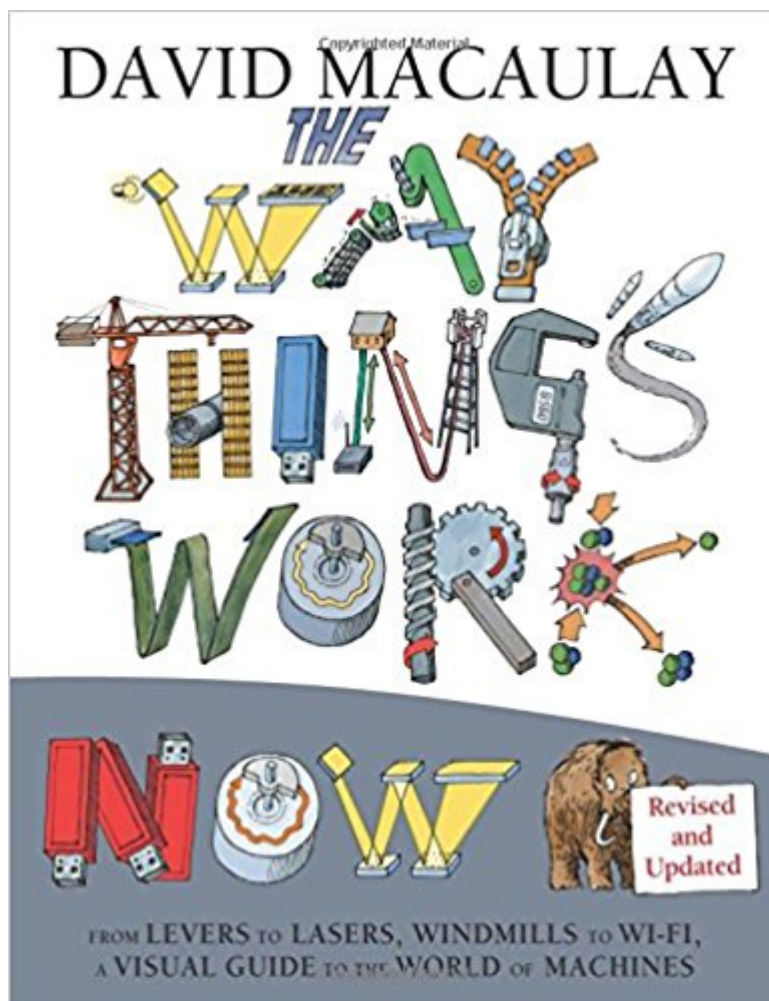


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# The Way Things Work Now



## Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller Explainer-in-Chief David Macaulay updates the worldwide bestseller *The New Way Things Work* to capture the latest developments in the technology that most impacts our lives. Famously packed with information on the inner workings of everything from windmills to Wi-Fi, this extraordinary and humorous book both guides readers through the fundamental principles of machines, and shows how the developments of the past are building the world of tomorrow. This sweepingly revised edition embraces all of the latest developments, from touchscreens to 3D printer. Each scientific principle is brilliantly explained--with the help of a charming, if rather slow-witted, woolly mammoth. An illustrated survey of significant inventions closes the book, along with a glossary of technical terms, and an index. What possible link could there be between zippers and plows, dentist drills and windmills? Parking meters and meat grinders, jumbo jets and jackhammers, remote control and rockets, electric guitars and egg beaters? Macaulay explains them all.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

A Conversation with David Macaulay Explainer-in-Chief David Macaulay talks about the ins and outs of updating his essential guide to the world of machines - *The Way Things Work Now*.

What was the most rewarding thing about doing this updated version of your now-classic book? The opportunity not only to stay current, but to make improvements to the object itself. The first is a no-brainer, but the second is personal. Staying up-to-date meant adding devices that are now so familiar we take them for granted and in fact have become completely dependent on them. It's actually fun to have at least a basic sense of how a touchscreen works, not to mention e-paper. One clue it's not paper. The more personal reward came with the opportunity to create what I hope is a more visually attractive book. Replacing the two color images (required of the first edition to keep costs down) with full-color art meant that not only is the book brighter and I think more inviting but also it offers greater clarity. In many of the earlier spreads, pieces of text floated in a sea of white space, often seeming disconnected from the related art. It doesn't help a reader trying to absorb new information if they aren't quite sure about the order or combination in which it should be viewed. It takes a team to create a work like this! Can you briefly describe how you all worked together? This book was a group effort from the beginning. As with the original editions, the new one was produced simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic. Research, writing, editing, and overall design happened in London. The pictures were developed and finally produced in my Vermont studio. I'm not a big fan of the distance, since it makes quick and more casual conversation possible between team members, even with Skype and FaceTime, etc., impossible. But since we weren't developing a whole new project, these communication shortcuts probably made sense. It's just not as much fun to work in isolation.

