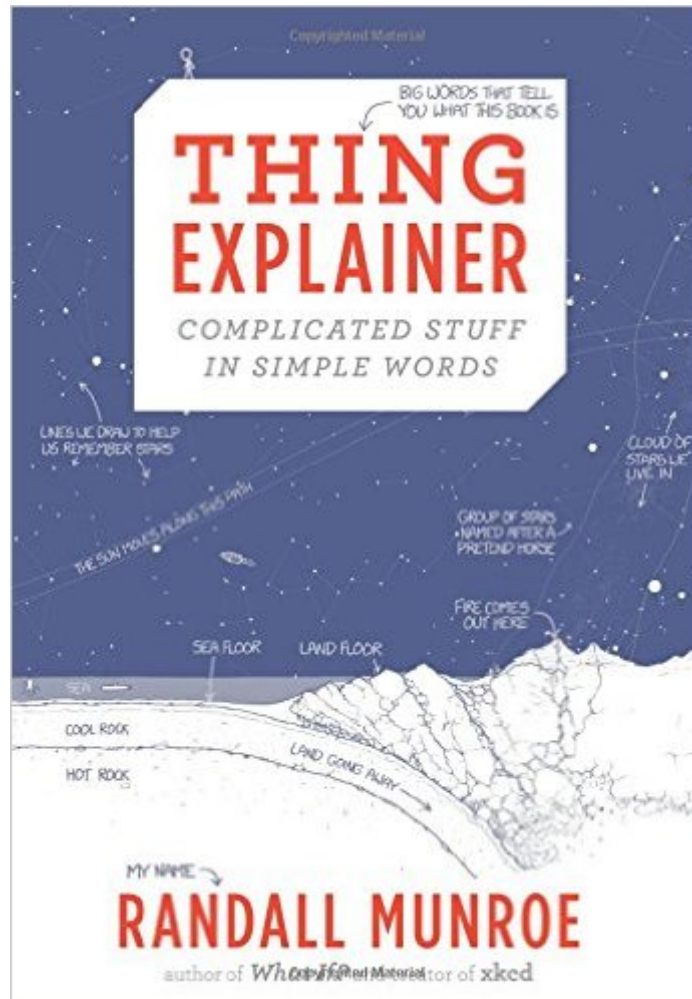


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Thing Explainer: Complicated Stuff In Simple Words



Synopsis

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, a *æten 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? In *Thing 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the funnest books to read, ever. The 'ten hundred words' limit does not get stale or ever truly 'limit' Munroe - he still manages to write some seriously interesting and educational stuff while keeping it entertaining. The whole way through you'll be making connections between what the simplified words mean and what you know from real life, but you'll also be learning a lot of new things. It's especially great when, through such simple terminology, you find out the answer to a

question you never would've considered asking, like how Everest is not the furthest point from the center of earth, and that one of Uranus' moons once orbited the sun. And that terminology gives way not only to humour but also to an insane amount of charm and sentiment. The introduction reads out like a child trying to explain why they've written a book. I personally love the section at the bottom of the page on "Tall Roads" (bridges) where Munroe writes with a child's voice about how bridges are so physically useful and well constructed, that life on other planets might use very similar models, and that somewhere, an alien might be looking at a bridge just like the one Munroe was looking at, and thinking about Munroe, too. That kind of sentimentality is, I think, the central staple of Munroe's XKCD, and it only shines brighter in Thing Explainer due to the childlike wonder in the writing. Thing Explainer writes without expectation of understanding, prior knowledge of language, or any prior knowledge; it is one of the closest things to a window into someone's thoughts.

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