



The Future of Toys

There will undoubtedly be an interesting development in the future of toys. Of course, there will be new fads (*instead of "Tickle me Elmo," it may be "Tickle me Cyborg"*), and toys will continue to grow more detailed and interactive. Even in our constantly evolving society, however, it's safe to say that some things won't change that much. If you're willing to look past all of the bright colors and fancy packaging, toys have remained pretty consistent for the past 10,000 years.

A century from now, babies will probably be playing with rattles and young children will be playing with dolls and action figures. These are the same sorts of toys that they were playing with a century ago, as well as the same toys they were playing with in the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia.



That's not to say that toys don't represent the changing times. While young girls today may choose to play with dolls (*just as they did in the Roman Empire*), they're not playing with the *same* dolls. Just look at the evolution of the world-famous Barbie doll. When Barbie was first introduced in 1959, she was dressed in a bathing suit. Flash forward to the year 2000 and you have Presidential Barbie, depicting her as a presidential candidate. Obviously, Barbie had come a long way in forty years. Her change represented the changing viewpoint of the general public. Other dolls, action figures, stuffed animals, and various toys will continue adjusting to fit the times. There will be more moving parts, more sound effects, and more exciting features.

While it's true that children have enjoyed the same toys for thousands of years, the impact of technology can't be dismissed. Today's children can get miniature automobiles that actually drive—the children in Ancient times weren't that lucky. As new toy making techniques are developed, toys get more sophisticated and entertaining. Computers have also had their impact. In the future, there may be "virtual reality" toys, similar to a three-dimensional video game.

One thing is for sure... the "must have" toys of today will be old news by tomorrow. As new movies get released, new television shows become popular, and new sports heroes rise up, the toy industry is the first to say, "*out with the old and end with the new.*" In 1983, the *E.T.* doll was all the rage. In 1996, it was "Tickle me Elmo." There's no way to even guess what will be clearing off the shelves in 2020 and beyond.

Something to think about...

Even as the toy industry produces more modern toys, there remain some toys that never go out of style. Over 2,000 years ago, the children of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman societies were playing with spinning tops, balls, rattles, marbles, hoops, and dolls. These same toys will result in millions of dollars in sales this year.

Other timeless classics—like checkers, chess, and playing cards—have also been around for a while. The people of India were playing a game called "Chaturanga" (which is very similar to modern chess) as early as 6000 BC. Checkers was being played by the Egyptians in 2000 BC, and playing cards came out in Asia in 1000 BC.