

Nonfiction

For each selected title, we provide the following:

Title in English

Title in Japanese (romanization) | Author/Illustrator | Publisher | Publication Year | Number of Pages |

Trim Size | ISBN | Target Age | Keywords

Basic Book Description (Last Name of Reviewer)

* Information on this material comes from data bases, such as that of the National Diet Library, Japan.

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They've Been Born! Geckos

うまれたよ! ヤモリ (Umaretayo! Yamori)

Text/photos SEKI Shintaro | Iwasaki Shoten | 2024 | 30pp | 29×25cm | ISBN978-4-2650-2158-1 | Ages: 3+ | *Reptiles, Geckos, Birth, Behaviors*

This picture book introduces geckos, common in Japanese cities, through large photos accompanied by simple text, from laying eggs through the growth and molting of the young. The clear and detailed images show the damp body of the newborn, and the hairs on the soles of the feet that enable the gecko to walk on ceilings and glass windows. Geckos will lay eggs in the same place for many years if the site is suitable, and seeing the huge number of eggshells that remain at these sites, as well as the scenes of geckos feeding on their prey—insects and spiders—is impactful. Explanations of the gecko's ability to change its body color to match its surroundings, and of its vertical cat-eye-like pupils, are included at the end. (Sakaguchi)

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The Secret Life of Shrews

トガリネズミひみつのくらし (Togarinezumi no himitsu no kurashi)

Text/photos ROKUTA Haruhito | Sekaibunkasha | 2024 | 40pp | 23×23cm | ISBN978-4-4182-4810-0 | Ages: 3+ | *Shrews, Endangered species, Birth, Nature*

The endangered Tokyo shrew is a species of mole that lives not in Tokyo, but in Hokkaido, northern Japan. It is one of the world's smallest mammals, weighing just 2 grams, and if it goes without food for four hours, it will die, unable to maintain its body temperature. The photographs in this picture book show how these tiny creatures survive in the wild. The author moved to Hokkaido to see the shrews' babies, which no one had ever seen before. His remarkable photographs, painstakingly taken over a period of three years, offer rare glimpses of the babies until they reach independence at 28 days of age. Detailed commentary and QR codes are included at the end of the book. (Sakaguchi)

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The Life of Acorns

どんぐり (Donguri)

Text/Ill. TATENO Hiroshi | Komine Shoten | 2023 | 33pp | 22×25cm | ISBN978-4-3383-6201-6 | Ages: 3+ | *Plants, Forests, Life, Nature*

The autumn wind stirs the treetops, and many acorns dance to the ground. Field mice nibble at the shiny brown acorns. Birds peck at them. Larvae make holes in the acorns and crawl out. The surviving acorns sprout and, after winter, produce new leaves. Small animals and larvae eat the leaves. This book contains no words except for the title. Detailed black-and-white illustrations

make up each scene, with color selectively used to symbolize lives being described. The tiny sapling on the lower part of the final spread evokes life's continuity in a remarkable way. (Nogami)

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Our Friend Clover

シロツメクサはともだち (Shirosumekusa wa tomodachi)

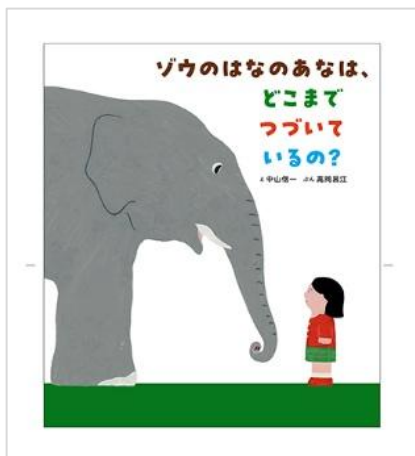
Text/Ill. SUZUKI Jun | Bronze Shinsha | 2024 | 32p | 26×21cm | ISBN978-4-8930-9729-3 | Ages: 7+ | *Naturalized plants, Life, Nature, Seasons*

We often see white clover around us. Its flowers may look like single round blooms, but they are made up of many florets. Each one has a pistil and stamen and gets pollinated when a honeybee lands. When the blossoms wither, they turn brown and fall to the ground. Remove their petals, and a bean-like object appears; open it, and multiple seeds come out. Plant the seeds, and they produce leaves with an array of patterns and shapes.