How has your process evolved over the years? I think the answer is 'Backwards'. Each big book takes me longer than the one before, although the process hasn't really changed much. Once I have my subject, I begin the research and stay with it until I run out of time. The original *The Way Things Work* was scheduled to be published in 1988. I joined the team in 1984 as the illustrator and spent the first two years trying to figure out how to avoid just making pictures of machines. It was during that time that I came up with the idea of an inventor's notebook and the mammoth an innocent victim of technology. Not only was I trying to put off the 'hard work' for as long as possible; I was hoping to find a way of introducing people to technology that was a little bit different and as unthreatening as possible. Because of the schedule, procrastination was severely limited. Now I can spend four years or more searching for just the right way of doing something before I finally have to do it. I ask more questions than I ever did and seem to have less confidence in my answers, so I

ask them again. It's a painful and pathetic process, and in the end, I can't say that it actually produces a better book. So my process is perhaps devolving. Why do we need this book if we can find pretty much all this information online? If all you're looking for is information, the Internet with all its content, hyperlinks, diverse media, and incredible speed is hard to beat. But *The Way Things Work Now* was created to be much more than just a catalog of information. It was intended as a friendly and reassuring introduction to the often complicated world of machines • a catalyst for curiosity with a reward on every page or two. The book had to be illuminating, engaging, and entertaining • these are not necessarily characteristics so highly valued online. It had to be straightforward but never simplistic. One of the great things about a book is that the limits are built in. It can only be so long, and then you run out of pages. This is a plus. For younger readers, it seems to contain everything they might ever need to know. For older readers who know there is so much more out there, it offers a sizable introduction and perhaps some direction.

What do you enjoy most about reading nonfiction? Learning and being entertained at the same time. I love being introduced to new ideas and gaining new insights from knowledgeable writers who also know how to tell a story. I can find the facts online, but it's the story that makes them stick. You've created quite a number of books. Do you have a favorite? I have several favorites. *Angelo* is my favorite picture book because I finally created a couple of characters I really cared about. *Cathedral* is my favorite architecture book because I had no preconceived idea of what I was trying to do until I actually did it. *Underground* is my favorite subterranean book because I couldn't just go to the library and find other subterranean books that weren't engineering texts. I had an opportunity to create a book that could show regular people, like me, what actually goes on down there. And *Baaa* is my favorite depressing book, mostly because I thought I was creating a work of fiction based on my own twisted view of life. Turns out it's a work of nonfiction, and life actually is pretty twisted • once you get past the sheep.

What are you working on now? I'm working on a book about crossing the Atlantic, something my family and I did sixty years ago on a ship called the SS *United States*. It combines history and technology with biography and autobiography, all of which are described primarily through illustration • as usual.

Gr 6 Up — It's been 28 years since Macaulay's brilliant volume exploded on the scene and 12 since its last updating, and with the technological world quickly evolving, this incarnation is more than welcome. Covering everything from the simplest of machines to the modern microcompressor, Macaulay uses clever illustrations and a lucid (often amusing) text to explain the complex interrelationships of the mechanical world. But it is the illustrations that catch the eye. Yes, the woolly mammoths still galumph through the pages, demonstrating such principles as heat by radiating warmth while acting as a rotund clothes dryer. Small people also potter about, dancing to a record player (yes, still included), pulping wood, and tilting at windmills. Small flutters of angels appear, positioning camshafts and adjusting camera lenses. But these seemingly frivolous drawings focus readers' attention on the matter at hand. "Things," both in the real world and in this book, have changed. The writing is tighter. Color has burst into the illustrations, making the whole hefty tome appear lighter and brighter. Some elements have vanished: the elevator is gone; the escalator remains. Hybrid cars appear while the tape recorder has slipped away, as has the compact disc player. Sections on the computer and robots have been completely redone. A small note: Criticisms are back. The mechanical world is evolving at warp speed, and the solidly printed page cannot keep up. But that is no reason not to embrace this long-awaited update to one of the more original books ever printed. VERDICT A delightful choice for browsing and reference. — Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY

Best Children's Books of the Year: NonFiction San Francisco Chronicle Best of 2016 New York Times Bestseller "... A long-awaited update to one of the more original books ever printed." — School Library Journal \* — "Macaulay's brilliantly designed, engagingly informal diagrams and cutaways bring within the grasp of even casual viewers a greater understanding of the technological wonders of both past and present. Necessary for every library, personal or otherwise." — Kirkus, starred review Praise for The Way Things Work — "The Way Things Work is a superb achievement. It is a very handsome book, a fascinating collection of riddles and a sound educational accomplishment that, while explaining in words and pictures - mostly pictures - some of the mysteries of physics, makes you smile, and often laugh. The author is honest enough to say that the book was intended for children of all ages, and brilliant enough to make all its readers feel brighter than they ever thought they could be." — The New York Times — "The Way Things Work is not the only book that has tried to explain modern mysteries, but it's the best. Macaulay's explanations are lucid; they are also fun. He includes visual puns, running jokes, a cast of thousands of tiny participants in on and around the

machines, choirs of angels and lots of big woolly mammoths. [Boston Globe](#) [“Keep the book a secret from your kids for a while and study up on the explanations of questions you’re anticipating. Let Macaulay make you look smarter than you think you are. The kids will certainly be impressed - and you’ll be getting a real education in the bargain.”](#) [The Los Angeles Times](#) [“An astonishing tour-de-force \*À\* \*À\* by the architect-turned-author who has given us Cathedral and City.”](#) [Kirkus](#) [“This is a work of mammoth imagination, energy, and humor. It justifies every critic’s belief that information and entertainment are not mutually exclusive - good nonfiction is storytelling at its best.”](#) [The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books](#), starred review [“Combining the tongue-in-cheek observations of a budding prehistoric engineer with acute descriptions of the functioning of mechanical and electrical machines, Macaulay has produced a superb volume.”](#) [The Horn Book](#), starred review [“A book to be treasured as both a browsing item and as a gold mine of reference information.”](#) [School Library Journal](#), starred review

I’m unusually attached to this book: I laid my hands on the earlier edition as a very young child, and it probably shaped my interests more than anything else - ultimately setting me on a very interesting and rewarding life path. I’ve gotten the 1998 edition for my eldest son when he was perhaps four, and it’s been his favorite for many years now. In the end, "The Way Things Work" is quite simply spectacular, packed with information about the world around us, funny, accessible, and inspiring. While there are one or two illustrations that aren’t as clear as they should have been, and a minor error creeps up here and there, it’s still a magnificent piece of work born out of true passion and skill. If you have a technically inclined young kid, chances are, you will not regret buying them this. As for the updated 2016 edition: compared to the 1998 version, the changes are incremental but fairly substantial, with a treatment of e-paper displays, digital cameras, accelerometers, and so on. Some of this may make you nostalgic - say, a mechanically simpler optical mouse takes place of the rolling ball design - but overall, it’s a much-needed and worthwhile reboot.

I learned this edition of the book on a NPR interview with the author recently and immediately placed a pre-sale order on [Amazon](#). It arrived the 3rd day after it went on sales. These days while everything and anything can be found online through Google or Bing search by a few keywords, knowledge and information seem cheap and vast, but rarely pure and condensed like what are provided in this book. Turning the pages, there are beautifully hand-drawn schematics and pictures to illustrate how

things around us work, clear and simple, complimented with easy-to-understand English to explain in details what's not covered by drawings. The book covers wide range of topics from how a key works to what makes a scanner ticking. It explains extremely well the physics, mechanical engineering, electronics, etc in things that surround our modern daily life. No question about it, such book should be had by every family, every school library, or everywhere education, especially STEM education, is in need. Oh, yeah, it is also entertaining and artistically appealing.

I had an older version when I was a kid. It was my go to book for things I didn't quite get (zippers, levers) and it's great now for my kids. Full of helpful illustrations. I'd say perfect for 8+ years.

I bought this for a 13 year old for christmas. It explains basic laws and principles in a fun and interesting way. I started reading the book before christmas and could not put it down. It has great art work, and diagrams. I would recommend to anyone who is intrigued by the engineered world around them.

I had a copy of the original 'Way things Work' when I was a wee one and now that I have kids of my own I broke it out to show them only to find it water damaged! So you can imagine how happy I was to find that not only is it still in print (and affordable!) but updated to cover the technology my girls see around them today. I loved David Macaulay growing up, his City and Castle are still on my bookshelf and it's amazing to see he's still going putting out new books with as much wit and charm as the ones I remember. What's more amazing is how much my little girls love this book. Each night when I ask them to pick bedtime stories they pull down the 'Machine Book' and carry it to bed, even though it's a bit too heavy for them to carry! The tradition continues!

My nine year old son enjoyed this book as a Christmas gift. I hope to get around to reading it myself in the near future. David Macaulay continues with yet another work in a long line of interesting books and subjects.

I bought it for my husband; he loves this sort of thing. While I wouldn't read it myself, I was impressed with the detail and whimsy of the illustrations and explanations.

Really a great book. It is well organized into categories so you can jump around a bit depending on what your child is asking about, or you can read in order. My seven year old son is a bit young for

some of the complete concepts but loves to read it with me and can understand all of the broad strokes and some of the detailed explanations. I think this book will grow with him as he can dissect more information each year.

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