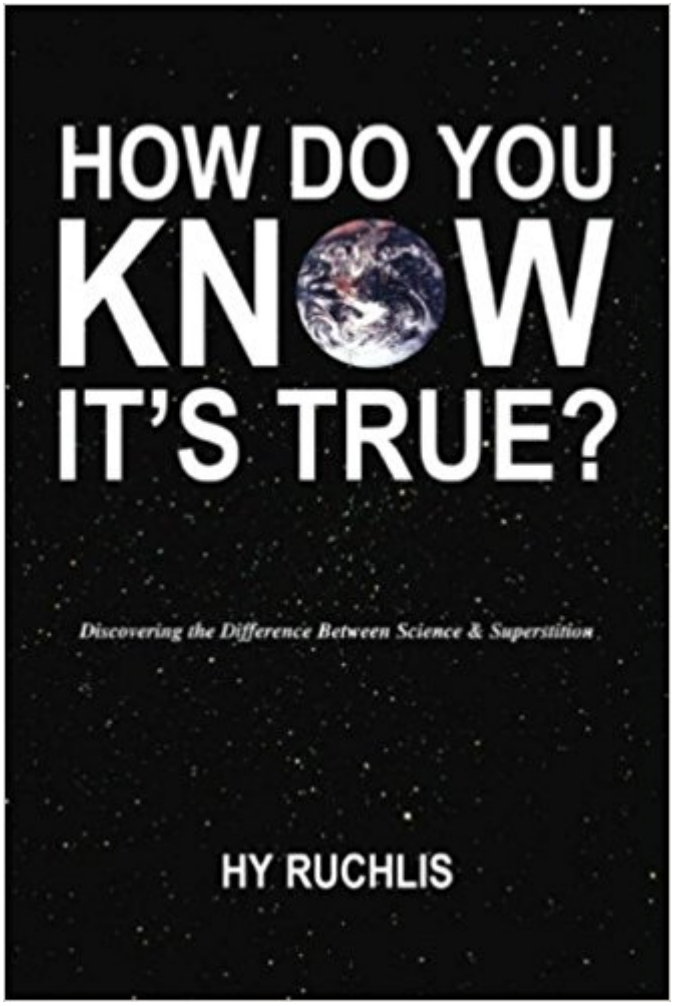
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How Do You Know It's True?



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Synopsis

Superstition still requires that many buildings have no floor numbered thirteen. More than 25% of Americans say they believe in astrology. Knocking on wood is an almost universal habit. Are these harmless notions - or dangerous delusions? Unfortunately, "fairy-tale thinking" is still the greatest enemy of progress, and education often bypasses the teaching of cognitive skills young readers can use to think independently.How Do You Know It’s True? will provide young readers with an understanding of the basic nature of science, not just as a body of knowledge, but as a way of thinking. Hy Ruchlis addresses the main theme by contrasting the Cinderella fable with the way scientists establish facts; he describes the scientific method and how it has been applied to increase human knowledge. In subsequent chapters, Ruchlis demonstrates the unobservable nature of superstition, illustrates the dangers of magical thinking using the example of the Salem witch trials, explores the contradictions of such elaborate superstitions as astrology, and shows how astonishing events can be analyzed and explained using rational methods.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Hy RuchlisÃ Â (1913-1992) was a physicist, teacher, and writer known for his scientific books aimed at younger readers. Ruchlis was a graduate of Brooklyn College and Columbia University, and went on to teach both at the secondary and college levels. He is the author ofÃ Â Clear

Thinking, How Do You Know ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s True?Ã Â andÃ Â How A Rock Came To Be In A Fence On A Road Near A Town.

