

Busy Boats

Written by Susan Steggall
Frances Lincoln £11.99
ISBN: 978-1847800749

What a very cheerful book this is. The bright, colourful illustrations are a delight. Just one sentence on a page but that is all it needs. The scene is a busy harbour with the boats going in and out. The fishing boat leaves, returns and unloads the fish. Cranes load and unload cargo boats and the tourists and the ferry boats go to and fro. The sky and the sea are blue and the white seagulls flutter all around. All is colour, life and activity. There is plenty here for child and adult to look at and talk about.

(3-6)

Pat Jenkins

X-treme X-Ray

Written by Nick Veasey
Carlton £9.99 ISBN: 978-1847324894

"What do you know about X-Rays?" I know a lot more than I did, having read this extraordinary book. What are x-rays? How does an x-ray machine work? Who discovered them and who uses them? These are questions asked and answered before we dive into the amazing world they reveal to us. We have all seen x-rays of people, but have you seen an x-ray of a laptop, a mobile phone or an MP3 player? How about a tarantula or a fruit bat? Along with the x-ray photograph of the person, creature or object, there is information about it. So while we study an x-ray of an MP3 player, we learn a little about its components and how they work. "See the world inside out", it says on the cover. And how amazing it is when we do.

(6+)

Pat Jenkins



Mini Scientist in the Kitchen

Written by Lisa Burke Illustrated by Lucy Barnard
Dorling Kindersley £6.99 ISBN: 978-1405356183



We all played with static electricity when we were children, usually by combing our hair and then picking up bits of paper with it. Variations on this and many other simple experiments are

described and illustrated in this most interesting book. There are experiments using ice, eggs, magnets and apples. Why do the slices of apple

not dipped in lemon juice go brown? My favourite is the bridge building experiment. Why does the corrugated card bridge support many more carrot slices than the flat card bridge? I could manage nicely without the pink blancmange experiment though. Every child's favourite, I should think. There is a fold-out flap for each experiment with the "science stuff". This is a lovely book for parent and child to enjoy together.

(4-7)

Pat Jenkins



Grow Your Own Monsters

Written by Nicola Davies and Simon Hickmott
Illustrated by Scouler Anderson
Frances Lincoln £11.99 ISBN: 978-1845078331

Well it makes a change from mustard and cress on damp blotting paper. Why not grow an Abyssinian banana, a walking stick cabbage or a Venus fly trap? So what if your giant echium grows as tall as a giraffe and your voodoo lily looks like a snake and smells like a corpse? All the more fun, I would say. All of these monsters, we are told, are easy to grow and need no special equipment or care. Just give them light, air and water and you are away. We are given detailed instructions on their care and cultivation, and are even told where we can buy the seeds. I love the air of excitement and optimism which bursts from every page in this delightful book.

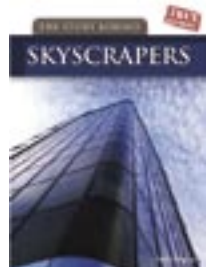
(7+)

Pat Jenkins



Skyscrapers

Written by Sean Stewart Price
Heinemann *The Story Behind* £6.99
ISBN: 978-0431115108



The word 'skyscraper' conjures up images of buildings powering their way through the clouds to the realm of birds. Who first thought of building accommodation upwards and why are skyscrapers to be seen in most countries? This book

will provide the answers. The earliest tall buildings were pyramids – built for the dead rather than the living. Today the world's tallest building is a staggering 160 storeys. Find out how skyscrapers are designed, and built. Good photographs capture their many shapes and the diversity of materials used. The dangers of constructing such buildings are always present, but natural disasters such as earthquakes also have to be allowed for. Man-made problems such as design errors and acts of terrorism are also considered. After reading this book you will still stand staring in awe at the Gherkin and other skyscrapers, but also appreciate the creation of these fabulous buildings.

(7+)

Anne Munro

The Usborne Little Book of Chocolate

Written by Sarah Khan Illustrated by Stephen Lambert
Usborne £5.99 ISBN: 978-1409508700

Are you a chocoholic? If so, you will love this attractive, well produced book that will tell you everything you want to know about the magic subject that is chocolate. How people arrived at the knowledge of producing such a wonder from the seed



of a pod found on the Cacao tree is not known, suffice to say that even today, its premier products can command huge prices in the confectionery markets. Short two-page chapters, each beautifully illustrated and adorned with lip-smacking colour photographs take you on a journey of discovery. Learn about production, marketing, flavours both sweet and savoury, as well as appreciating that chocolate is used for celebration and festivities in many countries and cultures. Try out some of the recipes and marvel at oddities like the hotel dedicated to chocolate, and the American 7 metre tall chocolate fountain. Remember, reading this book will not make you fat.

