Yike.

Pogo is not able to quite match Kopf's minifig quality, but are brave enough to occasionally create and market its own designs. The Alien does not copy LEGO, and is mostly a high quality bargain. Mostly.

Summary: Patchy quality, patchy trademark issues.

Scores	Watto	Cpt Britain	Ripley	Alien
Hair / Headgear	100	N/A	90	N/A
Head	N/A	80	100	100
Torso Assembly	100	90	100	100
Hands	90	100	100	100
Legs Assembly	100	100	90	100
Quality	100	80	90	100
Compatibility*	90	90	90	100
Design	100	100	100	100
Value	100	100	100	110
Total	-92	93	-95	101

Review Summary

LEGO

[2013-2018] Some parts made in China, so is communist. Fantastic kits, great quality, and good to superb designs. Instructions verge towards the daftly easy for each step. Stickers instead of printed bricks look cheap and some peel in the sun. Sometimes fairly good value, sensible sized boxes and look brilliant. Occasionally misses the boat on good ideas. But most importantly – great to play with.

Airfix Quick Build

[2014-2016] Made wholly in the UK, so is not communist. Uses LEGO-style fittings to make a scale model. Plastic is like an Airfix kit on the outside, plates are like Mega Bloks on the inside. Have a double 'H' printed on one stud for each piece. Parts are unique for each model with the exception of a few internal plates. Does require strong hands but not immensely so. Some panel gaps. Stickers are rubbish. Finished models are OK.

ANKER Play

[2018] Importer of clone bricks. Set design tolerable to OK.

Ausini

[2013-2016] Half-decent kit design, OK quality. Excellent flowers. Blatant LEGO minifig copies with disturbing undead hue and traumatic expressions. Good value but only applicable to playtime after sundown as the minifigs scream and turn to dust. Burns with a bright yellow toxic flame. Plausible rival if minifigs are ever made with yellow heads.

BanBao

[2014] Incompatible brick height, rubbish quality, daft legal minifigs and lamentably poor illegal minifigs. Never ever buy it.

BELA

[2015] Mediocre quality cloner with no morals whatsoever. Shamelessly copies LEGO kits directly.

Best-Lock

[2013-2016] Have been laughably bad, consistently among the worst LEGO copies on sale by some margin. Minifigs had creepy moulded heads, sometimes disquietingly so, and were very, very angry. Atrocious design and atrocious quality, bought for comic effect only. Quantum leap in design and quality from 2014 to 'mediocre', but minifig redesign has bombed. Check out their website for which companies trust them to make kits. Good grief.

Block Bricks

[2015] BLOCK Tech's answer to DUPLO. Most pointless LEGO clone in the UK. Epic fail.

BLOCK TECH

[2013-18] UK importer of many clone kits. Have recently sourced new hideous Tubbyfig, amusingly bad. Take 'contents may vary' to staggeringly new depths. Spoiled Christmas.

CaDA

[2018] Makes radio-controlled technic vehicles. Great products.

Character Building Sports Stars

[2015] Quite good quality football-based kits, mostly about collecting figures more than construction.

Click Brick

[2015-18] Mundane set design, high quality bricks. Designed in UK, now have vanished.

COGO

[2015-18] Lacklustre quality, gut-twistingly horrid zombie minifigs. Separate route for the Loongon company to inflict misery on a whole generation of the world's children. Recently had quality improvement to adequate. Less dire than Little White Dragon. But still dire.

Cobi

[2016] Polish bricks, Chinese figures. Character Building Armed Forces sets licenced by the UK Secretary of State for Defence. Bricks great source for desert camouflage colour and number one choice for kit with 62 tonnes of destructive firepower or for remotely patrolling the skies. Great brick quality, awful figures.

Dargo

[2016] Minifig clones of reasonable quality and no shame.

Decool

[2016-18] OK quality minifig and set cloner that fades in the sun within 6 months. Unsurprisingly few scruples. Morally bankrupt.

Donglin

[2015] Uninspiring incompatible ¾-sized Duplo-ish building blocks. Amusing packaging. If you see it, walk away.

Dreamlock

[2016] Mediocre quality cloner, exports a lot to Russia. Enough said.

Elephant

[2016] Minifig cloner, great quality, bad morals.

Enlighten

[2014] Good kit design, mediocre quality. Nice windows. Blatant LEGO minifigs copies with legs that keep falling off. Colours not quite right and clink test sounds bad. Hinges rubbish which is very, very annoying. Random missing pieces. Cheap, but not cheap enough.

