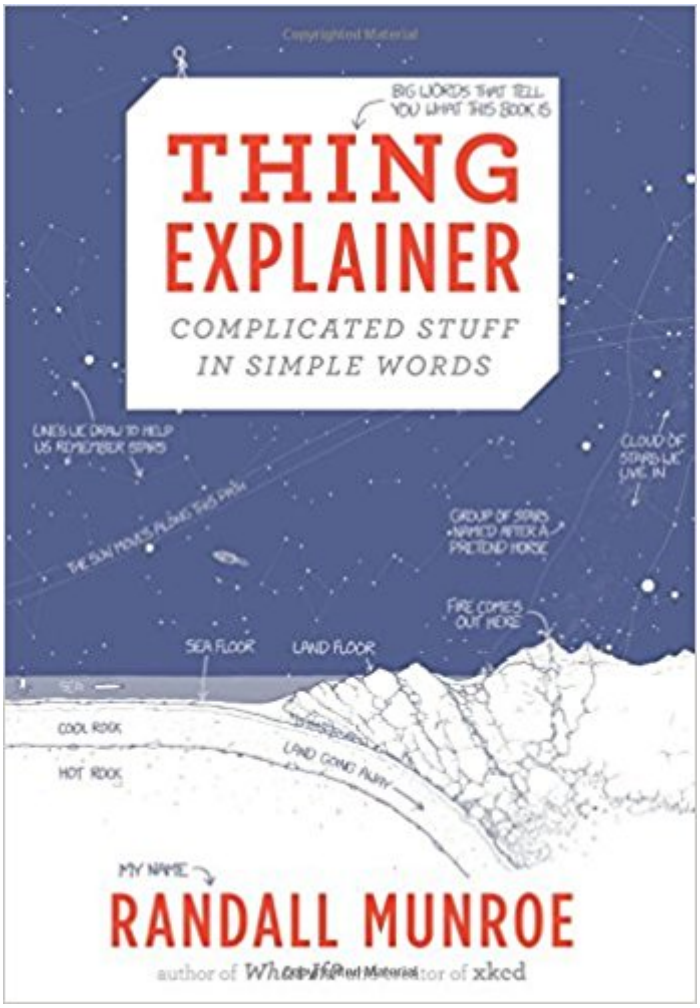
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Thing Explainer: Complicated Stuff In Simple Words



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Synopsis

Have you ever tried to learn more about some incredible thing, only to be frustrated by incomprehensible jargon?Ã Â Randall Munroe is here to help.Ã Â In Thing Explainer,Ã Â he uses line drawings and only the thousand (or, rather, Ã¢â ¬Å“ten hundredÃ¢â ¬Â•) most common words to provide simple explanations for some of the most interesting stuff there is, including:food-heating radio boxes (microwaves)tall roads (bridges)computer buildings (datacenters)the shared space house (the International Space Station)the other worlds around the sun (the solar system)the big flat rocks we live on (tectonic plates)the pieces everything is made of (the periodic table)planes with turning wings (helicopters)boxes that make clothes smell better (washers and dryers)the bags of stuff inside you (cells) How do these things work? Where do they come from? What would life be like without them? And what would happen if we opened them up, heated them up, cooled them down, pointed them in a different direction, or pressed this button? InÃ Â Thing Explainer,Ã Â Munroe gives us the answers to these questions and so many more. Funny, interesting, and always understandable, this book is for anyoneÃ¢â ¬â •age 5 to 105Ã¢â ¬â •who has ever wondered how things work, and why.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“BrilliantÃ¢â ¬Â|a wonderful guide for curious minds.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Bill Gates Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Like any good work of science writing, [Thing Explainer] is equal parts lucid, funny, and startling.Ã¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬â •NewYorker.com "Clever, intricate" Ã¢â ¬â •New York