It is said that in the Edo period (1603-1868), white clover traveled to Japan from Holland stuffed inside shipping crates, to cushion breakables. The wonders of this naturalized plant show through in clear photographs in this excellent book.

(Nogami)

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How Far Up Do an Elephant's Nostrils Go?

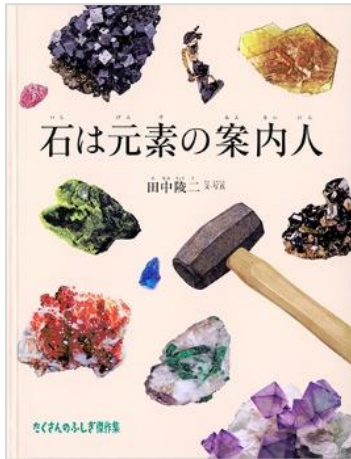
ゾウのはなのあなは、どこまでつづいているの? (Zo no hana no ana wa doko made tsuzuite iruno?)

Text: TAKAOKA Masae | Ill. NAKAYAMA Shinichi | Asunaro Shobo | 2023 | 38pp | 25×22cm | ISBN978-4-7515-3127-3 | Ages: 7+ | *Elephant, Nose, Form, Function*

A girl wonders how far up her nostrils go and what a nose's job is, and she compares her nose to an elephant's. She learns that their noses are completely different in length and shape, but their structure is identical. The elephant's nose

performs many jobs, such as communicating greetings and emotions to other elephants. This book's bright, fun illustrations and text addressing the reader are distinctive. The back matter introduces an elephant at Tennoji Zoo in Osaka whose mother died right after its birth, who grew up without a herd to teach it to use its nose. (Sakaguchi)

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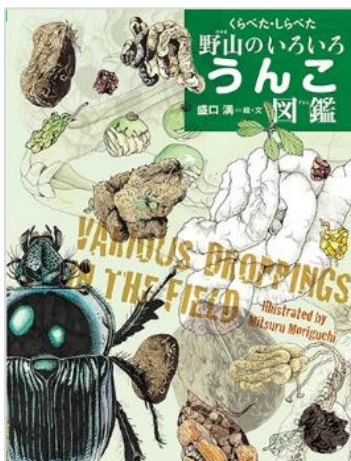
Minerals Are Guides to Elements

石は元素の案内人 (Ishi wa genso no annainin)

Text/Photos TANAKA Ryoji | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2024 | 47pp | 26×20cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8757-4 | Ages: 9+ | *Elements, Minerals, Crystals, Periodic table*

The number of elements currently known to make up all matter is 118. This picture book introduces several elements using beautiful mineral crystals. It shows that rock salt turns vivid pink or blue when combined with different elements, and it uses this to explain elements' structure. It also discusses how to extract the elements iron and copper from minerals, and how to extract the element iodine from kombu seaweed harvested in northern Japan. Eye-catching photographs convey that no matter how much you break up rock salt, its crystals remain cubic, and that metal crystals are shiny. This book includes a periodic table with a photo of a crystal containing each element. (Sakaguchi)

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I Compared! I Checked!

Poop Encyclopedia of Hill and Dale

くらべた・しらべた 野山のいろいろ うんこ図鑑 (Kurabeta. Shirabeta: Noyama no iroiro unko zukan)

Text/Ill. MORIGUCHI Mitsuru | Iwasaki Shoten | 2023 | 32pp | 29×22cm | ISBN978-4-2650-4378-1 | Ages: 9+ | *Wild animals, Dung, Biodiversity, Cycles*

Animals eat, therefore they poop. Examining their poop tells us how they live. This author collected copious samples of poop around Japan—from bear poop to snail poop—and their various colors, shapes, and sizes illustrate biodiversity itself. Some animals eat poop; others eat plants that sprout from poop. Looking at the detailed drawings of poop, readers come to realize its importance in the circle of life. The “pee” on gecko feces, the colorful droppings of fruit bats, and art made of dung pieces all appear in this picture book full of surprises. (Sakaguchi)

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Animals Who Cook

人間は料理をする生きものだ (Ningen wa ryori suru ikimono da)

Text/Photos MORIEDA Takashi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2024 | 40pp | 26×20cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8771-0 | Ages: 9+ |