Gudi

[2015-18] Surprisingly good quality clone brand, even more surprisingly made by the company that produces SY. Rare in the UK.

HuiMei

[2015] Abhorrent clone brand with patchy design and truly disastrous minifig quality. Importing these kits seems like retail suicide. Tragic.

IQ Blook

[2014-18] Unique but pointless brick locking design that doesn't really work with anyone else's. Set is OK but not really what's on the box. Minifig is odd. Requires immensely strong hands to assemble. Very cheap but trounced by Ausini and PeiZhi. This is not good. Bin fodder.

Jie Star

[2016] Competent small kit cloner with odd faces.

Jinrun

[2016] Terrible minifig cloner, disappointment guaranteed.

JLB

[2016] Run-of-the-mill minifig cloner with inexplicably weird product range.

Jubilux Woma

[2013-2016] Amusing blatant Chinese copy of a Chinese Sluban copy of a South Korean Oxford Toy copy of proper LEGO. Quite good quality pieces, but bottom-clenchingly creepy minifigs. Nice military olive green bricks, big Gatling guns and real firing darts. Potentially dangerous both physically and mentally. Woma fades in the sun.

Kazi

[2014-18] Excellent kit design, abysmal quality. Blatant LEGO minifig copies with arms that keep falling off. Terrible brick fit, no quality control, unidentified organic substances. Brand name is strangely but satisfyingly apt.

Kopf

[2018] Mediocre to excellent quality minifig cloner, with utterly shameful copying ethic as standard.

LELE

[2016-18] Mediocre quality minifig cloner, with utterly shameful copying ethic as standard and bizarre and pointless dioramas.

Lepin

[2017] Copies LEGO and MOC designs on an industrial scale. Bricks are mostly good quality, technic parts are shite, stickers are mediocre. Mightily suspicious short lead time ripping off new LEGO sets. Broadcasts evilness through the ether. The epitome of Communism My Arse.

Levi

[2015] Website promises quality and high morals. Utter lies. Copies LEGO and Chinese clone brands very badly. Never buy it.

Ligao / Wange

[2014] Originally mediocre quality building bricks, unearthly malformed figures, not cheap enough by a long, long way. Was a bit like Woking. Now better quality with earthly malformed figures. Now a bit like Reigate.

Liteup Blocks

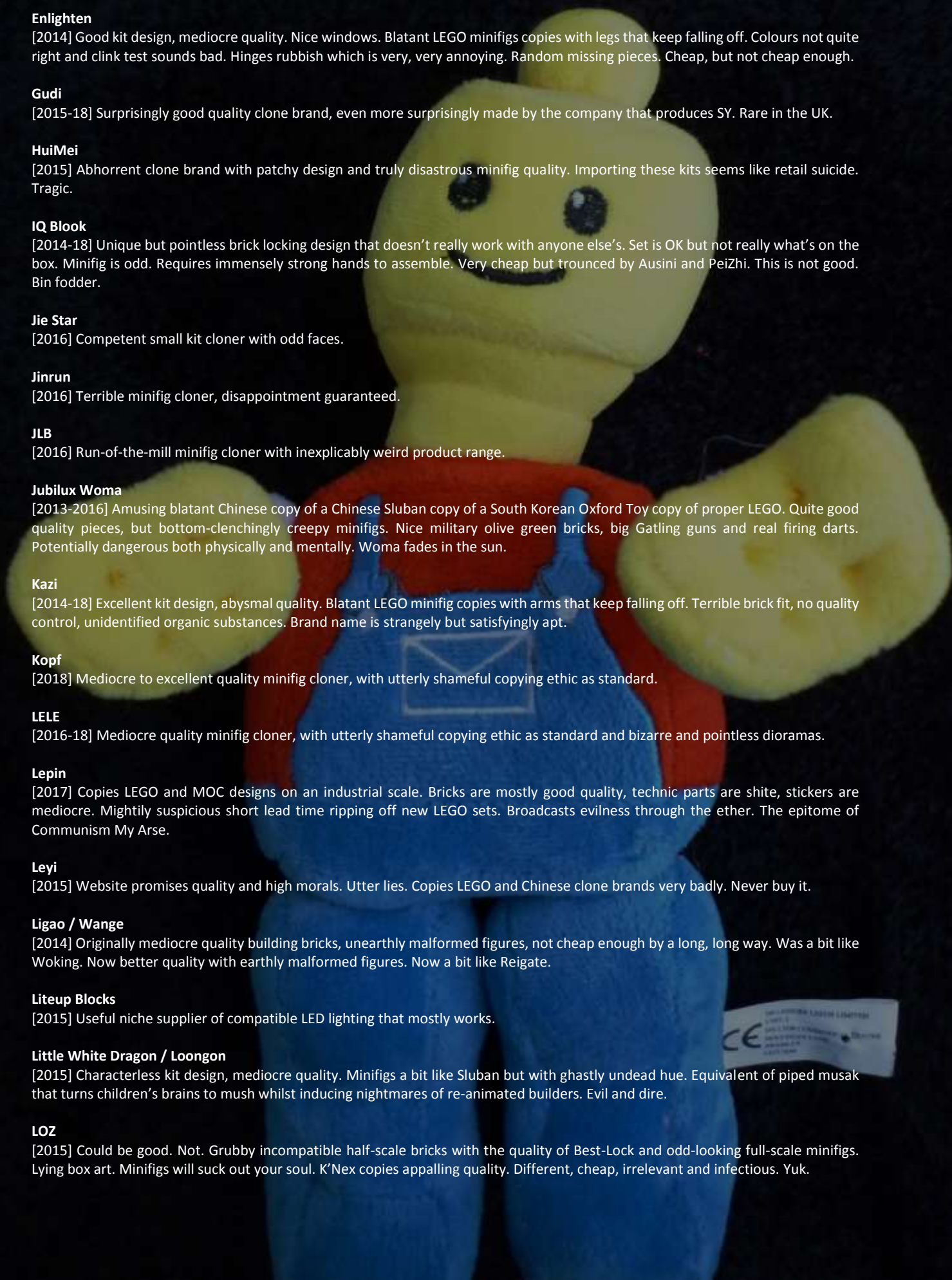
[2015] Useful niche supplier of compatible LED lighting that mostly works.

