

How the World Works

Forty years ago, plate tectonics was only taught in universities. But here, the natural movements of the Earth's crust are dealt with in engaging detail in an attractive pop-up book for 5-11 year olds.

Rare in being a serious attempt to explain large-scale geographical principles to a primary-school-age audience, *How the World Works* is not only ambitious but also remarkably successful. There are pages on how we think the universe began, when life started, the hydrological cycle, the carbon cycle, the weather and much else besides.

The text is by Christiane Dorion, a UK-based Canadian educational consultant who has previously written books on energy and pollution for secondary-school students. The colourful illustrations by Beverley Young, which are incorporated into everything from wheels and flip books to pull-out tabs, will appeal to scientists and non-scientists alike, and have allowed for the inclusion of a wealth of information without it all being too overwhelming.

Dorion never fails to remind us of our individual responsibility towards the Earth – whether it's saving the rainforest or reducing our carbon footprint – but her theme doesn't interfere with the main subject of the book.

The section on ocean currents cycle is particularly charming, using the example of the yellow rubber ducks sighted at different times around the world after thousands went overboard in a 1992 Pacific storm.

All in all, this is an appealing book containing fundamental knowledge about the world to which every child should have access. Although, on second thoughts, it's too nice to be ruined with sticky fingers and spilt juice. I think I'll keep it on the shelf with my other geomorphology textbooks.

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