
You Can Do The Cube By Patrick Bossert

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THE CLASSIC GUIDE THAT DEMYSTIFIED THE RUBIK'S CUBE: YOU CAN DO THE CUBE BY PATRICK BOSSERT

In the early 1980s, a colorful plastic puzzle took the world by storm. The Rubik's Cube, invented by Hungarian architect Ernő Rubik, became a global phenomenon almost overnight. But while millions of people twisted and turned the cube in frustration, only a small fraction could actually solve it. Then, in 1981, a young British schoolboy named Patrick Bossert changed everything. He wrote a small, unassuming book called **You Can Do The Cube**. This guide did not just teach a solution; it gave hope, confidence, and a method to millions. More than four decades later, the book remains a landmark in puzzle literature. In this article, we will explore the history, methods, and lasting legacy of **You Can Do The Cube By Patrick Bossert**.

The Birth of a Bestseller: How a 13-Year-Old

Wrote the Ultimate Cube Guide

Patrick Bossert was only thirteen years old when he first solved the Rubik's Cube. Like many others, he was captivated by the puzzle's challenge. But unlike most, he developed a systematic, layered approach to solving it. His method was clear, logical, and surprisingly simple for beginners. Encouraged by his father, a publisher, Bossert turned his notes into a book. Published in 1981 by Puffin Books, **You Can Do The Cube** quickly became a runaway success. It topped bestseller lists in the UK and the United States, selling over 1.5 million copies by 1982. The book's timing was perfect: the Rubik's Cube craze was at its peak, and people desperately needed a reliable, easy-to-follow solution.

What Made This Guide So Special?

Many cube solutions existed at the time, but **You Can Do The Cube By Patrick Bossert** stood out for several reasons. First, it was written by a peer—a

teenager who understood the frustrations of other beginners. The tone was encouraging, not intimidating. Second, Bossert's method used a layer-by-layer approach, which became the standard for most future beginner methods. Third, the book used clear diagrams and simple notation. Instead of complex algorithms, Bossert presented sequences as "moves" with memorable names like "The Eight Move" and "The Twenty-Five Move." This made learning feel like following a recipe rather than memorizing abstract math.

THE LAYER-BY-LAYER METHOD EXPLAINED

Bossert's solution broke the cube into three stages: the first layer, the second layer, and the final layer. This is now the most common way to teach cube solving worldwide. Here is a brief overview of each stage as presented in the book:

- **Stage 1 - The First Layer:** The solver starts by completing one face (usually white) and aligning the edges so that the adjacent centers match. Bossert provided straightforward patterns to position each corner piece without disturbing previously placed ones.
- **Stage 2 - The Second Layer:** After the first layer is complete, the middle ring is solved by inserting edge pieces using two simple sequences. The book called these the "Twist" and the "Flick." They are still taught today as standard algorithms.
- **Stage 3 - The Final Layer:** This is the trickiest part. Bossert used a series of moves to first orient the last layer's edges, then position the corners, and finally orient the

corners. His famous "Twenty-Five Move" sequence (sometimes called the "Final Sequence") would solve the entire cube from a specific pattern. The book reassured readers that even if they messed up, they could start again without fear.

The Notation and Diagrams: Making the Impossible Accessible

One of the most impressive aspects of **You Can Do The Cube** is how it handles notation. Modern cubers use a letter-based system (R, L, U, D, F, B) that can be daunting. Bossert instead used arrows, symbols, and simple arrows to indicate turn directions. Each move diagram showed which face to turn and how many times. The book also used a "before and after" illustration for each sequence, so readers could check their work. This visual approach eliminated confusion and made the guide usable for children as young as eight or nine. The book even included a practice drill called "The Six Move" to help beginners develop finger dexterity.

Cultural Impact: How One Book

Shaped a Generation of Cubers

The success of **You Can Do The Cube By Patrick Bossert** had ripple effects far beyond the 1980s. It inspired countless other guides, videos, and eventually online tutorials. Many of today's speedcubers, including world record holders, credit this book as their first introduction to solving the cube. The book also contributed to the cube's staying power. When the initial craze faded in the mid-1980s, the knowledge of solving it remained because so many people had learned from Bossert's method. In the 2000s, when the Rubik's Cube experienced a revival, the book was republished and remained in print. It even became a collector's item, with original copies fetching high prices online.