Little White Dragon / Loongon

[2015] Characterless kit design, mediocre quality. Minifigs a bit like Sluban but with ghastly undead hue. Equivalent of piped musak that turns children's brains to mush whilst inducing nightmares of re-animated builders. Evil and dire.

LOZ

[2015] Could be good. Not. Grubby incompatible half-scale bricks with the quality of Best-Lock and odd-looking full-scale minifigs. Lying box art. Minifigs will suck out your soul. K'Nex copies appalling quality. Different, cheap, irrelevant and infectious. Yuk.



Mega Bloks

[2013-2016] Character minifigs reasonable quality, poor quality bricks unless new camouflage colours. Occasionally infected. Mega Bloks think they are now an equal rival to LEGO and can charge the same price. Seemingly tasked with matching the evil Sluban and ensuring future US generations will be angry, militaristic and possess immensely strong hands.

OK

[2016] Minifig cloner, OK quality. Of course.

Oxford Toys / Kre-O

[2016] OK quality, densely packaged, rather basic and expensive. New Kreon minifig quite good. Niche marketing by Hasbro patchy, much like franchise film quality. An acquired taste.

PeiZhi

[2013-2018] Poor quality bricks that look dirty when new, kit design for almost the entire range laughably poor. Sets without minifigs are worthless. Quality control is not going up and occasionally diseased. OK minifigs with arms and legs that mostly stay on. Cheapest kits in the UK. Military sets very useful for Russian colours and minifigs, but nothing else.

PMS International

[2015] Rubbish imported clone bricks.

POGO

[2018] OK to excellent quality minifig cloner, with utterly shameful copying ethic as standard but occasional own designs.

Qiaoletong

[2016] OK quality cloner producing small OK kits. Yellow is too orange for good taste - except in Essex.

Quick Bricks

[2015] Poundland's wrong answer to DUPLO. Two types randomly in bags, both as bad as each other. Terrible in every way.

Sluban

[2014-18] Nice website, sets look professional, don't be fooled. Minifigs weird and rubbish quality with arms falling off, poor leg fit and un-grippy hands. Need mallet to assemble sets. Sluban is solely responsible for 100 million militaristic angry Chinese children with immensely strong hands. Horrible.

Star Diamond

[2015] Good to excellent set design, very high quality bricks and good minifigs, can be found occasionally for a competitive price. Apart from a few minor niggles virtually identical to the genuine article and have parts and colours not yet available from Denmark. A competitor to LEGO if kits ever get exported in numbers, which currently they don't.

SY

[2016] Poor to excellent clone brand, blatantly ripping off copyright. Epitome of the darker side of the hooky brands.

TY

[2016] Worst minifigs available, terrible fit, too much beige. Constant reminder of failure.

Weagle

[2016-18] Worse than Best-Lock, which is some feat. Appalling in every way, mostly not riddled with disease. A lesson that there is a limit to cheap manufacture. Shockingly poor. Note to UK importers: PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE STOP.

