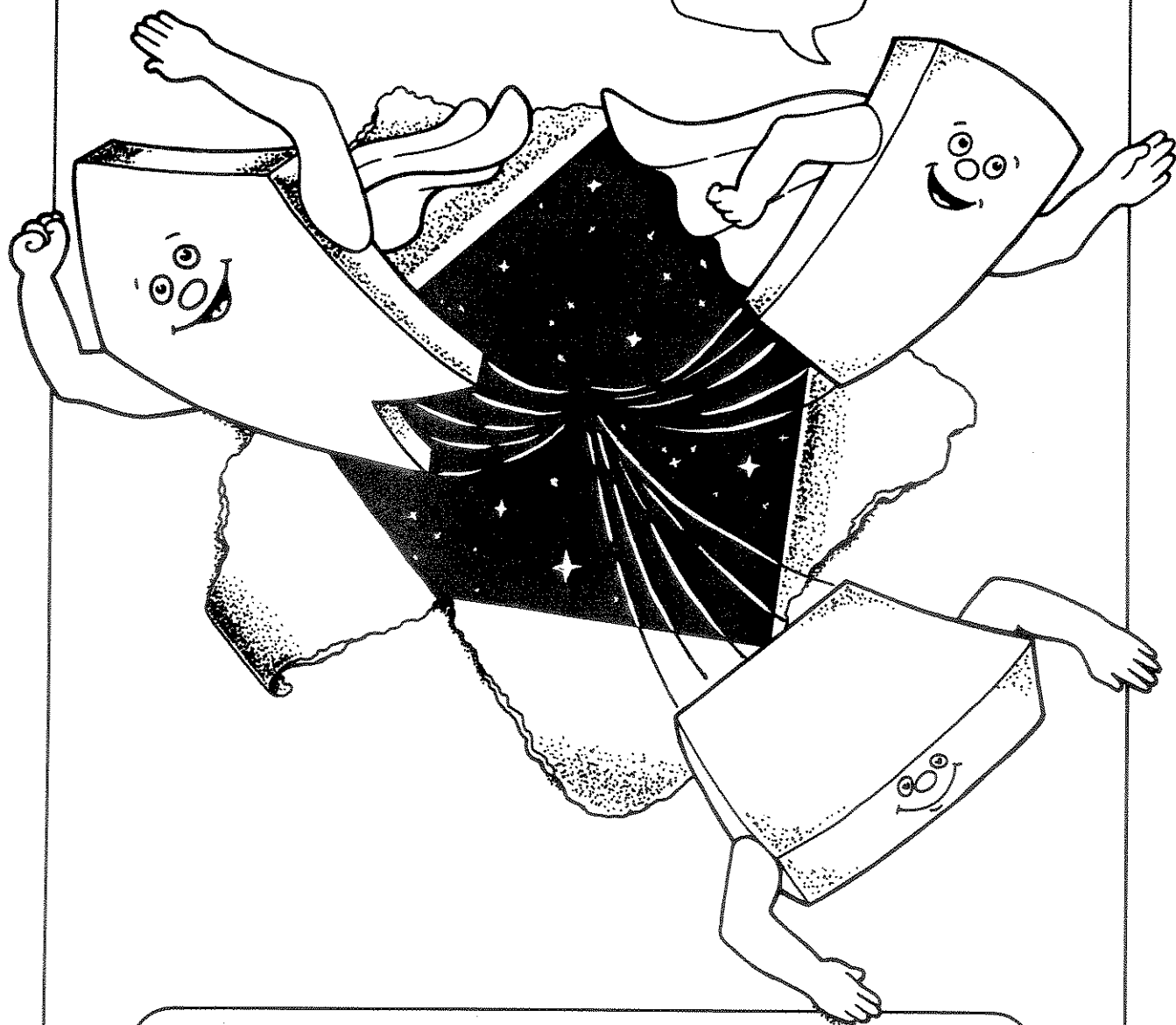


# SUPERTANGRAMS

For Beginners

2



Henri Picciotto • [www.picciotto.org/math-ed](http://www.picciotto.org/math-ed)

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For more activities involving superTangrams and related shapes, see  
<<http://www.picciotto.org/math-ed>>. Search for "puzzles".