(8+)

Anne Munro



Look!: Really Smart Art

Written by Gillian Wolfe
Frances Lincoln £12.99
ISBN: 978-1847800107

Looking at Art and appreciating it are two different things. This

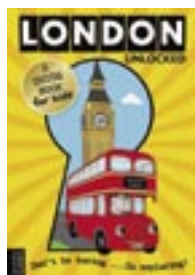
beautifully produced book may challenge the way you regard paintings in the future. It is filled with magical images from paintings ranging across the centuries. These can tease, intrigue, trick or

just amaze you with their beauty or skill. Each example illustrates a specific technique which can be learned. Discover how to paint the eyes in a portrait so that they follow you round the room. Note the realistic depiction of fur and fabrics. Find meaning in a paint spatter, see the optical illusions that trick, mimic or simply amuse. These techniques are explained and ideas presented for you to experiment with. Any budding artist would find this book a valuable source of ideas. It could be enjoyed on many levels, for discussion, enjoyment or experimentation. Contains a good reference section. A recommended series for both home and school. (8+)

Anne Munro

London Unlocked

Written by Emily Kerr & Joshua Pery
Illustrated by Katherine Hardy
Unlocked Guides £8.99 ISBN: 978-0956414809



An eye catching, compact guide for children visiting London with an adult, one preferably carrying an Underground map. This book would suit the child who wants to see more than familiar museums, shops or landmarks. These are included but more

unusual topics are also suggested. How about being a Mudlark, driving a tube train, flying a kite, seeing an original Banksy piece of street art or finding out where you can eat cupcakes? To plan for each activity, London is divided into colour coded areas. Each topic has a 'how to plan your visit section', photographs, top tips and illustrations. Gold adhesive stars are provided for you to award after you have achieved your chosen task of exploration. There should be many happy hours of visiting our capital if you first consult this well packaged guide.

(7-12)

Anne Munro



Children's Book of Music

Dorling Kindersley £14.99 ISBN: 978-1405356855

This is a large book (30x26cm and 143 pages), covering a large number of topics. It can be used as an introductory study support or as a 'dip in' read for general interest. As often with this highly illustrated format, the subjects are not treated in depth but there is augmentation in the shape of a CD. The extracts are signalled in the text so the vast number of illustrations is accompanied by the aural



equivalent. There are three main sections. Firstly, *Early music*, where the instruments featured merge into traditional music. Secondly, *Classical music to 1900* which includes some named individuals, both composers and conductors, dance and "Hilarious Operettas". (Judging by the photographs, they could be right.) Then, *Modern music* from 1900. They cover a great many bases here from Schoenberg to Hip Hop and the illustrative approach is less satisfactory. For example, a black and white photograph of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies fades into the background compared with the blaze of a Bollywood musical. The book closes with a decent glossary, an index of musicians and a welcome call to join in with live music. (12+)

Pat Thomson

Evolution, Nature and Stuff

Written by Glenn Murphy
Macmillan £5.99
ISBN: 978-0330508940

The *Science Sorted* series is published in association with The Science Museum and the author is qualified in science communication so we expect sound science, accompanied by the 'down with the kids' approach that we get. The text is friendly and approachable and, although the author may not like the word, the question and answer format is sensible. It allows the information to be presented in manageable chunks and for the book to remain conversational in style. It starts with the ambitious question "What actually is life?" In fact, it covers very big questions, among them evolution, which runs through the book. Along the way, we look at taxonomy, adaptive behaviour and genetics but the larger questions are raised through smaller ones, such as: "Why do crocodiles wriggle when they walk?" The answer leads us through an explanation of how we have evolved in a very practical fashion. We are invited to get down and try to move like a fish, like a reptile, improving our movement from a human point of view until we stand upright and the imagined reader responds with "Cool! We mammals rule!" So, behind the 'Hi dude!' style, the book delivers the goods.

(12+)

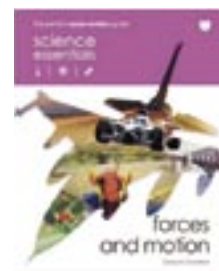
Pat Thomson



Forces and Motion

Written by Gerard Cheshire
Evans *Science Essentials: Physics* £8.99
ISBN: 978-0237541811

This series styles itself "The perfect exam revision guide" and the books are certainly well organised and clear. Equally useful, they offer methods of reinforcement as we go along. This title seeks to explain how forces are produced and the effects they have, from kicking a ball to the nanotubes of



the future. The expected fields are there: gravity, friction, flight, pressure, machines, stresses and strains, all illustrated with photographs and diagrams. Additional pages and boxes offer insights into the history of physics, set

experiments to try and there are also "Did you Know?" boxes of facts related to physics. There are short tests to see if you are keeping up, with answers at the end. This is a friendly format and the author and consultant are experienced physics educators. There are five more books available in the Physics series as well as another series: *Science Essentials: Biology*.

(13+)

Pat Thomson



Corpses and Skeletons

Written by Rob Shone Illustrated by Nick Spender
ISBN: 978-0749692445

Autopsies

Written by Gary Jeffrey Illustrated by Nick Spender
ISBN: 978-0749692452
Watts *Graphic Forensic Science* £12.99

Graphic Forensic Science sounds like something to be approached from behind the sofa but although the gruesome is a little played up ("We were just lucky we found him before his insides went pulpy"), it does not cross the line for an older child. Both books reflect the work of forensic scientists. The pattern is to explain in the opening section why forensics are important and then to tell the story of several cases in graphic strip form. The bulk of the book is thus taken up by the stories but the text points up and explains forensic practice as the story unfolds. "Other famous cases" are given in brief and there is also a glossary as well as websites and further reading. Those who would like to make a career in this field would certainly get an idea of what they ought to expect. (13+)

Pat Thomson