Wei Te Feng

[2015] DUPLO cloner, OK quality but staggeringly scary figures.

Winner

[2018] Military and technic kits, great design, mediocre quality plastic.

XINH

[2016] Poor quality minifig cloner with epic disrespect for IPR.

XQL

[2015] Astoundingly shite. It beggars belief how this company stayed in business. Requires hammer, immensely strong hands, glue, anger, and ultimately a bin.

Review Tables, Sets, 2017-18

Company	ANKER Play	ANKER Play	ANKER Play (PeiZhi)	ANKER Play	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH (IQ Blook)	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	Blox	Blox	CaDA	Cartoon Cars
Model	Bulldozer Pit	Oil Rig Rescue	Police Car	Steam Roller	Beauty Salon	Dragster GT	Jet Ski	Medical Response	Rescue Engine	Response Force	Snowman	Snow Mobile	Black Cab	Fire Engine	Patrol Car	Cartoon Pickup
Quality*	70	70	70	70	40	60	Great	40	40	40	70	80	90	80	100	100
Value	90	100	100	90	20	90	Great	70	50	30	100	100	100	100	100	100
Fit*	70	70	80	70	40	70	Great	70	70	30	70	90	60	80	100	100
Compatibility	80	80	90	80	70	50	Great	70	80	70	100	100	90	90	100	0
Minifig*	50	50	70	40	10	50	N/A	40	40	30	N/A	80	N/A	40	100	N/A
Design	50	90	30	60	30	80	Great	20	10	0	80	80	90	70	100	100
Instructions	80	80	60	90	90	90	Great	80	90	90	100	90	90	90	100	N/A
Total	68	73	72	68	39	67	Great	54	53	35	80	92	84	75	100	86

Company	Click Brick (Star Diamond)	Click Brick (Star Diamond)	Click Brick (Star Diamond)	COGO	Decool	Gudi	Hsanhe	Hsanhe	Kazi	M.Y	M.Y	M.Y (Weagle)	M.Y	Sluban	Sluban	Wange	Winner
Model	Dump Truck	Dozer	Farm Tractor and Hay Rake	Corpse Flower	Caterham 620R	Cops N Crooks	Comer Coffee	Fast Food Restuarant	Field Army 155mm Howitzer	Buggy	Jet Ski	Kitchen	Space Craft	Coastguard Cutter	Army Jeep	Snowmobile	Row Crop Tractor
Quality*	100	100	100	90	90	100	90	95	50	90	95	40	100	50	90	95	80
Value	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	60	60	80	70	100	100
Fit*	100	100	100	100	90	100	100	100	80	90	100	70	100	60	90	95	95
Compatibility	100	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	70	100	80	90	90	100
Minifig*	N/A	N/A	100	80	N/A	95	90	95	90	90	90	60	N/A	50	40	90	N/A
Design	70	60	80	80	100	60	100	100	100	80	100	70	70	70	70	100	100
Instructions	100	100	100	80	90	100	100	100	90	100	100	90	100	60	90	90	90
Total	97	96	98	89	-188	95	97	98	83	92	97	63	91	61	76	94	93

Review Tables, Minifigs, 2017-18

Company	ANKER Play	ANKER Play	ANKER Play	ANKER Play	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	Blox	Blox	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf
Model	Red Rage	Arrowhead	Centrum	Green Force	Human Lightier	Dudpool	Dr Bronx	Damp Squall	Botman	Shaz	Lee	Chantelle	Gaz	Police (female)	Police (male)	Ronald	Donald	Elvis	Scotty	Edward
Hair/Headgear	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	40	40	30	30	30	30	70	70	100	90	100	70	70
Head	20	10	20	10	70	70	70	60	40	30	30	30	40	90	80	100	80	80	70	70
Torso Assembly	40	40	40	40	60	60	80	70	60	30	30	40	40	70	70	80	80	90	70	60
Hands	60	60	60	60	20	20	20	20	20	50	50	50	50	50	50	90	90	90	70	70
Legs Assembly	20	20	20	20	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	90	90	90	60	60
Quality	30	20	30	20	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	60	50	80	90	70	70	70
Compatibility*	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	90	90	90	100	100
Design	60	50	60	50	60	60	70	60	50	50	50	60	50	50	50	100	90	100	90	90
Value	80	80	80	80	50	50	50	50	50	70	70	70	70	70	70	100	100	100	100	100
Total	33	30	33	31	40	40	43	40	36	36	36	38	37	51	49	92	-89	-90	-80	-79

