



Problem Solving with Jigsaw Puzzles

Did you know that Jigsaw puzzles are a great way to practice problem-solving skills that can be applied to many different tasks at school, work, or in your daily life? Work with a partner or small group to assemble a puzzle and then talk about the skills and strategies you used.



What You Need

- 2 or more players
- jigsaw puzzle

How to Play

- **Strategize.** As a team, come up with a strategy for assembling the puzzle. To choose a strategy, ask questions such as:
 - “Is there a way to group the pieces to make it easier to put the puzzle together?”
 - “How can we split the work between us to finish faster?”

Some common strategies include:

- Turning all the pieces picture side up
 - Assembling the edges of the puzzle first
 - Sorting pieces by color, shape, or type (i.e., edge vs. middle)
- **Assemble the puzzle.** Depending on the size and difficulty of the puzzle, you might be able to finish the whole thing in one sitting or you might choose to do some now and some later.
 - **Talk about it.**
 - How did you break down the big task of assembling the puzzle into smaller, more manageable tasks?
 - When something went wrong, what did you do to try to fix it?
 - What strategies did you use? Did your strategies change as you worked?

- Did you and your partner(s) work together or divide things up? What did each person in your team do? How did each person get their job? Did it just happen or did you decide on roles?
- How might you apply the techniques and strategies you used to assemble the puzzle to other problems or tasks in your life?

Other ways to play:

Feeling competitive? If you have enough people and puzzles for multiple teams, see who can get more of their puzzle completed in 15 minutes. Make a prediction about which puzzle you think will be easier or harder to complete quickly and why.

Want to work on a puzzle with a friend or family member in another location? Try a collaborative online puzzle site such as [Jigsaw Explorer](#). NOTE: To build an online puzzle as a team in multiplayer mode, you'll need one internet-connected device per person. Information on how to set up Multiplayer Jigsaw Puzzle Games for Jigsaw Explorer can be found [here](#).