Magazine, The Approval Matrix ("highbrow, brilliant") "Funny, precise and beautifully designed" Ã¢â ¬â •The Guardian "...with witty, playful diagrams, you'll be understanding nuclear reactors ('heavy metal power buildings') in no time." Ã¢â ¬â •NPR.org, Best Books of 2015 "Whimsical...MunroeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s masterpiece is the antidote to scientific jargon, ably demonstrating that not knowing the exact name for something doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t mean you canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t grasp how it works. The same holds for those doing the explaining: you donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t need to use big words to convey meaning. If anything, it just gets in the way." Ã¢â ¬â •Gizmodo, Best Science Books of 2015 "Required reading for the curious." Ã¢â ¬â •Popular Science "This book is a feast for the eyes and a party for your brain. I cannot more highly recommend that you get this for yourself, your favorite nerd, or someone who just loves beautiful drawings." Ã¢â ¬â •Scientific American "One of the charms of this new book is that it imbues everything between its covers with a childlike and unpretentious sense of delight in humanity's intellectual achievements."Ã¢â ¬â •Tor.com "[Thing Explainer] soars in both explanatory clarity and entertainment value...Munroe delightfully challenges us to reassess our preconceptions and think of things in new ways." Ã¢â ¬â •American Scientist Ã¢â ¬Å“MunroeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s signature humor and firm grasp on the underlying science and engineering make the book a delightful and informative read.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Science Magazine "Thing Explainer overall is unintimidating and engaging, with lavish blueprint-like illustrations that draw you into just about every page...Munroe has a gift for turning his own curiosity into your own edification." Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •CNET "I think a lot of people will have a lot of fun reading this book. Even if you know many big ideas, it is fun to see them get very small. And if you just want to learn about how things work, then the book will show you some big ideas without hitting you with big words too. As an idea for how to write a book, I thinkÃ Â Thing ExplainerÃ Â is a good one." Ã¢â ¬â •NerdistPRAISE FOR WHAT IF? Ã Â "Toreinvigorate your sense of cosmic wonder...breeze through former NASA scientist Munroe's lively answersÃ¢â ¬â •peppered with line drawingsÃ¢â ¬â •to some pretty bizarre questions about life, the universe, and everything else...Extreme astrophysics and indecipherable chemistry have rarely been this clearly explained or this consistently hilarious."Ã¢â ¬â •Entertainment Weekly "10 Best Nonfiction Books of the Year" Ã Â "Catchy and approachable...There's plenty of scientific rigor behind his elaborate explanations but he punctuates them with sly humor and winningly primitive cartoon diagrams...A cut above so many popular science and technology books."Ã¢â ¬â •NPR.org Ã Â "Consistently fascinating and entertaining...Munroe leavens the hard science with whimsical touches...An illuminating handbook of methods of reasoning."Ã¢â ¬â •Wall Street Journal Ã Â "Education should aim to teach people to reason confidently about problems that they have never come across

before. This book is a great deal of fun, and a masterclass in such reasoning. Like all the best lessons, you only realise youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve learned something once youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve finished it."Ã¢â ¬â •The Economist Ã Â "Munroe takes inane, useless and often quite pointless questions asked by real humans (mostly sent to him through his website), and turns them into beautiful expositions on the impossible that illuminate the furthest reaches, almost to the limits, of the modern sciencesÃ¢â ¬Â¦The answers are all illustrated with XKCDÃ¢â ¬â„¢s trademark stick figures...and these are eminently approachable." Ã¢â ¬â •Newsweek Ã Â "What If? Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions includes old favorites, new inquiries and the mix of expert research and accessible wit that has made Munroe a favorite among both geeks and laymen."Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •TIME Ã Â "Loaded with the same dry wit and blank-faced stick figures that populate xkcd, What If? is that rare book that will have you laughing as you learn just how a mass extinction might unfold."Ã¢â ¬â •Discover

From the creator of the webcomicxkcdand author of the #1New York TimesbestsellerWhat If?, a series of brilliantly and simply! annotated blueprints that explain everything from nuclear bombs to ballpoint pens Have you ever tried to learn more about some incredible thing, only to be frustrated by incomprehensible jargon? Randall Munroe is here to help. In Thing Explainer, he uses line drawings and only the thousand (or, rather, ten hundred) most common words to provide simple explanations for some of the most interesting stuff there is, including: food-heating radio boxes (microwaves)tall roads (bridges)computer buildings (datacenters)the shared space house (the International Space Station)the other worlds around the sun (the solar system)the big flat rocks we live on (tectonic plates)the pieces everything is made of (the periodic table)planes with turning wings (helicopters)boxes that make clothes smell better (washers and dryers)the bags of stuff inside you (cells)How do these things work? Where do they come from? What would life be like without them? And what would happen if we opened them up, heated them up, cooled them down, pointed them in a different direction, or pressed this button? InThing Explainer, Munroe gives us the answers to these questions and so many more. Funny, interesting, and always understandable, this book is for anyone age 5 to 105 who has ever wondered how things work, and why."