Company	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	Kopf	LELE	MY	MY	MY	MY	Pogo	Pogo	Pogo	Pogo
Model	Tom	Michael	Robocop	Wayne	Hell Boy	Clubber	He-Man	Skeletor	Bob	David	Lone Ranger Soldier	Brown Soldier	Green Soldier	Grey Soldier	Black Soldier	Watto	Captain Britain	Ripley	Alien
Hair/Headgear	90	80	N/A	100	N/A	100	80	100	90	90	100	30	20	30	20	100	N/A	90	N/A
Head	100	100	110	100	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	20	10	10	10	N/A	80	100	100
Torso Assembly	100	90	110	80	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	20	30	30	10	100	90	100	100
Hands	100	100	100	80	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	10	10	10	10	90	100	100	100
Legs Assembly	90	90	110	80	100	100	90	100	100	90	100	10	10	10	10	100	100	90	100
Quality	100	90	100	90	100	90	90	100	95	90	100	10	10	10	10	100	80	90	100
Compatibility*	100	100	100	90	90	90	90	90	100	100	90	10	10	10	10	90	90	90	100
Design	100	90	100	100	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	20	20	20	10	100	100	100	100
Value	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	30	20	20	30	100	100	100	110
Total	-98	-94	-103	-90	98	97	89	98	97	95	-98	17	15	15	14	-92	93	-95	101

Review Tables 2015-16

Company	Best Lock	Best Lock	Bloc Kits (Qiaole tong)	Block Constr-uction (PeiZhi)	Block Constr-uction (Weagle)	Block Constr-uction (Weagle)	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	Blox	Blox	BRIK PIX	Cobi	First Blox	Kids Create (Dream-lock)	Kool Blox (Qiaole-tong)	Kre-O	M.Y (Jie Star)	M.Y	Mega Bloks	Mega Bloks	Mega Bloks	Woma
Model	Convertible	Firefighters	Patrol Jeep	Army Vehicle	Vehicle Set 1	Vehicle Set 3	Tree and Elf	Snowman and Post	Pterodactyl	Beach Cafe	Velociraptor	Dreamworks Puzzles	T-34/76	Happy Home	Naughty Kitty	Construction Team	Autobot Jazz	Pirate Attack	Police Boat	Minions Fire Rescue	Minions Dance Party	Police Force Chopper	Vacation House
Quality*	0	10	90	70	20	10	70	60	90	70	60	70	95	70	80	80	100	80	70	80	90	80	70
Value	50	70	100	100	100	50	20	50	80	70	100	50	60	100	100	100	70	100	90	70	40	80	70
Fit*	30	30	100	80	30	0	70	70	100	60	90	60	100	100	100	80	100	80	80	90	100	90	80
Compatibility	60	70	100	90	80	50	90	90	90	80	90	90	100	100	100	70	90	90	90	100	100	90	90
Minifig*	N/A	20	N/A	40	10	0	40	N/A	N/A	20	N/A	N/A	50	100	N/A	N/A	80	80	60	100	100	70	50
Design	40	10	90	60	40	0	50	40	80	70	90	80	80	90	80	80	60	80	70	70	90	70	40
Instructions	100	100	70	60	50	40	50	60	60	100	90	N/A	100	N/A	50	90	100	100	70	100	100	100	80
Total	39	37	93	70	39	17	54	63	86	62	87	78	83	92	81	83	89	85	74	88	89	82	68

Company	Cobi	Cobi	Dargo	Dargo	Decool	Elephant	Jinrun	Jinrun	JLB	JLB	LELE	Mega Bloks	OK	SY	SY	SY	SY	TY	XINH	XINH
Model	Scooby Doo	Shaggy	Hulk	Black Widow	Zombie World	The Walking Dead Series 1	Han Solo	Clone Trooper	Athena	Mr Bean	SCO19	Minions Series 3	Megatron	Lt Hammerman	Monster School	Expendables	Storm	Random Minifigs	Ghost Busters	Kid Flash
Hair/Headgear	N/A	N/A	80	80	100	95	40	80	80	70	90	70	90	100	80	80	90	70	50	70
Head	90	70	100	70	100	100	70	80	70	70	80	N/A	80	90	80	80	100	70	80	70
Torso Assembly	90	70	90	100	90	100	70	70	60	60	60	90	90	100	90	100	100	10	50	60
Hands	N/A	80	90	90	90	100	80	80	90	90	90	80	100	100	90	90	100	20	70	70
Legs Assembly	90	60	80	100	80	100	70	70	70	50	60	80	100	100	80	100	100	10	50	60
Quality	50	50	80	90	90	95	30	0	60	60	60	80	80	100	80	90	90	5	40	50
Compatibility*	50	20	90	80	90	100	80	80	80	80	100	10	90	100	90	100	100	80	70	80
Design	100	90	90	90	90	100	50	90	100	90	90	90	100	100	100	100	100	50	40	90
Value	70	70	90	90	100	100	70	70	90	100	100	40	100	100	100	100	100	70	50	70
Total	74	59	88	87	92	99	64	72	78	75	83	63	92	99	88	94	98	46.5	57	70

