

The Tangram Book Reviews, 2003

Customer Reviews - Amazon.Com

Reviewer: [J. Guild](#) (Toronto,Canada)

And I thought I knew something about Tangrams..., Jan. 6, 2004

I have been solving Tangrams for over 50 years and have amassed a modest collection of Tangrams and books about Tangrams. However, until I found this book, I didn't realize how little I knew about them or how modest my little collection was. Up till now I thought the Penguin publication of Joost Elffers book including 1600 puzzles, plus the packaged set published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang in 1997; the Dover publication of Ronald Read's ; as well as the beautifully packaged sets by Crawford were about all that could be done on the subject.

Not so; Slocum has produced a magnificent book and has created the new definitive book on Tangrams.

I used to think there might be as many as 3000 possible problems. Slocum informs that Harold Raizer studied 104 books and card sets and of the more than 20,000 problems found 5900 different problems published before 1926.

Slocum has covered all the history and separated fact from fiction. He has reviewed all the major publications produced worldwide and included many photographs that nobody could possibly see without visiting museums and private collections around the world. His Bibliography and References is simply amazing with about 250 entries. On top of that he has given us 1756 problems to work on as well as providing the solutions. Even here, he has done a superb job of selecting these problems from the landmark books published over the years.

The high quality of the printing, color rendering and overall construction mirrors the high quality of the content of the book.

The title "The Tangram Book" tells it all; that's what this book will become.

On behalf of Puzzle lovers, and particularly Tangram lovers, I would like to congratulate Jerry Slocum and Sterling on their brilliant effort.

Reviewer: [S. Metzler](#)

I have lots of tangram books, but the well-illustrated history in this was one of the funnest and most amazing and thought-provoking things I have ever read.

The collection puzzles in the back, where the first known published source of each puzzle is given, is incredibly comprehensive - enough to keep me busy for years! Still, it is mentioned that the authors have found in their research over 5,000 (!) unique silhouettes - more than twice as many as they publish in this year... one wonders if they plan to come out with an encyclopedic collection of ALL of these silhouettes any time soon. I do hope so.

I am terribly grateful for this wonderful work.

Reviewer: **Charles Ashbacher**

Complete history and lots of problems, September 12, 2003

A tangram puzzle is one where you take a specific set of seven wooden pieces (called the tans) and put them together to construct a figure.

The rules of construction are simple:

*All seven pieces must be used. *The pieces cannot overlap. *The constructed figure must exactly match the desired figure.

These puzzles have a long, and sometimes inaccurately rendered history. It has been said that Napoleon Bonaparte whiled away the hours by constructing tangram figures. Slocum has spent a great deal of time and effort in determining the true history of the tangram puzzles, and the first ninety nine pages are devoted to the history of the tangram. Originally invented in China, it moved out into the world as the Europeans constructed their empires. For some time in the early nineteenth century, there was a tangram craze in Europe, and the book displays cartoons depicting people neglecting their spouses, children and other relationships while they attempt to solve tangram puzzles. This history is thorough and quite unique, demonstrating the powerful human need for quality, mind-stretching entertainment. The remainder of the book is a collection of over 2,000 tangram puzzles, with solutions. These problems have been culled from books of problems that have been published in the last two hundred years. Unless you have a phenomenal flair for these puzzles, you could spend the greater part of your life immersed in them. Everything from a sailboat to a waiter carrying a tray can be constructed from tangrams. There are no doubt tangram problems that do not appear in this collection, so it is not possible to consider it complete. Nevertheless, the number and range of problems makes this the authoritative work on tangrams and one that everyone interested in puzzles should read.

Furthermore, they make an excellent tool for the teaching of basic geometry and spatial relationships.

Published in the recreational mathematics e-mail newsletter, reprinted with permission.

Reviewer: "[otbbarrett](#)"

THE Tangram book to have!, July 4, 2003

Jerry Slocum and his team have done a fantastic job of pulling ALL the available known information about the Tangram puzzle into one gorgeous book. The research is extensive, the illustrations are plentiful and the pictures are superb. This is a must-have for anyone interested in this classic seven piece puzzle that has intrigued puzzlers for hundreds of years.