Animals, Bodies, World, Foodstuffs

Most animals' bodies let them eat their food as-is, but humans are different. After we catch, raise, or buy our food, we use a variety of tools to cook it, making it safe and delicious to eat. What other animals do inside their bodies, we do on the outside; that is what cooking is, according to the author. In this landmark science picture book, an author who has considered humans and food for decades compares us to an array of animals, and introduces cooking practices and food traditions from around the world using abundant photographs. By conveying the essence of cooking from different angles, he gets us to think. (Nogami)

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A Stone Grinder and 24 Blocks of Tofu

ひき石と24丁のとうふ (Hiki ishi to nijuyon cho no tofu)

Text/Photos ONISHI Nobuo | Alice-kan | 2024 | 40pp | 26×21cm | ISBN978-4-7520-1100-2 | Ages: 9+ | *Tofu making, Elderly woman, Visual impairment*

A photo picture book about Mina-san, a ninety-year-old woman who makes and sells tofu in the mountains of Iwate prefecture. Mina-san, who has been visually impaired since childhood, lives alone and began selling tofu in her seventies. Using no electric appliances and a century-old stone grinder, she breaks down soybeans and cooks them over a wood fire before pouring them into molds. Every day, she does this for six hours to prepare 24 blocks of tofu. Mina-san's daily efforts to prepare tofu by hand and serve others come through in stunning photographs. This book causes us to consider what food is, and what a store is. (Doi)

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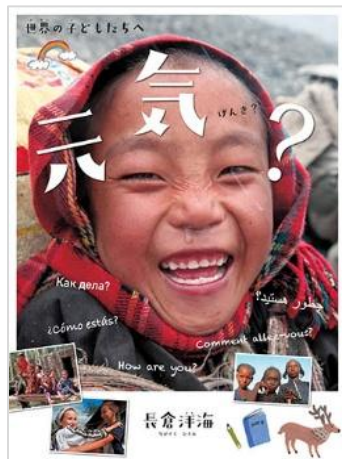
Insect Bodies 5

Eyes

虫のからだ5: め (Mushi no karada 5: Me)

Text/Photos SHINKAI Takashi | Iwasaki Shoten | 2024 | 31pp | 22×29cm | ISBN978-4-2650-9110-2 | Ages: 9+ | *Insects, Bodies, Function, Biodiversity*

This is one of five books in a series that introduce the structure and functions of insect bodies part by part, focusing especially on five species including the small cabbage white butterfly and the rhinoceros beetle. The insects may be familiar, but magnified photos of their bodies in ultrafine detail are fresh and new. They all have compound eyes, but these are white in the butterfly, and black in the nocturnal beetle in order to catch even weak light. A spider, by contrast, has eight simple eyes to see its surroundings. The "Legs" volume in this series shows how butterfly larvae have spines on their legs, which hook onto threads from their mouths to help them stay in place. The detailed explanations will change how readers see insects. (Sakaguchi)



Are You Well?

To the World's Children

元気? 世界の子どもたちへ (Genki? Sekai no kodomo tachi e)

Text/Photos NAGAKURA Hiromi | Asahi Shimbun Shuppan | 2023 | 111pp | 29×21cm | ISBN978-4-0233-2304-9 | Ages: 11+ | *Cultural diversity, Photography, Children*

The author of this book has traveled the world for more than forty years and seems able to get along with children everywhere. Here, he introduces us to children from 27 nations on five continents and islands. Each introduction includes photos of the child wearing a characteristic facial expression; a map; and text describing the landscape, culture, and circumstances in which the author met the child. The book also offers glimpses of the problems adults are grappling with in society. Organized with one introduction per spread, the book is easy to follow and exposes readers to diverse cultures. In a "Note to You" at the end, the author invites readers to venture out into the world themselves. (Sakuma)



Barrier-Free Reading

Let's Find It! The Best Way for Me to Read

読書バリアフリー: 見つけよう! 自分にあった読書のカタチ (Dokushi baria furi: mitsukeyo! Jibun ni atta dokusho no katachi)

Ed. Dokusho Kobo | kokudoshya | 2023 | 79pp | 27×19cm | ISBN978-4-3372-8950-5 | Ages: 11+ | *Barrier-free texts, Diversity*