Review Tables 2014-15

Company	Ausini	Ausini	Lexington Park (Ausini)	BELA	Best-Lock	Bloc Kits (Peizhi)	Bloc Kits (Peizhi)	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	BLOCK TECH	Fright Nite	Fright Nite	Funtastic Armed Forces	Funtastic Armed Forces	Funtastic Armed Forces	Funtastic Super Cars	Funtastic Building Site	Funtastic Building Site	Funtastic Fire	Funtastic Fire	Funtastic Fire	LELE
Model	Construction Digger	Police Helicopter	Racing Championship	City Park Cafe	120 Piece Army Kit	Dune Buggy	Jet Ski	Dinosaur Island	Dinosaur Island Figures	Girls Go Shopping	Advent Calendar 2014	Pumpkin Head	Skull	4x4	Tank	Drone	Formula GX	Fork Lift	Foreman	Helicopter	Fire Truck	Fast Response Vehicle	The LELE Movie
Quality*	70	60	70	50	70	70	70	60	N/A	60	50	80	60	70	50	70	80	80	70	70	70	70	80
Value	80	100	100	50	100	100	90	100	N/A	100	30	70	70	100	80	70	90	100	30	90	40	80	70
Fit*	80	70	80	70	100	80	80	70	N/A	70	70	80	80	70	70	70	90	70	70	70	70	80	80
Compatibility	90	90	90	80	80	90	90	90	N/A	80	80	80	80	70	70	70	90	80	70	80	80	80	100
Minifig*	70	80	70	80	30	60	60	60	20	70	N/A	N/A	N/A	80	80	80	70	70	70	70	70	70	90
Design	60	30	70	0	90	100	80	80	N/A	20	40	60	50	60	30	40	60	70	20	60	40	70	40
Instructions	N/A	N/A	90	0	70	80	80	60	N/A	50	70	60	50	40	40	40	50	60	60	60	60	60	N/A
Total	74	62	79	47	74	79	76	71	20	65	60	75	71	71	62	66	77	75	60	71	65	77	-79

Company	M.Y (Leyi)	Liteup Blocks	BLOCH TECH (Loongon)	LOZ	Toy Mania (PeiZhi)	Toy Mania (PeiZhi)	Toy Mania (PeiZhi)	Funtastic (PeiZhi)	Funtastic (PeiZhi)	PMS International	M.Y (Star Diamond)	Blox	Blox	Blox	Blox	Blox	Character Building	Click Brick	Donglin	BLOCK TECH (Gudi)	BLOCK TECH (Gudi)
Model	Fire Engine	USB Lamppost Light	Earthworx	Scooter	Battlefield	Police Squad	Space	Rocket 4x4	Tank	Building Blocks	Farm Tractor	Ice Cream Van	High Speed Tanker	Home Sweet Home	Helicopter	Figures	Football Spot Kick	Grader	Riddle Bricks	Santa Claus	Snowman
Quality*	40	90	60	20	70	70	60	70	70	20	100	70	60	70	60	N/A	80	100	40	95	100
Value	50	100	80	80	100	80	90	90	100	50	100	100	80	100	90	N/A	70	100	100	100	100
Fit*	30	100	70	70	80	90	80	70	80	10	100	100	70	90	70	N/A	80	100	50	100	100
Compatibility	80	100	60	80	80	80	70	80	80	0	100	80	90	90	80	N/A	90	100	0	100	100
Minifig*	50	N/A	20	N/A	70	70	60	60	70	N/A	95	20	N/A	20	20	20	50	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
Design	80	90	50	80	70	60	80	60	40	0	100	60	70	60	50	N/A	80	100	80	100	90
Instructions	50	N/A	60	30	60	60	60	60	60	N/A	100	80	90	80	70	N/A	50	100	N/A	100	100
Total	50	96	54	57	75	74	70	59	72	14	99	70	76	70	57	20	71	100	50	99	98

