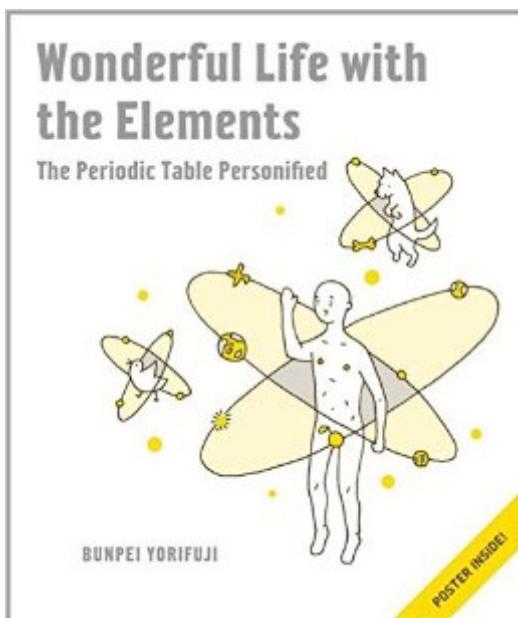


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Wonderful Life With The Elements: The Periodic Table Personified



Synopsis

Get to Know the Elements! From the brilliant mind of Japanese artist Bunpei Yorifuji comes *Wonderful Life with the Elements*, an illustrated guide to the periodic table that gives chemistry a friendly face. In this super periodic table, every element is a unique character whose properties are represented visually: heavy elements are fat, man-made elements are robots, and noble gases sport impressive afros. Every detail is significant, from the length of an element's beard to the clothes on its back. You'll also learn about each element's discovery, its common uses, and other vital stats like whether it floats or explodes in water. Why bother trudging through a traditional periodic table? In this periodic paradise, the elements are people too. And once you've met them, you'll never forget them. Includes pull-out poster!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I picked this book up for two reasons. 1) As a scientist and a geek, I love books that look at science from a different angle, especially ones with great visuals that help you see new patterns. In that regard, the description on this made it seem as if the book was right up my alley. 2) I'm always on the lookout for sciencey gifts for the kids in my life, books or kits that might spark a new interest in some part of science. For me, this book made it halfway there to that first reason, and was a complete fail on the second. Yes, this book did make me stop and think in some different ways about the periodicity of the periodic table, which was fun. But because the actual content didn't really go much beyond what you'd see on Wikipedia (with about the same level of accuracy), I didn't

really learn a whole lot in the end. The experience ended up being one of thinking "oh, I remember thinking how neat these patterns were when I took chemistry in school," but not much more than that. And while I liked the idea of using patterns in visuals to represent patterns in data, the actual art itself didn't really work for me -- in part because of the color scheme (I really would have preferred straight black and white over the black, white, and neon yellow of the book), and in part because pretty much all the drawings are cartoons of naked men. For me, that meant that this couldn't be one of the fun science books I leave out for visitors to flip through, and it seriously limited who I could consider gifting with a copy. As with many disappointed book reviews, it's very likely that I'm just not the right target audience for this book in the end -- and in part, the failure for that lies with the description just as much as it does the book.

This book helps readers appreciate the various periodic families and elements by personifying them. Of course, science instructors also anthropomorphize elements (chlorine is hungry for electrons, and sodium wants to get rid of them), but this book personifies to a greater degree than do most science instructors. The clothes elements wear, their hair-style, their physique, and if they walk, float or flow visually tell readers something about their properties. The first chapter looks at the distribution of elements in the universe, the sun, and the earth. It also looks at the elements found in living rooms during primitive, ancient, medieval and contemporary times. Chapter two introduces readers to the various families within the periodic table. Here readers are also introduced to what properties are represented by the various visual characteristics used to anthropomorphize them. Chapter two ends with the super periodic table. This is the regular periodic table, but instead of the standard element symbols, it shows people (the ones that personify the various elements). Chapter three is the bulk of the book. It profiles each element by listing its most exploited properties and its most common usage. In addition to the individual elements there are two supplementary sections at the end of the chapter. The first is titled Element Friends and outlines additional groups of elements. The second is titled Troublesome Elements and lists harmful compounds and their destructive traits. Chapter four focuses on the role of minerals in the body by listing in what foods they can be found, their functions in the body, and symptoms if one has too much or too little of a particular mineral.

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