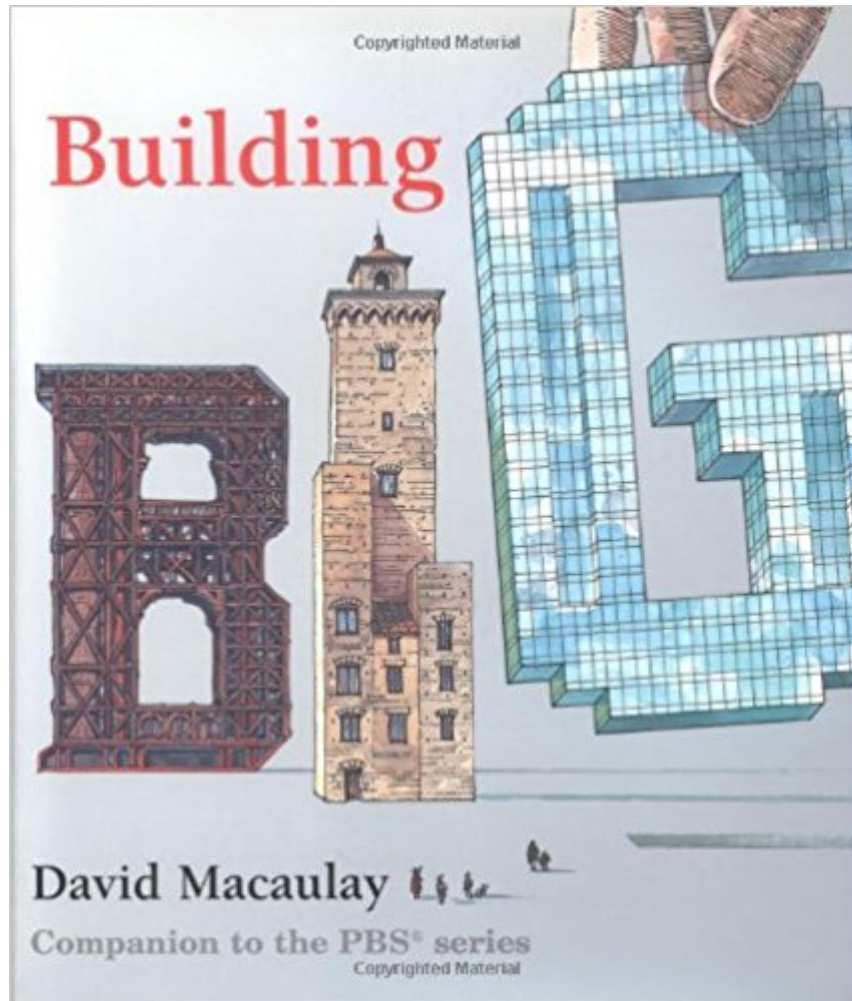




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Building Big



Synopsis

Why this shape and not that? Why steel instead of concrete or stone? Why put it here and not over there? These are the kinds of questions that David Macaulay asks himself when he observes an architectural wonder. These questions take him back to the basic process of design from which all structures begin, from the realization of a need for the structure to the struggles of the engineers and designers to map out and create the final construction. As only he can, David Macaulay engages readers' imaginations and gets them thinking about structures they see and use every day — bridges, tunnels, skyscrapers, domes, and dams. In *Building Big* he focuses on the connections between the planning and design problems and the solutions that are finally reached. Whether a structure is imposing or inspiring, he shows us that common sense and logic play just as important a part in architecture as imagination and technology do. As always, Macaulay inspires readers of all ages to look at their world in a new way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Macaulay's hit PBS series by the same name cannot take you as far as this book does into the wonders of the constructed world: dams, domes, skyscrapers, tunnels, and bridges. It's also a trip through time, transporting you, for instance, from Rome's Ponte Fabricio (built in 62 B.C.) to the 1930s Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco to France's Ponte de Normandie across the Seine,