CRITICISMS AND LIMITATIONS

No method is perfect, and Bossert's solution has its drawbacks. The final layer sequences can be quite long—up to 25 moves—and require memorizing specific patterns. This makes it slower than modern beginner methods like CFOP (which is an advanced method) or even the simpler "Dan Brown" method. Some critics point out that the book's notation, while friendly, is not scalable for learning more advanced techniques. However, these limitations do not diminish its historical importance. For its time, it was the most accessible method available, and it served its purpose admirably.

The Legacy of Patrick Bossert

After the monumental success of his book, Bossert did not become a professional cuber. He went on to study at the University of Cambridge and later pursued a career in technology. Yet his name remains synonymous with the Rubik's Cube beginner method. In interviews, Bossert has expressed amazement at the book's longevity. He wrote it as a hobby project, never anticipating it would become a cultural touchstone. The book's title, **You Can Do The Cube**, has entered the lexicon as a phrase representing perseverance and achievable mastery. Even today, if you search for "how to solve a Rubik's cube," you may find references to Bossert's work.

Comparing Bossert's Method to Modern Approaches

Today, speedcubers use methods like CFOP (initially developed by Jessica Fridrich) that can solve a cube in under ten seconds. But for beginners, the layer-by-layer approach championed by Bossert remains the most intuitive. Many modern tutorials, including popular YouTube videos, follow essentially the same structure: first layer cross and corners, then middle edges, then last layer orientation and permutation. The difference is that modern algorithms are

more efficient, often requiring fewer moves. Bossert's method uses around 150 moves on average; modern beginner methods can solve in about 80-100 moves. Still, for a thirteen-year-old in 1981 to devise a system that works reliably is a remarkable achievement.

WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM THIS CLASSIC GUIDE TODAY

Even if you already know how to solve a Rubik's Cube, reading **You Can Do The Cube By Patrick Bossert** can offer historical perspective. It shows how puzzle-solving logic can be broken down into small, repeatable steps. The book also teaches patience and the value of a systematic approach. For parents introducing the cube to their children, using Bossert's friendly language and diagrams can be a gentle start. The book is still available in reprint editions and as a PDF. It makes a wonderful gift for any budding cuber.

Subheadings to Explore Further

To give you a more detailed look, here are some additional aspects covered in the book and its legacy:

- **Understanding the Cube's Anatomy:** Bossert explained centers, edges, and corners in simple terms. He taught that centers never move relative to each other, a key insight for solving.
- **The Power of Practice:** The book included exercises to build muscle memory, such as the "Six Move" and "Eight Move." These were

designed to be repeated until automatic.

- **Troubleshooting Common Errors:** Bossert anticipated where beginners might go wrong. He devoted pages to "what if I get stuck?" scenarios, offering recovery sequences.
- **Variations and Challenges:** The book briefly touched on patterns like the "Checkered Cube" and "Four Spots," encouraging readers to explore after mastering the solve.

Why the Book Still Matters in the Age of Apps and Videos

In a world of instant digital tutorials, a printed book from 1981 might seem obsolete. Yet **You Can Do The Cube** offers something that videos often cannot: a non-distracting, step-by-step reference that you can revisit at your own pace. There is no pause button needed; you can lay the book flat beside your cube and follow along. Moreover, the book's physicality adds a nostalgic charm. For many who grew up in the 80s, picking up that thin paperback with the bright cover is a trip down memory lane. The book also teaches a valuable lesson: complex problems can be solved with clear, logical instructions, no matter your age.

Conclusion

Few books can claim to have taught millions of people a skill that seemed impossible. **You Can Do The Cube By Patrick Bossert** is one of those rare works. Its simple, encouraging approach turned a frustrating puzzle into a fun, achievable goal. The layer-by-layer

method it popularized remains the foundation for almost all beginner cube teaching today. Whether you are a nostalgic adult who learned in the 1980s or a new generation cuber curious about the roots of the hobby, this book is a fascinating piece of puzzle history. As Bossert himself proved, with the right guidance, anyone truly can do the cube.