

QUESTIONS AND EXCELLENT ANSWERS

I didn't know that! The extraordinary science in an ordinary day. Katherine Farris, ed. Greey de Pencier Books, 1988. 77 pp., \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-920775-31-4.

What's the oldest vegetable on earth? How do fireworks work? Why are feet so ticklish? These are only a sample of the many interesting questions contained in *I didn't know that! The extraordinary science in an ordinary day*. The questions selected for inclusion in this book are the ones most frequently asked by young readers of OWL magazine.

The index reveals the wide variety of subjects discussed through a question-answer format. All answers are brief, consisting of only a few paragraphs at most. Nevertheless, the information presented is fascinating and could easily spark an investigation into further research.

It is enjoyable to actually watch children using this book. They flip through the pages stopping at those questions which catch their attention. The book covers such a variety of topics that it appeals to children with very different interests. Young readers spend several sittings with the book, each time selecting and discussing new questions and answers. The questions encourage hypothesizing, thinking, sharing ideas and reading to gain or confirm information.

Topics related to the body, such as "Why do noses run?" are viewed as "gross", and therefore, of the utmost interest to eight through twelve-year-olds. They eagerly read aloud the answers to each other while making faces in the process.

The photography contained in *I didn't know that!* is excellent and greatly enhances the text. Cartoons also add to the book's visual appeal.

Since the Ontario Ministry of Education currently sees science as a priority in our school system, a book such as *I didn't know that!* would be a very good addition to any school, classroom or home library. It would help to promote science as an enjoyable, non-threatening subject. Through questions and answers directly related to themselves and to their environment, children could gain new information, reinforce known facts and develop an interest where one did not previously exist.

Now for just a few more fascinating questions. Why doesn't Earth have a ring around it? Which is colder, The North or South Pole? Why does popcorn pop?

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