which was the longest bridge on earth when completed in 1994. Some of the wires that so ingeniously hold up the Golden Gate are depicted in their intricate engineering context--and at their actual size. As you pore over Macaulay's crystal-clear text and profuse illustrations, the mental fog lifts and you get a sense of what a marvelous act of imagination the bridge is. In books about building, the whole art lies in the details. Macaulay gives you a glimpse into the minds of the designers, too: in making a tunnel under the Thames River in London, Marc Brunel was inspired by shipworms, "the scourge of the Royal Navy," mollusks who used shieldlike shells to bore holes through timber "and then had the audacity to create a rigid lining in the wood with material they excreted." Though the poor workers who created Brunel's tunnel shields had to brave fiery explosions of methane gas and vile fumes from centuries of sewage--and as Macaulay rather rudely puts it, "Brunel's shield now seems a bit like a platoon of creaking Star Wars robots leaning against each other for support as they inch their way nervously through the muck"--the construction did the trick. That tunnel begun in 1825 is still part of the London Underground subway system. Macaulay can construct a sound sentence: a child can grasp his celebration of the art of engineering, and a grownup can read him with childlike glee. --Tim Appelo

If ever a book were destined to inspire a future generation of engineers and designers, it would be this volume, a companion to the PBS series of the same name. From Istanbul to New York City, San Francisco to the Firth of Forth, Macaulay circles the globe and spans the centuries to provide a fascinating peek at the inner workings of bridges, tunnels, skyscrapers, domes and dams, each arranged by section with a brief overview. As he delves into the history as well as the mechanics of each project, an all-star lineup of engineering icons that includes the Pantheon, Hoover Dam, the Channel Tunnel and the Chrysler Building Macaulay is in his element, nimbly deploying his gift for making the arcane accessible. For instance, he describes Brunel's shield, a tedious but successful tunnel-boring aid used under the Thames in the early 19th century, as "a bit like a platoon of creaking Star Wars robots leaning against each other for support as they inch their way nervously through the muck." Macaulay constructs the volume as thoughtfully as an engineer, explaining in his opening note on bridges, "They are in a sense three-dimensional diagrams of the work they do, and this makes them ideal subjects with which to begin." Each section connects to the next with intelligence and humor (e.g., his opening to the tunnels section: "While bridges, skyscrapers, domes and even a few dams enjoy varying amounts of popularity, I think it's fairly safe to say that only an engineer could love a tunnel"). His trademark cutaway views and diagrams also illuminate and instruct as they illustrate. Readers will not only enjoy an intimate look at specific structures, but

ultimately come away with a broad overview of how modern engineering evolved. Macaulay fosters in readers a keen appreciation for the role of logic, imagination and perseverance in vaulting over impediments and bringing a project to completion. All ages. (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

At the recommendation of a family member, I looked into David Macaulay and bought this book, along with "Underground," for my 5-year old son. Yes, the comprehension level doesn't quite match, and in this day and age, the drawings and printing are just a tad to the "crude" side, but it doesn't matter -- our son is taken by these books. He's opened them and studied a single page for minutes, then comes to us with all sorts of remarkable questions. For children of this age, these don't make great bedtime reading, but there's no question they engage an active and curious brain, and you may even find yourself attempting to replicate the Golden Gate Bridge out of Legos and string before the night is over!

Another excellent Macaulay book! My son is a visual learner and loves all his books. This book has piqued his interest in engineering principles. The illustrations, combined with written information, bring the concepts of engineering and physics to life and he won't forget what he has learned.

The illustrations were wonderful. My 4 year old is obsessed with David Macaulay. Since purchasing this book, and the DVD series, we have checked out as many of the David Macaulay books at our library as we can get.

Fascinating book on almost every aspect of building structures across time- Thanks!!

My grandson, who uses Mind Craft , wanted this book He has always been a Lego builder and likes architecture, he was busy reading this book during the holidays.

Love his books.

David is a great writer and artist. The PBS series that followed along with this book was fantastic. If you want to know the how and why, here it is. Enjoy! Once you open the book you'll find an abundance of information on gigantic structures from past to publication date. There are bridges, tunnels, dams, domes, skyscrapers covered in great detail. All the art work hand drawn or

sketched with labels. If your interested in history and the development of structures this is a very good book on seeing how it was done. There are examples of ever type of structure in each topic. Each topic details the phases involved in construction. In most of these chapters there is a discussion on "why" the thing was built as well as the "who" and "how". Under bridges there are (7) famous ones covered, (6) tunnels, (4) dams, (8) domes, (10) skyscrapers. You won't get bored reading this book. I also suggest the DVD to go with the book and support your local PBS.

David Macaulay did it again, this time explaining the engineering behind some of our greatest achievements

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