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What a Great Idea! Inventions that Changed the World

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Tomacek, Stephen M. *What a Great Idea! Inventions that Changed the World*. Illustrated by Dan Stuckenschneider. Scholastic, 2003. ISBN 0590681443. \$18.95. 112 pp.

Reviewer: AnnMarie Hamar

Reading Level: Primary; Intermediate;

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Informational Books;

Subject: Inventions--History--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

"What a Great Idea" is a basic introduction to 45 inventions that have had a major impact on the way people live. Author Tomacek divides the text into five major time periods: the Ancient World, the Metal Age, the Age of Discovery, the Age of Electricity and Communication, and the Age of the Atom. The Age of Electricity and Communication encompasses the development of anesthesia, antiseptics, the electric motor, and plastics, among others. The book's strength lies in author Tomacek's ability to then draw a connection between one invention and how it influenced the discovery of others. For example, the work of Wilhelm Roentgen, William Cannon, and others on X-rays led to the eventual development of diagnostic tools like CAT scans and MRIs.

Tomacek's text is simple and straightforward. Although his book does not offer the depth of information that some others might, it is an excellent introduction and encourages further reading. A bibliography and list of pertinent websites are included.