Company	Weagle	Wei Te Feng	Mega Bloks	Kre-O	SY	SY	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	Decool	LEGO	LEGO	LEGO	LEGO	LEGO
Model	Police Helicopter	Country Train Set	Chopper Strike	Star Trek Bird Of Prey	Wolverine	Star Wars	Black Widow	Wolverine	Iron Man Mk1	Phoenix	Cyclops	Joker	Fantastic Four	Green Lantern	Batch 2: 9 Superheroes	Big Hulk	Big Thing	Dragon Ball Z	Benny's SPACE-SHIP!	Mos Eisley Cantena	Double Decker Couch	SW Advent Calendar 2014	Tractor and Plough
Quality*	30	60	100	100	N/A	60	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	100	100	100	100
Value	60	100	70	100	N/A	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	80	70	110	80	100
Fit*	30	80	100	100	N/A	80	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	100	100	100	100
Compatibility	70	70	90	100	N/A	80	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	100	100	100	100
Minifig*	0	60	60	100	50	70	90	95	95	90	95	100	95	90	90	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	100
Design	40	90	100	100	N/A	90	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	110	100	100	100	100
Instructions	30	N/A	90	95	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	100	100	100	100
Total	32	73	87	99.5	0	0	0	0	95	0	0	0	95	0	0	0	100	90	99	97	101	98	100

Review Tables 2013-2014

Company	LEGO	LEGO	Airfix	Mega Bloks	Mega Bloks	Mega Bloks	Kre-o	Cobi	Enlighten	Enlighten	Kazi	Sluban	Ligao	Little White Dragon	LOZ	LOZ	KIDDIE LAND	Best-Lock	Best-Lock	Blox	Blox	Blox	Blox
Model	Cement Mixer	Olivia's Beach Buggy	Quick Build F-22 Raptor	Baker Smurf	Brute Prowler	Heavy Armor Outpost	Basic Optimus Prime	Challenger II Tank	Diesel	Carriage	Chinook	HEMTT	Speed Car	Crane Truck	Fire and Police Car	Helicopter and Boat	Farm Set	Racing Car	SWAT	Fire Engine	Combine Harvester	SWAT Cruiser	Construction Truck
Quality*	100	100	80	60	95	95	80	95	80	80	50	60	70	60	40	30	70	Nope	10	None	Still none	Erm...	Missing
Value	100	80	70	40	70	80	50	90	80	90	50	90	40	50	100	100	100	40	50	30	70	30	20
Fit*	100	100	80	70	100	100	90	90	90	60	70	60	60	60	70	50	60	20	20	15	20	15	15
Compatibility	100	100	70	70	90	90	90	90	100	100	100	90	90	60	20	20	70	60	60	65	60	50	40
Minifig*	100	100	N/A	100	95	70	NA	90	70	70	60	30	20	40	40	30	70	25	30	30	30	20	20
Design	110	90	100	80	100	100	70	90	100	90	100	90	50	40	40	30	70	40	30	20	80	30	10
Instructions	95	100	100	90	100	100	100	70	90	90	80	80	90	70	50	40	NA	30	60	35	50	35	35
Total	100.5	97	82.5	74	94	90	81	89	85	79	69	65	57	54	49	41	71	26	32	24	36	21.5	17.5

Company	Ausini	Ausini	Ausini	Ausini	Weagle	Weagle	IQ Block	PeiZhi	PeiZhi	PeiZhi	PeiZhi	PeiZhi	PeiZhi	PeiZhi	Jubilux Woma	Jubilux Woma	Click Brick	M.Y / Star Diamond	Star Diamond	Star Diamond	M.Y / Star Diamond
Model	Pizza Van	Ice Cream Truck	Construction Multi-Crane	Garden Cottage	Construction Digger	Fire Tender	UrbanX Sport	Space Cruiser	Space Craft	Military Car	Military Boat	Military Plane	Police Car	Attack Helicopter	Military Justice	Star Fighter	Tow Truck	City Bus	Delivery Truck	Ice-Cream Truck	Military Tank
Quality*	60	70	70	70	0	Pants	60	60	60	60	60	50	60	70	90	90	95	100	100	100	100
Value	100	100	80	100	10	Pants	100	100	100	100	100	100	80	100	80	70	70	100	60	60	100
Fit*	80	80	70	90	20	Pants	70	70	70	70	70	60	80	60	80	70	95	100	100	100	100
Compatibility	90	80	80	90	40	Pants	60	90	90	90	90	90	90	80	90	80	95	95	100	100	100
Minifig*	60	70	70	60	20	N/A	70	80	80	80	80	80	N/A	70	40	40	100	100	105	95	90
Design	70	60	60	90	5	Pants	80	50	60	70	60	10	30	70	80	80	80	90	100	100	90
Instructions	70	70	70	90	30	Pants	50	70	70	70	70	70	50	60	70	90	90	100	100	100	100
Total	73	75	71	81	16.5	Pants	69	73	74	75	74	65	66	71	74	72	92.5	98.5	97	95	97

