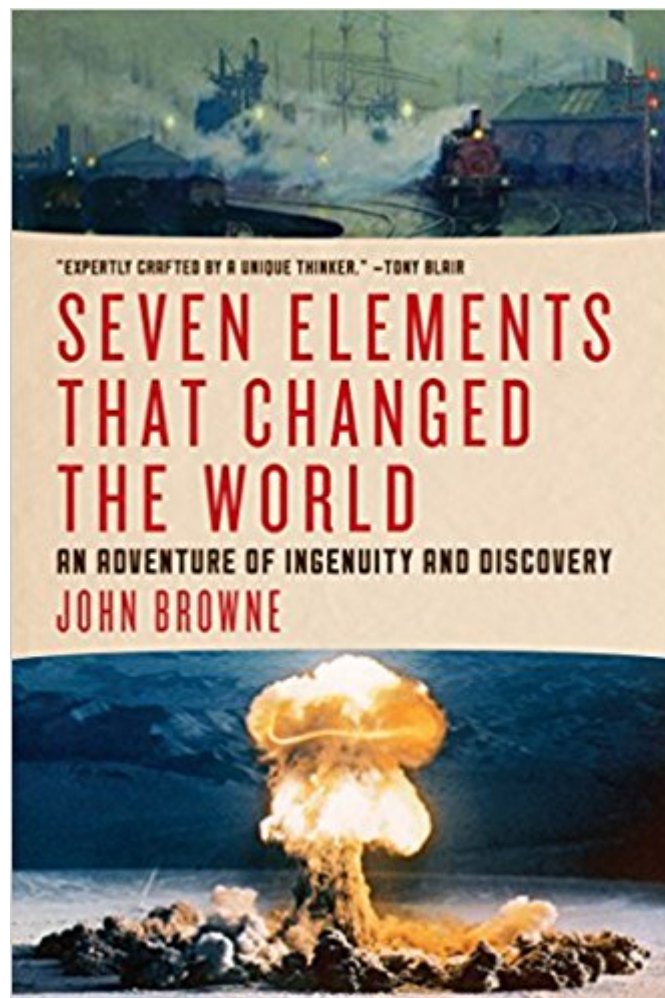




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Seven Elements That Changed The World: An Adventure Of Ingenuity And Discovery



Synopsis

"Mr. Browne uses his chosen elements to frame a wide-ranging look at scientific progress. It's also a lot of fun." — The Wall Street Journal

The fascinating story of how seven elements—iron, carbon, gold, silver, uranium, titanium, and silicon—have changed modern life, for good and ill. With carbon we access heat, light and mobility at the flick of a switch, while silicon enables us to communicate across the globe in an instant. Uranium is both productive (nuclear power) and destructive (nuclear bombs); iron is the bloody weapon of war, but also the economic tool of peace; our desire for alluring gold is the foundation of global trade, but has also led to the death of millions. John Browne, CEO of British Petroleum (BP) for twelve years, vividly describes how seven elements are shaping the world around us, for better and for worse. Combining history, science and politics, *Seven Elements* takes you on a present-day adventure of human passion, ingenuity and discovery. This journey is far from over: we continue to find surprising new uses for these seven elements. Discover how titanium pervades modern consumer society, how natural gas is transforming the global energy sector, and how an innovative new form of carbon could be starting a technology revolution.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Pegasus Books; 1 edition (April 15, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1605986917

ISBN-13: 978-1605986913

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 26 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #330,119 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in Books > Science & Math > Chemistry > Inorganic #868 in Books > History > World > Civilization & Culture #1166 in Books > Science & Math > Chemistry > General & Reference

Customer Reviews

Anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of chemistry can look at the periodic table of elements and feel confident that the vast majority of listed chemicals, save several latecomers synthesized in physics laboratories, serve vital roles in the world around us. For his debut work of nonfiction, however, former British Petroleum CEO Browne decided to focus only on seven—iron,

carbon, gold, silver, uranium, titanium and silicon, convincingly demonstrating how each had its part in shaping human civilization, both for good and for ill. Iron, for instance, was indispensable in building machinery that powered the industrial revolution, but has also made possible the diverse and destructive weapons of war. Carbon, in the form of oil and coal, provides abundant energy but also accelerates global warming. Gold and silver have buttressed international economies while fostering greed and genocide, whereas uranium is essential both in nuclear power plants and in the world's deadliest bombs. In his first foray into popular-science writing, Browne does an admirable job crafting an informative and engrossing chemistry-based view of history. --Carl Hays

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

“The human quest for knowledge has led to extraordinary progress. This book forces us to confront these realities and does so in a unique and fascinating way. It weaves science and humanity together in a way that gives us new insight. This is an expertly crafted book by a unique thinker.” - Tony Blair

“In his first foray into popular-science writing, Browne does an admirable job crafting an informative and engrossing chemistry-based view of history.” - Booklist

“[Browne] mixes in his travels and anecdotes from an impressive career to produce a lively, educational examination of civilization's building blocks.” - Publishers Weekly

“The topics the author chooses to cover, ranging from the use of coal in ancient China to the Bessemer converter and silver photography, unfold in thoughtful detail, and the ample footnotes accompanying the text are as diverting as they are helpful.” - Kirkus Reviews

Very Interesting

It's a book with uncommon knowledge. Knowledge hard to find in such a concise form elsewhere.

The author covers a broad description of history and technology successfully providing the reader with a simultaneous glimpse of both the "forest" and the "trees."

Excellent idea. A few times the author referred to events that he obviously expected I should know about but I didn't (and I know about lots of things!). Very widely travelled author. Knowledgeable. Not quite all I was hoping for!

My memory is foggy since I read many books. I remember enjoying reading about carbon, and other

elements. At 78 yrs. I don't retain much. The book is easy reading and if you have an interest in elements this book reveal more than you may have learned in school.

A clever, interesting way to get at the subject

One of the best non-fiction books ever written. I've never seen so many footnotes and the authors attention to detail. Really well researched and presented. In fact, I just got the real story about aircraft-100 years of Boeing.

Interesting look at 7 elements important to our world with good historical commentary about each one.

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