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SuperTangrams™ are the geometric shapes that are formed by joining four isosceles right triangles (half-squares) edge-to-edge. They are called SuperTangrams™ because their underlying geometry is that of the old Chinese tangram puzzle. In fact, three of the SuperTangrams™ are identical to three of the tangram pieces. As with the tangrams, you can combine the SuperTangrams™ in an infinite number of ways to create various shapes.

Like tangrams, and pentominoes (to which they are also related), the SuperTangrams™ offer a recreational approach to many mathematical questions. Solving the puzzles can help students develop their intuitive feel for two-dimensional space, which will provide a solid foundation for the formal study of geometry.

Even students who have had experience with other geometric puzzles may find SuperTangrams™ quite challenging. There are two reasons for this. First, there are fourteen shapes, all different, whereas there are only seven tangram pieces in three different shapes. Second, because there are 45-degree and 135-degree angles, in addition to 90-degree angles, and the fact that all sides are not multiples of the same unit length, make the SuperTangrams™ trickier to put together than tangrams or pentominoes. With this in mind, the exercises in this book have been carefully designed to provide a step-by-step introduction to these exciting and brain-twisting shapes.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

You may want to keep copies of the puzzles in each set in separate folders. This will help keep them organized and make it easier for a student to work with a whole set at one time.

As much as possible, the puzzles are ordered by difficulty within each set, the easier ones coming first. The first puzzle in a set may be easier than the last one in an earlier set. If a student becomes frustrated, encourage him or her to try an easier puzzle.

Students may work through the pages in any order, but it is important that they keep track of their successes by marking on the checklist the puzzles they solve correctly. This allows students to see their progress, and motivates them to solve more puzzles.

For introductory activities for SuperTangrams™ see *SuperTangrams™ for Beginners: Book 1*. More difficult puzzles than those in the two beginner books are in *SuperTangram™ Activities: Book 1* and *Book 2*.

## Learning the SuperTangram™ Names and Symbols

To remember the names of the pieces, it will help to learn the alphabetical sequence BCHPRST. For each letter there are two SuperTangrams™ represented by the capital and lower-case letters. You can add vowels to make up a phrase such as "BeaCH, PReSTo" or "BaCH, PRouST" to make the letters easier to remember.

### Sets A, B, C (pages 5-7)

If students find other ways to make these figures, encourage them to record their discoveries. They can use these as additional challenges for their classmates.

Students will need to record their solutions to these puzzles on separate pieces of paper. Be sure there is enough paper available.

## Set D (page 8)

Use this page only with older or gifted students. You will also need plenty of recording paper for these puzzles.

## The Grid (page 9)

SuperTangram™ puzzles are impossible to solve if the pieces are not oriented correctly. Awareness of the grid that underlies the design of the pieces makes puzzle solving considerably easier. In sets E through G, the grid is drawn within the figures. This allows students to see immediately if they are placing a piece incorrectly. In other words, pieces should fit perfectly on the grid.

For example, if the grid is in the horizontal-vertical direction, as on page 38, the rectangle must be placed horizontally or vertically and the square must be placed diagonally. If the grid is in the diagonal direction, as on page 35, the rectangle must be placed diagonally and the square horizontally.

## Set E (pages 10-16)

Note that these figures are blown up versions of seven SuperTangrams™. It is possible to make other SuperTangram™ shapes and shapes in other sizes.

## Sets F, G (pages 17-38)

“Houses” are among the easiest shapes to make with SuperTangrams™. The houses in Set F are pentagons (five-sided), and the ones in Set G are hexagons (six-sided).

## The Fourteen-Piece Puzzle (page 39)

Symmetric figures utilizing all fourteen SuperTangrams™ are very hard to make. (If you or your students discover some, please send them to the author.)

Use the shapes on page vi as patterns to make SuperTangrams™ or as a check to make sure you have a complete set. Assign students to check the sets periodically to see that they are complete.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## CHECKLIST FOR THE SUPERTANGRAM™ PUZZLES

Use this checklist to keep track of which puzzles you have solved.