Company	BanBao	Best-Lock	Blox	Cobi	Click Brick	COGO	HuiMei	Mega Bloks	Mega Bloks	Mega Bloks	PeiZhi	PeiZhi	Quick Bricks	Top Toys	Weagle	Weagle	Weagle	Weagle	Weagle	Weagle	Weagle	Xing Qi Le	Yixing (?)
Model	KFOR Tank	Fire Station	Police Cruiser	RAF Reaper and Remote Pilot	Mini Digger	Princess Playroom	Forklift	DJ Quack Moshi Monster	Schoolin' Smurfs	Smurf's Celebration	Army Vehicle	SPACE TOY FUN BAG	Bag of bricks	Metalix Build Your Own Car	Police SWAT Vehicle	Tipper Truck Roadworks Crew	Fire Engine	Police Car	MODEL TOY FUN BAG	PIANO AND STAGE	DISCO	Combat Mission	Brick Blocks
Quality*	40	0	40	80	90	60	20	50	50	60	50	40	20	40	20	10	0	0	20	60	30	0	0
Value	50	40	40	100	90	60	70	N/A	100	100	100	100	50	90	50	30	40	100	50	80	60	20	30
Fit*	20	10	40	80	90	60	30	70	70	80	70	50	10	60	10	20	10	20	10	50	30	0	0
Compatibility	10	20	50	90	90	70	50	90	70	70	90	70	0	50	50	50	30	50	30	70	60	30	0
Minifig*	20	10	20	80	80	50	20	80	60	70	70	40	N/A	N/A	10	10	10	10	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Design	40	0	20	90	70	70	60	70	80	80	60	30	30	60	40	50	30	20	20	90	50	40	N/A
Instructions	30	70	50	80	90	90	70	N/A	90	90	60	50	N/A	N/A	60	30	40	20	50	50	30	20	N/A
Total	29	17	36	84	86	63	39	70	70	76	68	51	19	65	27	24	18	26	21	51	32	14	5

Company Review Rankings 2018

Ranking	Company	No. of Reviews	Average Score		Ranking	Company	No. of Reviews	Average Score
1	CaDA	1	100		26	Sluban	3	67
2	LEGO	7	99		27	Top Toys	1	65
3	Gudi	3	98		28	Little White Dragon	1	54
4	Hsanhe	2	98		29	Anker Play	8	51
5	Star Diamond	5	97		30	Donglin	1	50
6	Lite-Up Bricks	1	96		31	Leyi	1	50
7	Click Brick	4	96		32	MY	7	49
8	Winner	1	93		33	BLOCK TECH	21	47
9	Oxford Toys / Kre-o	1	90		34	BELA	1	47
10	Cobi	2	87		35	Blox	16	45
11	Cartoon Cars	1	86		36	LOZ	2	45
12	Airfix	1	83		37	HuiMei	1	39
13	Enlighten	2	82		38	Best-Lock	4	37
14	Mega Bloks	5	80		39	BanBao	1	29
15	COGO	2	76		40	Weagle	11	28
16	Ligao / Wange	2	76		41	Quick Brick	1	19
17	Kazi	2	76		42	Decool	13	15
18	Ausini	7	74		43	XQL	1	14
19	Jubilux Woma	2	73		44	PMS International	1	14
20	Wei Te Feng	1	73		45	SY	2	6
21	KIDDIELAND	1	71		46	Yixing (?)	1	5
22	Character Building	1	71		47	POGO	4	2
23	PeiZhi	17	70		48	Kopf	15	-4
24	Funtastic	10	69		49	LELE	4	-84
25	IQ Blook	2	68		50	Lepin	1	-90

This table includes both set and minifig reviews. This can skew results. Also, there are many single reviews which may not reflect overall company competency. The most blatant copying is randomly punished by taking away points, so many companies suffer from despicability. Not unfairly. Some importers use other companies for bricks but use their own designs, such as Click Brick, Funtastic and BLOCK TECH. These are scored when there are differences between the original manufacturer and the brand user.

Hooky manufacturers that seem worth getting are CaDA, Gudi, Star Diamond and Hsanhe. Winner have good designs but some bricks are a horrible colour.