Since the Barrier-Free Reading Act passed in Japan in 2019, interest has grown regarding the many ways in which different people read books and obtain information. In this book, illustrations and photographs combine with text to introduce touchable picture books with braille, cloth picture books, large print books, easy-to-read "lättläst" books, audiobooks, manga, eBooks, and books in various languages. The text discusses characteristics of the different book categories, and it explores what makes content easy to read and understand for people with diverse needs. Readers consider what kinds of books belong in our world. (Sakuma)

Japanese Foods from the Sea 1-3

Dried Fish | Kamaboko | Fish Eggs

海からいただく日本のおかず 1～3: 干物/蒲鉾/魚卵 (Umi kara itadaku nihon no okazu 1-3: himono/ kamaboko/ gyoran)

Text/Ill. ABE Hideki | Ed. Japan Fisheries Association | Kaiseisha | 2024 | 40pp | 29×24cm | ISBN978-4-0343-8110-6 | Ages: 11+ | *Washoku (Japanese cuisine), Foodstuffs, Seafood products, Processed foods*



Processed seafood products number among Japan's traditional foods. These three photo picture books introduce three categories of such products, their histories and preparation, how they are eaten, and how they connect to the future. Surrounded by the sea, each region of Japan retains unique processing methods and food culture. The depth of washoku (traditional Japanese cuisine)—an Intangible Cultural Heritage—and the wisdom of not wasting come through in plentiful photos and detailed text.

The books about dried fish and kamaboko include ukiyoe prints depicting these foods; the book about fish eggs introduces caviar. The books also show children drying fish, making kamaboko, and preparing salmon roe with soy sauce. These are fun books to pair with meals and hands-on cooking experiences. (Sakaguchi)

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Make It from Scratch!

Brooms

Life Starts with the Basics

イチからつくる

ホウキ イチは、いのちのはじまり (Ichi kara tsukuru Hoki: ichi wa inochi no hajimari)

Ed. MIYAHARA Katsuto | Ill. HORIKAWA Rimako | Nobunkyo | 2024 | 36pp | 27×22cm

| ISBN 978-4-5402-3156-8 | Ages: 11+ | *Tools, Brooms, Handmade*

This book uses easy-to-understand illustrations and photographs to show how broomcorn and kochia are grown from seeds and using to make brooms. Since ancient times, Japanese have treated brooms differently than other tools, seeing in them power to cleanse the heart as well as one's surroundings. These days, vacuum cleaners are everywhere, but the value of handmade brooms is being seen anew. Not only are they made from materials kind to Nature, but making them is also fun in itself. This book shows the making and care of rice straw, fan palm and bamboo brooms and introduces brooms from different countries. A QR code lets one witness broom manufacturing, and the back matter includes detailed explanations. (Sakaguchi)

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Akira Ikegami's Modern Asian History for Young Readers, Book 1

The Republic of Korea and Democratic People's Republic of Korea

池上彰の若い読者のためのアジア現代史 1:大韓民国・朝鮮民主主義人民共和国 (Ikegami

Akira no Wakai dokusha no tame no ajia gendaishi 1: Daikanminkoku, Chosen minshushugi jinmin kyowakoku)

Text: IKEGAMI Akira | Asunaro Shobo | 2024 | 238pp | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-7515-3177-8 | Ages: 13+ | *History, Diplomacy*

The Korean peninsula sits just across the Japan Sea from Japan, but while many Japanese

harbor various emotions about North Korea and South Korea, opportunities to study the two countries are sparse. This book invites deeper understanding. In an overview chapter, the countries' territory, politics, and other aspects are concisely introduced. In a modern history chapter, Japan's relationship with the two countries is described in detail. Sprinkled throughout are summaries of content plus explanations of key terms, including yangban (traditional ruling class of Korea during the Joseon dynasty); KCIA (South Korean intelligence agency); wartime procurement; and the Silmido incident (1971). The author, a well-known journalist, fervently hopes young people will read this book and improve relations with North Korea and South Korea. (Sakaguchi)

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Observing Objects, Caring for a Lifetime: The World of Art Conservation and Restoration

絵画を見る、絵画をなおす 保存修復の世界 (Kaiga o miru, kaiga o naosu: hozon shufuku no sekai)

Text: TAGUCHI Kaori | Kaiseisha | 2024 | 183pp | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-0363-6410-7 |

