

Commercial games

These are good for developing mathematical & logical thinking. They've proven popular at various events with people of all ages.

Most of these games have many levels, the highest of which are often challenging even for mathematically-inclined adults.

Don't get fooled by the manufacturers' suggested age! Something like "8+" usually means an eight-year-old can follow the instructions and complete the first few puzzles.

game	# to play	multi-level?	main features	age	made by
Airport Traffic Control	1	yes	2D geometry, logic; this gets difficult quite quickly	8+	SmartGames
Anaconda	1	yes	2D geometry, logic; not only do you have to figure out how to put the snake together, you have to decide which side of each piece to use	7+	SmartGames
Animal Logic	1	yes	sequential reasoning; logic these puzzles go fairly quickly from straightforward to quite tricky	5+	Fat Brain Toys
Antivirus	1	yes	sequential reasoning, 2D spatial reasoning like Rush Hour but with an interesting diagonal grid	7+	SmartGames
Ball of Whacks	1+	no	beautiful 3D geometry; free-form construction involving strong magnets		Creative Whack Co
Bend-It	1	yes	2D geometric logic puzzle; bendable pieces make this game unusual	7+	SmartGames
Burst	1 or 2	no	3D geometry involving pentagons & hexagons; magnetic geodesic puzzle with variations	8+	MindWalk
Camouflage North Pole	1	yes	2D geometry, logic	6+	SmartGames

Cart Before the Horse	1	yes	logic, 2D spatial reasoning; very good for building verbal precision	8+	MindWare
Chocolate Fix	1	yes	logic, 2D spatial reasoning, visual clues	8+	ThinkFun
Colour Code	1	yes	2D geometry, pattern recognition; stack coloured shapes to make a given picture; appealing and easily accessible to younger students	5+	SmartGames
Connect4	2	no	2D logic, strategy; several versions available; easily accessible	6+	Hasbro
Dee Cubes	1	yes	wooden 3D geometric puzzles; make the shapes suggested or create your own	6?	Dee's Invention
Find Your Way Gnome	1	yes	pathways, spatial reasoning; connect gnomes to homes without paths crossing	8+	MindWare
Hide & Seek Canada	1	yes	2D shapes, logic; what makes this "Canadian" is pictures of moose, beavers, raccoons & grizzlies; other versions of the game (Pirates, Safari) are available	5+	SmartGames
Hoppers	1	yes	2D path, sequential reasoning; this is a variation on peg solitaire	8+	ThinkFun
IQ Circle IQ Blocks	1	no	2D geometric puzzles; I haven't seen these sold anywhere in years, but they are very popular whenever I bring them out	6?	Petoy
IQ Fit	1	yes	3D geometric puzzles; these get nicely challenging	6+	SmartGames
IQ Twist	1	yes	2D geometric puzzles; these become surprisingly tricky	6+	SmartGames

Izzi	1+	yes	2D logical puzzles, very visual; you can make this a free-form cooperative game for all ages	8+	
Katamino	1+	y	2D puzzles based on Pentominoes; appealing wooden blocks; lots of levels (some very difficult); extra pieces make it very accessible for the youngest children	3+	Gigamic
Lab Mice	1	yes	pathways, spatial reasoning; connect mice to cheese without paths crossing	8+	MindWare
Logic links	1	yes	logic; very good for building precision of speech; you can find age-specific versions at the MindWare site	5+	MindWare
Oblo	1	no	3D spherical puzzle; develops hand-eye coordination as well as spatial reasoning; very appealing		Great Circle Works
Penguins On Ice	1	yes	2D geometry, logic; you can change the shape of the pieces, which makes this unusual; the puzzles get hard fairly quickly	6+	SmartGames
Q-bitz	1+	yes	patterns; can played as solitaire, cooperatively, or as a competitive game; accessible for much younger children, with a bit of help	8+	MindWare
Quantumino	1	somewhat	3D geometry; very difficult (Katamino is more accessible) we're working on a way to make this multi-level and more accessible; look for the Youtube video	8+	Family Games
Quarto	2	no	patterns, strategy; you choose your opponent's next piece; lovely wooden pieces, very tactile	8+	Family Games
Qwirkle	1+	no	patterns, strategy; fun to play cooperatively (or solo) as well as competitively; feel free to make up your own patterns!	6+	MindWare
Qwirkle Cubes	2+	no	patterns, more strategy involved than with original Qwirkle	6+	MindWare
River Crossing	1	yes	order of operations, logic, 2D spatial reasoning	8+	ThinkFun

Rush Hour	1	yes	order of operations on a rectangular grid; 2D spatial reasoning very popular; there are apps for this!	8+	ThinkFun
Serpentiles	1	yes	2D geometry, logic (no longer manufactured)	8+	ThinkFun
Set	1+	possibly	pattern recognition, logic; fascinating for all ages; the original game is competitive – see my “Set variations” for cooperative and solitaire play; there are several versions available, including on-line	6+	Set Enterprises
Soccer Pyramid	1	no	3D puzzle (sadly, no longer manufactured)	8+	DaMert
Spot It	2+	no	pattern recognition, requires mental rotations and resizing; comes with several variations described by the manufacturer, all involving speed and competition; easily accessible	7+	Blue Orange
Square by Square	1	no	2D geometry, logic, visual; easily accessible	8+	ThinkFun
Sumoku	1+	yes	arithmetic, strategy	9+	Blue Orange
Swish	2+	yes	mental rotation of 2D shapes; can play cooperatively as well as competitively	8+	ThinkFun
Tantrix	1+	yes	2D mapping, logic; several versions available, including solitaire, multi-player, and on-line	6+	Family Games
Tipover	1	yes	3D spatial reasoning, order of operations, visual	8+	ThinkFun
Trucky3	1	yes	2D spatial reasoning; don't be fooled by the fact that it looks like a toy for toddlers - the puzzles get surprisingly tricky	3+	SmartGames
Turnstile	1	yes	2D order of operations, logic; this involves pieces that rotate, which is different	8+	ThinkFun
Unhinged	1	yes	geometry, logic gets tricky quite quickly	8+	ThinkFun
Utopia	1	yes	3D reasoning; easily accessible, popular there are on-line versions: Brainbashers calls it “Skyscrapers”, while	8+	Popular Playthings

			Simon Tatham calls it "Towers"		
22-kudu **	2+	yes	arithmetic crosswords, adaptable to various skill levels		Mad Cave Bird Games
3D tic-tac-toe	2	no	spatial reasoning; there are various versions, including on-line; much more interesting than the 2D version, as you keep playing until all the pieces are used up, then count the number of rows of three; outcomes are not easily predicted	5+	various, or make your own