

Create Your Personalized License Plate



Vehicle registration plates have been around for almost as long as vehicles themselves. In 1901, New York was the first U.S. state that required its residents to have a license plate on their vehicle, but there was a catch: Vehicle owners had to make their own. Plates were made of metal, leather or even felt with the owner's initials as the identifier. Pretty different from today's plates, huh?

Check out this trivia and license plate timeline, then create your own! We can't wait to see what you come up with.

A Brief History of License Plates

1893 – France became the first country to issue “number plates” to vehicles.

1901 – New York mandated license plates for vehicles, but car owners were expected to produce their own until 1909.

1906 – West Virginia produced the first stamped metal license plate.

1921 – Although Alaska was not yet a state and had very few roads, its territorial government produced a license plate now considered the “Holy Grail” of historic plates by hobbyists and collectors.

1931 – Pennsylvania became the first state to issue customized license plates, which were limited to the driver's initials.

1944 – The metal shortage caused by World War II forced states to use alternative materials for plates, namely embossed fiberboard, cardboard and soybean-based plastic.

1957 – After meeting with world governments and international standards organizations, automobile manufacturers imposed uniform dimensions on license plates. The standard size for license plates in all American states was set at 6” x 12”.

1965 – The “vanity plate” was born when states began allowing drivers to customize their plates with letters and numbers.

1971 – After 3M introduced “High Intensity Grade Reflective Sheeting,” states made the product mandatory on license plates for improved visibility.

2007 – The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administration conducted North America's first state-by-state and province-by-province survey of vanity plates. The study found some 9.7 million vehicles with personalized vanity license plates in America and Canada.

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It's your turn to get creative!

Using any material you would like, create your own 6" X 12" vanity plate.

Share your image on the PCA Juniors Facebook page.

Just look for the post of this activity and share in the comments!

