
By LJ Reviews on April 10, 2015 Leave a Comment

atlases


This is the second of three “atlases” intended as companion volumes to the ongoing exhibition Places & Spaces: Mapping Science, traveling and evolving in content since 2005. The project aims to introduce and promote the new dimension of information or knowledge visualization
described as “science mapping”; it can be explored on the website scimaps.org, which also displays all of the maps from the exhibition reproduced in the derivative publications. This is a dramatic, transformational leap from traditional mapping of space through cartography or the graphing of data. Börner (director, Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center, Indiana Univ.; Atlas of Science), a prime mover of this endeavor, presents this new vision in three main parts: “Science and Technology Facts,” “Envisioning Science and Technology,” and “Science Maps in Action” with recommended sequences for their reading based on one’s familiarity with the subject matter. Profiles of the creators of the maps used as examples are featured. A fourth section, “Outlook,” projects the future of science and technology mapping. VERDICT This visually stunning, complex, and thought-provoking publication will be of particular interest to information visualization professionals and serve as a revelation to informed nonspecialists.—Edward K. Werner, St. Lucie Cty. Lib. Syst., Ft. Pierce, FL

Health & Medicine


Using a question-and-answer format within broadly organized chapters, science writer Barnes-Svarney (The Handy Biology Answer Book) and scientist Svarney respond to nutrition questions. Answers range from extensive definitions to numerous pages on a specific topic—there are 17 pages on carbohydrates, for example. Despite the format, each section flows smoothly with one question leading into the next, forming an essay-style approach. Eleven chapters cover queries concerning nutrition basics, food chemistry and preservation, allergies and illness, food labeling, food history, nutrition controversies, and nutrition needs for each life stage. Useful charts such as “Beans and Their Nutrients,” exciting sidebars, and black-and-white illustrations abound. Appendices list current food safety and nutrition websites and offer diet comparisons, additional reading, and a glossary. The authors (who note that they aren’t endorsing any specific foods, supplements, treatments, or diets) refer to but don’t cite the various scientific studies, and cross-references lack specific page numbers. The detailed index is the most efficient access point for information on a particular topic. The diet comparison appendix is the most fascinating extra resource, as it reviews the purpose, pros, and cons of general diets (e.g., flexitarian, Mediterranean), institution-sponsored diets (e.g., Mayo Clinic, volumetrics) and popular culture diets (e.g., Atkins, Nutrisystem). VERDICT This approachable and valuable resource for nutrition students, health care professionals, and laypeople interested in nutrition information is an excellent complement to Brigitte Mars and Chrystle Fiedler’s The Home Reference to Holistic Health and Healing.—Laurie Selwyn, formerly with Grayson Cty. Law Lib., Sherman, TX

Political Science


At first glance, this would appear to be a tremendously involved and relatively inaccessible tome for the general reader. Upon further inspection, it is a detailed, comprehensive look at the most confusing issues of government, history, struggles for independence, and politics facing our world today. Roth (history, Becoming Tsimchian: The Social Life of Names) presents the information in an absorbing manner coupled with his cheeky sense of humor: “[Mikheil] Saakashvili grumpily tolerated Abkhazia…. This invited a Russian invasion…Georgia got nothing but a big bloody nose.” The intention of the author is to present intricate material in an engaging and humorous way, which is not easy considering the subject matter. Yet he succeeds in doing both well. Brian Beary’s Separatist Movements: A Global Reference differs in that it is an in-depth investigation of 59 movements and their leaders. Unlike this book, it doesn’t catalog the 195 sovereign states and attempt to mention the “hundreds maybe thousands, of nations in the world that are not their own states,” VERDICT Readers who enjoy gaining a better understanding of the complexities of the modern age and how they came to be will love this book. Roth addresses issues facing global citizens, places, and military situations with wit and insight.—Christine Sharbrough, Chelmsford P.L., MA

Psychology


Dream interpreter/psychologist Lennox (Dream Sight) here compiles over 1,000 alphabetically arranged entries covering symbols in dreams and their significance. The author feels there is “no wrong way to interpret a dream” and discusses how to “approach the landscape of the dream
world itself.” One of his intriguing perspectives states that people we meet in our dreams reflect us. He also explores “the shadow,” which is the darker side of the unconscious. Throughout the book, Lennox cites masculine and feminine principles, noting that both are at work within people no matter their gender. Masculine refers to “doing, taking action and being decisive,” whereas feminine covers “the idea of being, creativity and receptivity.” He calls the ocean, the unconscious mind, the land, the conscious mind and all birds messengers. Archetypes such as the witch, the wizard, and the angel provide powerful dream imagery. Various animals (cat, dog, deer, elephant) are considered along with chakras, colors (e.g., blue represents communication) and numbers (e.g., eight stands for infinity). Familiar types of dreams such as “teeth falling out,” “taking a test,” and “being chased” are also analyzed. Dreams are a popular topic with patrons so it is advisable to have a variety of sources with different and current points of view. While dream theory is subjective, Lennox proposes some riveting ideas in this affordable guide. There is also some helpful cross-referencing (the index was not seen).

VERDICT While the search for meaning in dreams is often elusive, Lennox provides some knowledge of the issues with which readers’ unconscious minds may be wrestling.—Barbara Kundanis, Longmont P.L., CO

**Religion & Spirituality**


The beautifully depicted signs, symbols, and objects in this work by astrologer Bartlett (Tarot Bible) illustrate 100 attempts to make sense of the world and our place in it. They are divided equally among chapters that cover “The Natural World,” “The Divine World,” “Signs and Systems,” and “The Mystic World.” The introduction explains what symbols are and their importance throughout history. It outlines the coverage in the book and discusses the “catalog pages” that illustrate groups of 12 symbols from various traditions. The entries that follow generally portray on a two-page spread each, an item and its history—handprints on cave walls in Argentina, the breastplate of Aaron, Vitruvian Man. Several entries address a type of item, such as tefillin (phylacteries worn by Jews), playing cards, or Fibonacci series. In many cases the book goes into extra detail. The summary on the Hindu elephant-headed god Ganesha, for example, is accompanied by information on Kangi-ten, a Japanese pair of gods that are male and female elephants, and followed by pages on Hindu deities generally. Entries are accompanied by vivid reproductions of artworks. The accompanying captions provide basic facts on the items, though the descriptions are at times quite general rather than offering thorough explanations on the particular object shown. Since the spreads are fascinating but brief, some may wish for further reading advice that is unfortunately lacking. Still, this is a wonderful browse and a great jumping-off point for reports on history, mythology, and religion. VERDICT Books on 100 objects of various kinds are common now yet usually address history rather than signs and symbols. This is therefore a worthwhile addition to public library reference shelves.—Henrietta Verma, Library Journal

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