**Set A**                      Page 5  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Set B**                      Page 6  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Set C**                      Page 7  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Set D**                      Page 8  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Set E**  
Pages: 10    11    12    13    14    15    16

**Set F**  
Pages: 17    18    19    20    21    22    23    24

25    26    27

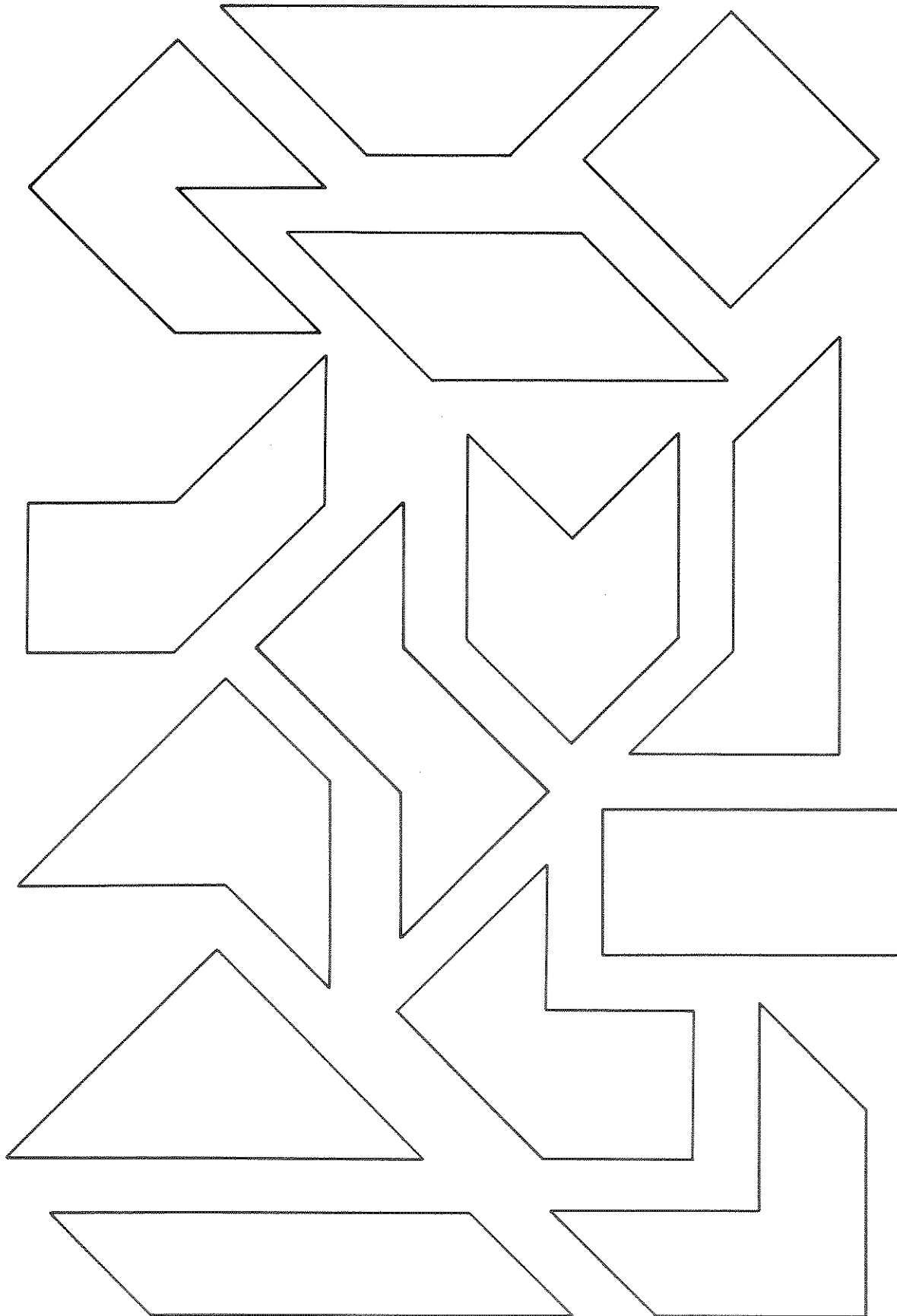
**Set G**  
Pages: 28    29    30    31    32    33    34    35

