



# Picture News

*Advanced*

4<sup>th</sup> May 2020

What's going on this week?



The toy world is in the grip of a llama obsession as the woolly South American animals become the new industry sensation! At the American International Toy Fair in New York in February, there were llamas everywhere! Knitted, plush and sequined, small and large; llamas on mobile phone cases and swimming pool floats, llama diaries, puzzles and even backpacks.

“The toy industry has historically thrived off of mainstream animals like cats, Pound Puppies, bunnies and bears, but now it’s time for the llama to have its turn under the sun,” said Richard Gottlieb, the founder and principal of the consultancy firm Global Toy Group. “We tend to like cute animals that are soft and sweet. But llamas are kind of funny-looking, aren’t they?” Parents who are spending a lot more time with their children these days - which is just about everyone because of the coronavirus pandemic, might have noticed the peculiar trend.

This week’s news story: <https://nyti.ms/3akdbUG>

This week’s useful video: <https://bit.ly/3eyZ3dl>



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## Main question:

### What makes some toys more popular than others?

#### Listen, think, share

- Read through this week's story and talk about our favourite toys when we were younger. Talk about how the types of toys we enjoy changed over time. Talk about the types of toys you enjoyed playing with! E.g. did you prefer models, Lego, skateboards, soft toys etc?
- Can you remember any toy trends from your childhood? Did you play with those toys or did you choose other things to play with? Can you produce a timeline of your favourite toys from your childhood?
- Were there any toys that you didn't like at all growing up? Talk about why.
- Are there any toys that you think transcend age and that all can play with, whatever age you are?
- Are you aware of any current toy trends? Do you think toys have changed much in general?
- Humorous catchphrases like "Save the drama for your llama," "No prob-llama," "Alpaca my bags" and the holiday-themed "Fa la la la llama" are popular across fashion. Have you seen any similar? If so, where have you seen them and why do you think they appeal to people?
- What is it about llamas that you think people like? What makes them interesting?
- Do you think when one trend arises, it generally pushes out another? Some people believe that the llama trend is pushing out the unicorn trend. Do you agree or do you think there is space for both?
- Stephen Berman, the co-founder and chief executive of the toy company JAKKS Pacific, which created the 'Who's Your Llama' collectible toy line, said his company's trend experts identified that the animal was a best seller in Japan, "Unicorns are magical, but llamas are real and relatable," Berman said. "They have different character attributes that kids can relate to. They blink, they grin, they spit. That translates well to the collectible phenomenon." Do you agree?
- Sylvana Ward Durrett, co-founder of the children's boutique Maisonette said parents were curating their children's toy collections to look good on Instagram and other social media platforms, "Ten years ago the decision came down to what was affordable. Today it's more complex: Is it chic? Does it fit in with the aesthetic of our family? We are buying for ourselves as much as we are for our kids." Do you agree that this could be happening?
- Ward Durrett also believes that llamas are more gender neutral and appeal to all and that this is a key factor for new toy trends. Do you agree?
- What would you predict could be the next toy trend?

#### Further questions for discussion

- Do you think there is an age where you stop enjoying playing with toys?
- What do you think it is that makes some toy trends so popular? Do you think the most popular toys have anything particular in common?