Ages: 13+ | *Art, Restoration and conservation, Research, Careers*

The author of this book fell in love with Western art when visiting Italy at age fifteen. She went on to study and work in art conservation and restoration at an Italian studio, eventually returning to Japan and becoming a consultant for art exhibitions. This book

vividly conveys the fun and depth of doing a job that is not well known in Japan. Using fascinating examples—ranging from the Venus de Milo sculpture of the second century BC, to recent art by Christian Boltanski and Banksy—the author explores composition in art, the importance of looking, the meaning of restoring (and not restoring), the birth and death of artworks, and art's connection to society. This is a book in the "Research for All" series focused on young people's curiosity and future aspirations. (Hiromatsu)

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The Fukushima Crisis, Person by Person

From March 2011 to Today

原発事故、ひとりひとりの記憶 3.11 から今に続くこと (Genpatsu jiko, hitori hitori no kioku: san ten ichiichi kara ima ni tsuzuku koto)

Text: YOSHIDA Chia | Iwanami Shoten | 2024 | 226pp | 18×11cm | ISBN978-4-0050-0981-7 |

Ages: 13+ | *Fukushima, Nuclear accident, Evacuation, History in the Present*

The accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in March 2011 caused radioactive contamination of a wide area, forcing many people to evacuate. The author of this book visited the affected area repeatedly in order to share, in great detail, the memories of eighteen

individuals. One person lost a livelihood; another became a single parent due to evacuating with a child. Another person sued the government and the power company over a lost way of life; still another began measuring radiation levels with a friend. A firefighter went without sleep to continue rescue efforts during the crisis; a number of children have contracted

thyroid cancer in its wake. This book records both the voices and the humanity of its subjects. (Sakuma)

53



Because I'm Not Japanese?

Experiences in Japan's Immigration System

それはわたしが外国人だから？ 日本の入管で起こっていること (Sore wa watashi ga gaikokujin dakara?: nihon no nyukan de okotte iru koto)

Text: YASUDA Natsuki | Text/Ill. KANAI Maki | Ed. TAKAHASHI Wataru | Heureka | 2024 | 183pp | 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-9097-5317-5 | Ages: 13+ | *Immigration bureau, Non-Japanese, Discrimination*

Rhianna was born in Japan to Ghanaian parents. Ahmed is a Kurdish man who came to Japan from Turkey because he feared for his life. Soku Irubun has Korean roots but has lived in Japan since before World War II. In this book, the authors explore barriers faced by these interviewees because they are not Japanese nationals. In addition, the authors share learnings from the family of Wishma Sandamali, a Sri Lankan woman who died in a Japanese immigration detention facility. The distinctions between immigrants and refugees, Japan's Immigration Control Act, and a Refugee and Migrant Festival are covered as well. This book accessibly and concretely conveys the effects of immigration law on non-Japanese in Japan. (Doi)

54



Please, Someone Tell Me What "Normal" Is!

だれか、ふつうを教えてください！ (増補新版) (Dareka, futsu o oshiete kure! Zoho shinpan)

Text: KURAMOTO Tomoaki | Shinyosha | 2024 | 205pp | 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-7885-1835-3 | Ages:13+ | *Disabilities, Personal relationships, Coexistence*

An author with visual impairment presents philosophical essays about coexistence and normality. Some of his observations stem from memories, such as playing baseball as a child and falling from a train platform. He points out that the false binary of disabled vs. non-disabled is manufactured by society, and that individuals' challenges and degrees of disability cannot be lumped together. He urges getting to know the people in front of us rather than assuming we understand them. His hints for relating to others are packed with humor. This new edition includes supplementary material, which is a rousing call to challenge social norms that stigmatize disabilities. (Okuyama)

55

What is Romance?

恋愛ってなんだろう？ (Renai tte nandarou?)

Text: OMORI Misa | Heibonsha | 2024 | 223pp | 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-5828-3944-9 | Ages: 13+ | *Romance, Sexuality, History*



The author, a sociologist, discusses romantic love in the form of a Q-and-A with middle-school students. The first chapter, "What is Romance?", delves into diverse sexualities, friendships, and attraction. The second chapter, "Does Romance Have Rules?", explores romantic confessions and touch, as well as the phenomena of internet dating and dating violence. The third chapter, "How Does Romance Relate to Society?", explores the history of romance and marriage as well as situations overseas. By providing concrete information, this book invites us to shrug off fixed attitudes about romance and carefully consider our interactions with others. (Okuyama)