36    37    38

The fourteen-piece puzzle

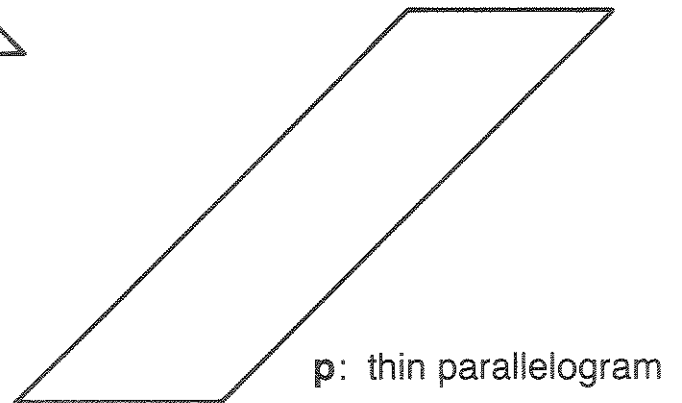
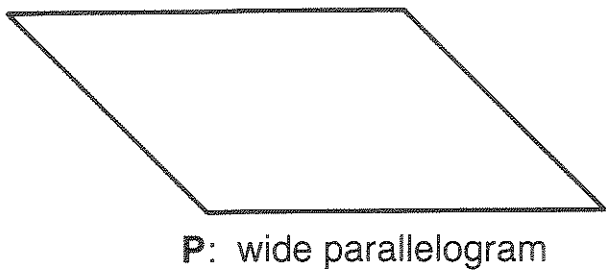
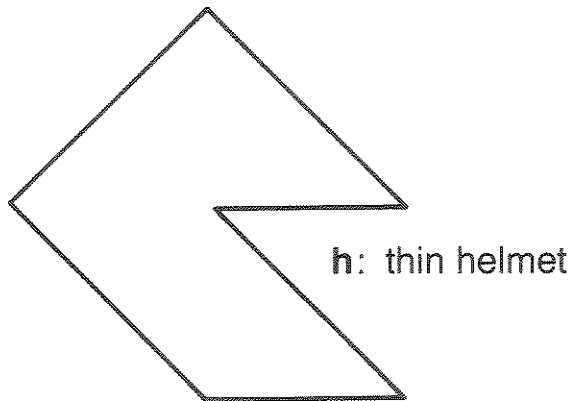
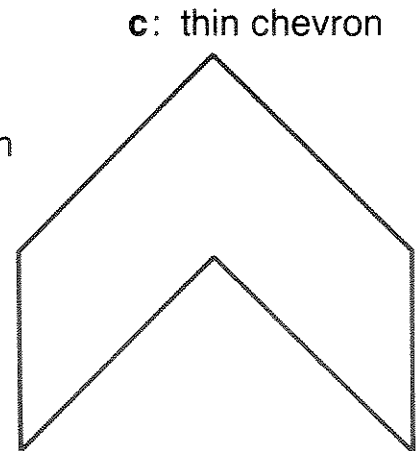
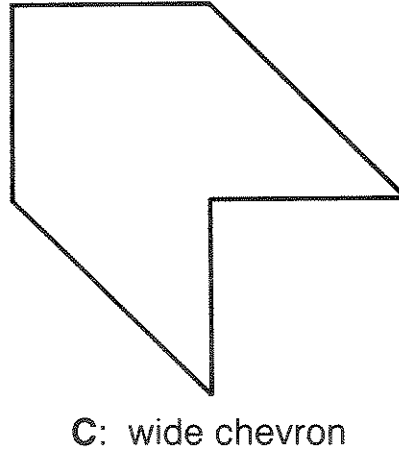
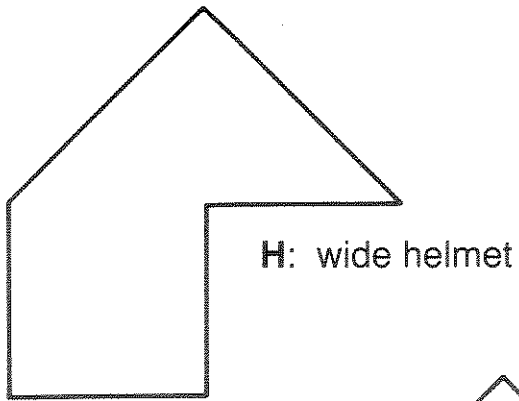
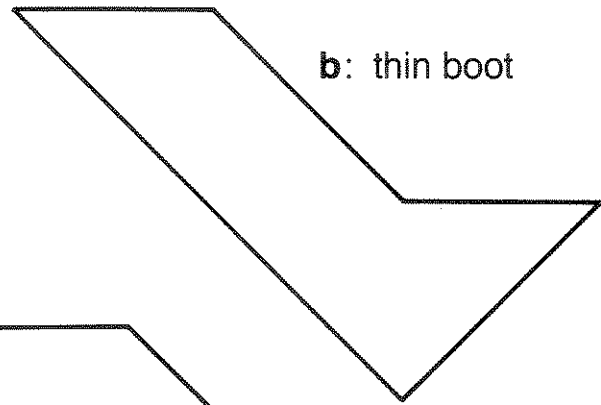
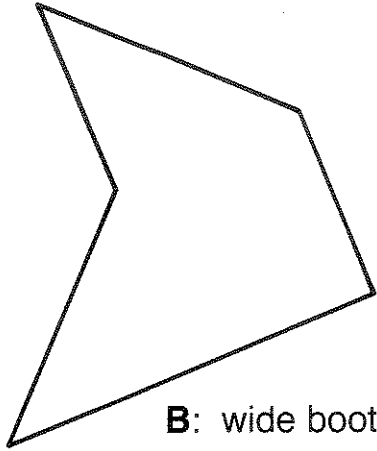
Page: 39