This book shows you that understanding how something works and knowing its name are different. In doing so, it makes you consider when and why it’s actually important to use a special name for some things, and think harder about what your words are really telling people. The point of this book is not to explain things as well and as quickly as possible. It’s to help you use your thinking bag in a

different way than you do every day. That’s why it’s so much fun to read.I’m a teacher at a school for people who already know a lot, and who are very good at what they do. (I teach them about power for our lights and machines.) We use big words and special names all the time. But I sometimes ask my students to try explaining complicated stuff using only simple words, because when you do that, you find out whether you really understand it. It forces you to ask, what is the most important idea here? I wish more teachers did this.Putting ideas into simple words can also help you recognize how different words carry meaning other than just telling you what something is. This is especially true for things that people often have strong feelings about, like the laws of the land, or our body parts for making new people, or machines for burning cities. Special words can quietly suggest if something is a good or a bad idea, or cover up bad feelings. Playing the game of using only simple words can help you see things more clearly for what they actually are, and say just what you mean. So, this book shows us a way to pay special attention to how our own thinking bag works. And I think that’s really, really cool.

...because the details of the diagrams do not translate well to the smaller Kindle. You’ll need all 13 x 9 inches to understand and appreciate the illustrations and explanations.

The thing about this book is that it only uses the ten hundred most used words by people to tell you about things that are hard to understand. It makes it sound kind of strange because you hear some words over and over again, but all in all, it is a very fun book to look at.The man that wrote the book wrote about "Under a car’s front cover" and the "US Space Team’s Up Goer Five" and lots of things that have to do with a "Sky Boat." There is a page about "Colors of Light" but it is in black and white, so it is not as good as other pages. There is a big table in the middle that is "the pieces everything is made of" that has "the stuff they put in pools so nothing bad can grow in them," "brown metal that we use to carry power and voices" and "stuff you drink so doctors can look inside your body" along with all the other rocks and metals and air that is really fun to look at.I paid money for "Thing Explainer" to put it under the tree for my seven year old, but I will have to read it before he does, I am sure.

I’m a long time fan of Munroe’s comic XKCD, so I went into this book with very high expectations, which it quickly surpassed. I bought three copies, one for our family and two as gifts, but my 9-year-old twin daughters were so enamoured with the book that I was glad for the extra copies, since we could each read through the diagrams at our own paces without fighting over the book. I

had to physically remove the books from the children’s hands before I could get the girls to come to the table for dinner.The premise of explaining complex concepts using a repertoire of only 1000 words would have been kitschy in less skillful hands, but Munroe manages to hone in on meaning over form. The depth into which he is able to delve with a single page each devoted to huge concepts like the US Constitution, the human body, and the nuclear bomb is nothing short of genius. It will appeal to curious people of ages 5 to 105, and I look forward to discovering new gems in the book as I return to it over the years.I can’t imagine that this book lends itself well to a Kindle format. Despite the shortfalls of the dust jacket, which quickly fades and scratches easily, this book is worth purchasing in hardcover.

Growing up in the 1990ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s, one of the defining books that helped me understand the world around me was David MacaulayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s The Way Things Work . Using ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“cartoonishÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• drawings of plenty of everyday (and not so everyday) machines, I gained plenty of useful knowledge that probably led me to eventually earn my MasterÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Degree in Mechanical Engineering in 2009. While MacaulayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s illustrations were straight forward enough that they didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t need explanations, some concepts around today certainly need some words to help gain an understanding of the way things work.Enter Randall Munroe, famed ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“xkcdÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• webcomic author and an all around smart guy. In late 2012, he published a comic that described each of the systems in NASAÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Saturn V rocket with simple words. Described as ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“U.S. Space TeamÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Up Goer Five,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• the concept of using shorter, more common words to explain complicated concepts came to its full fruition in Thing Explainer. Using the thousand most common words, Munroe manages to humorously and thoroughly explain such ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“thingsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• as the U.S. Constitution, The International Space Station, and the Large Hadron Collider (amongst many other common and complicated ideas).While the concept is fun and this book could easily be used to help children understand these fascinating ideas, the thousand-word constraint is also its biggest weakness. Sure, I could deduce that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“shaftsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• were usually ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“sticksÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (or ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“hallwaysÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• if they were like mine shafts), and ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“fire waterÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• often meant gasoline (or some other combustible fuel). However, I often found myself trying to figure out what the actual name of the item or part in question was because the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“simpleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• name wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t self-explanatory. Also, it

was sometimes a challenge to read all the small text, as it usually wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t arranged in a linear format, instead appearing in chunks around the illustrations to be close to the parts that were being described.A unique concept to bring advanced technological knowledge to everyone, I give Thing Explainer 4.0 stars out of 5.

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