The latest issue of Skeptical Inquirer magazine is celebrating the 40th anniversary of Scooby Doo.Traveling with Fred, Daphne, Velma and Shaggy, Scooby entertained me through many Saturday mornings with (yes, often poorly told) stories of ghosts and goblins that only seemed to be.But he also conveyed that all important message that things often aren't as they seem.In other words a healthy skepticism is perhaps just as important in understanding the world as any traditional academic skill. In this regard this book is a wonderful introduction to skepticism for kids reading it as one of their first few books on science or perhaps even one of their first few books at all.Told in easy to understand language the book simply describes the difference between a superstition and a scientific fact. It provides helpful clues to kids about where maybe they should stop and take a second look before leaping.In these regards I think the book also provides helpful life guidance. With their natural inquisitiveness and sense of wonder the beliefs of the young feature most prominently in the future of our society.I'd like to think, someday down the road, when faced down by some bright kid who's read this book or watched Scooby some dubious claimant may be forced to say:"I would have gotten away with it if it weren't for you kid."Even if you didn't like my last joke get your kid this book.

Stunningly presented title, cover that does not fail to catch people's eyes, attention & interest. They find it hard to ignore, especially children & teens, & the contents are equally brilliant to match.

I bought this book for my daughter who was about 11 at the time. I wanted her to understand the importance of using reasoning and critical thinking. Also, I wanted her to understand that this is something important to me and something I consider essential. Although the book was a huge departure from the fiction she normally reads, she did enjoy it. We read it together sometimes.The book discusses common examples of fairy tale thinking such as astrology. It discusses concepts like probability in order to explain how some things that may appear supernatural are easily explainable. It does address superstition but doesnt touch religion which was important to me as my wife is somewhat religious. I actually think that this book did make an impression on her. She is quick to question superstitions and the supernatural and attempts to explain them away. Im really proud of her.

Great book on teaching children how to think using logic and reason before coming to a conclusion. I think that this book or one just like it should be required for grade school kids. There are too many people seduced by superstitions, scams, and supernatural beings. Critical thinking classes are usually required in college, but not many people are given the chance to learn about the subject before that age. Most people hear about things like fortune telling, ghosts, and religions in childhood. Grade school is usually way before kids can make an educated conclusion about those topics unless they were taught to think critically early on in their education. The book has great true examples to illustrate how believing that supernatural things like demons or witches really exist can be dangerous.

This is a wonderful book about scientific thinking for kids older than 10. Warning to parents: this book does a number on Santa! My son (younger and not yet de-mythed) enjoyed the book immensely. I read it to him and skipped the offending paragraphs. Had the author skipped the Santa stuff this book would be great for gifted/talented kids who are much younger -- the writing is that clear and engaging!

I was hoping to get a great book for my 10-year-old daughter on the difference between science and superstition, but I was pretty disappointed by this book.The first section of the book is quite ranty in tone, which I didn't really care for. Astrology will fall down all by itself when subjected to scrutiny; there's no need to yell about it. I felt that the tone detracted from the objective stance I hoped for, and even made the author seem a bit insecure about his position.My real complaint, however, is about the second section, when Ruchlis tries to describe how Renaissance science got rid of older, incorrect ideas about a flat Earth and geocentric universe. He must not have checked his facts too well, because this science teacher believes the long-discredited Myth of the Flat Earth. (You can look it up on Wikipedia for a good summary.) Aristotle accepted the idea of a spherical earth, and Eratosthenes measured its circumference in 240 BC. Throughout the classical and medieval eras, educated people knew that the Earth is a sphere, and they had a good idea of how large it is. Ruchlis also, in my opinion, does not do a good job of describing the debate over the geocentric vs. heliocentric models of the solar system (for one thing, geocentrists did not believe that God had created the universe solely for us, nor that Earth was the most important thing in it--and Ruchlis fails to note that the Pope was quite sympathetic to Galileo until Galileo publicly insulted him in his written debate).I did quite appreciate the last section, where Ruchlis reminds us that we stand on the shoulders of giants. I will still have my daughter read this book--but we'll be discussing the errors

it contains! I suppose it does serve as a great lesson on how we always have to be careful about making mistakes and examining our thinking.

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