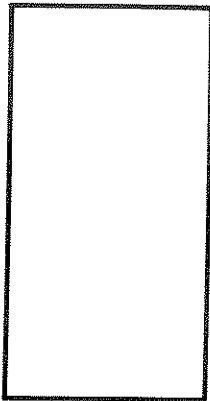
# SUPERTANGRAM™ PATTERNS



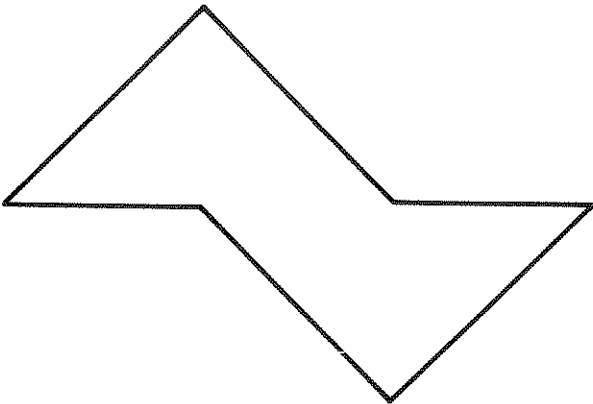
Each SuperTangram™ has a name and a letter symbol.  
They are shown on this page and the next.

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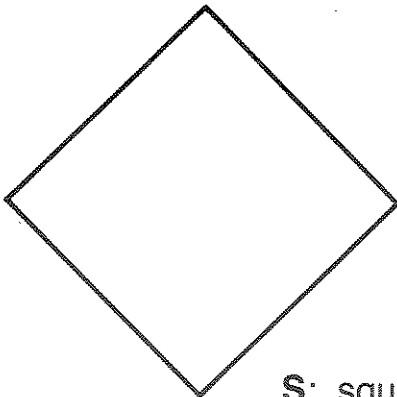




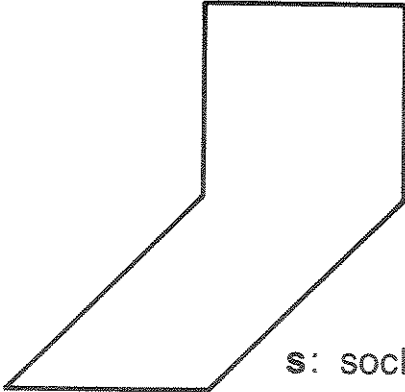
**R:** rectangle



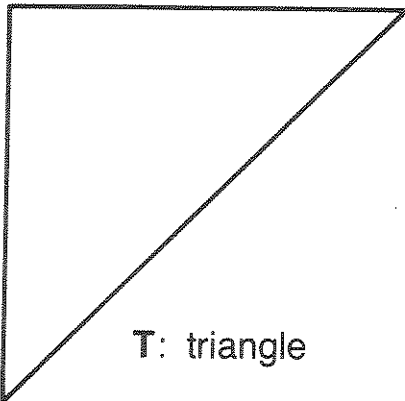
**r:** rotor



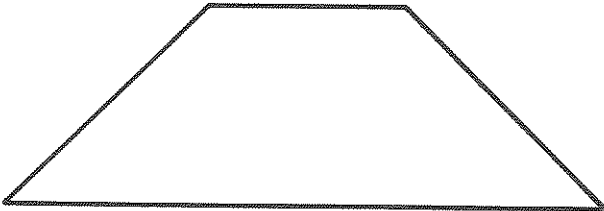
**S:** square



**s:** sock



**T:** triangle



**t:** trapezoid