

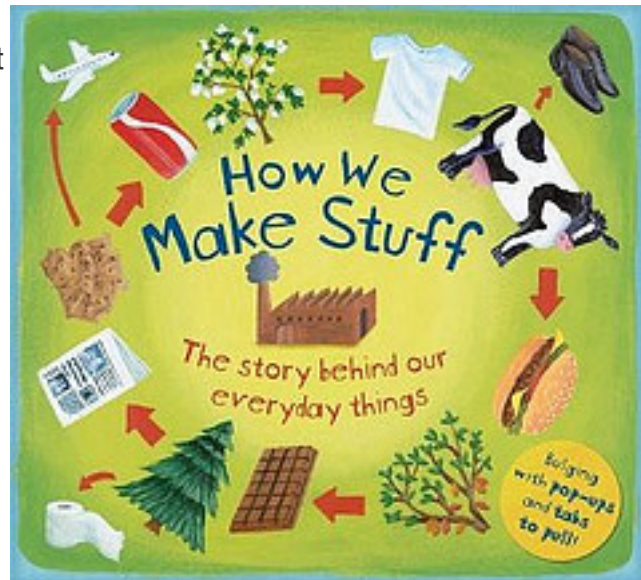


How We Make Stuff by Christiane Dorion | Book Review

How We Make Stuff is an engaging and educational exploration of how we design, produce and dispose of everyday products such as t-shirts, mobile phones and burgers.

What are rubber ducks really made of? Where do burgers come from? Does chocolate really grow on trees? How do we turn trees into paper? What's the link between gorillas and mobile phones?

If you are a parent, your child often bombards you with the most fascinating questions -- questions that probably make you stop and think, too. In *How We Make Stuff* [Templar Publishing; 2012: [Guardian Bookshop](#); [Amazon UK](#); [Amazon US](#)], writer Christiane Dorion provides answers to some of the burning questions of childhood -- at least a few of which remained unanswered from her own youth. This large, highly interactive book uses colourful diagrammes and flowcharts, along with a variety of fun booklets, flaps, tabs and pop-ups that describe how we design, produce and dispose of everyday products such as clothing, mobile phones and several common food items. It also explains the history and environmental impacts of human technology.



Each section or chapter is a 2-page spread filled with charming and quirky paintings by artist Beverley Young, who illustrated the other two books in this award-winning "How it works" series. At the beginning of this book, a cluster of factories pop up, showing how our inventions have changed how a variety of

everyday items are made. Later in the book, another section points to the curious juxtaposition between single-use disposable products that are made from materials that will last forever -- unless we develop methods for recycling or reusing these items. Along those lines, one of the flaps is a refrigerator door that can be opened to show the six types of plastic containers we use, and next to that is a pull-tab showing what happens to plastics that are not recycled.

I particularly liked the last section, entitled; "What can we learn from other creatures?" This section explores topics such as why modern wind turbines mimic the shape of whale fins, how sharks maintain their speedy swimming by resisting encrustation by barnacles, and what we can learn from abalone to develop stronger building materials. Filled with clever innovations inspired by basic knowledge of the animals around us, this section unites the value of sustainable living with the appreciation and preservation of the animals and plants that share the Earth with us.

More than just another pretty children's book, the author provides an informative and thought-provoking starting point for a dinner-table or classroom discussion about the practicalities of sustainable living. This large hardcover will also be enjoyed by children who are considerably older than its intended audience of those who are aged 7 to 12 years.

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[Christiane Dorion](#) has worked for over 20 years as an educational consultant, teaching sustainable development. She has written six nonfiction books about the world and the environment. Her children's book, *How the World Works*, was the winner of the Royal Society [2011 Young People's Book Prize](#), and it was shortlisted for the [2011 Blue Peter Book Award](#) and for the [2011 SLA Information Book Award](#). Another of her children's books, *How the Weather Works*, won the American Meteorological Society's [2012 Louis J. Battan Author's award for grades K-12](#), and was shortlisted for the Royal Society's [2012 Young People's Book Prize](#). Born in Quebec City, Canada, Ms Dorion currently resides in the UK.

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Beverley Young studied at Falmouth School of Art and Design, specialising in ceramics, but later returned to painting. Her work is mainly acrylics on board and canvas, and is influenced by artists such as Mackenzie Thorpe and Annora Spence, as well as by her everyday observations of animals, people, the environment and the weather.

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