



2020

Literally: Amazing Words and Where They Come From

Rachel Wadham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Wadham, Rachel (2020) "Literally: Amazing Words and Where They Come From," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 41: Iss. 10, Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol41/iss10/15>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.



Book Review

Literally: Amazing Words and Where They Come From



Author

Patrick Skipworth

Illustrator

Nicholas Stevenson

Reviewer

Rachel Wadham

.....

Rating

Dependable

Level

Primary

.....

Pages

32

Year

2020

ISBN

9781912920181

Publisher

What On Earth Books

Discover the origins and meanings of twelve English words that come from a wide range of languages all over the world. From finding out that the origin of the world ukulele has to do with fleas to seeing how the use of the world royalty has changed over time, it is clear that the origin and history of words shape their meanings both in the past and in the present.

This direct and simple exploration of English words derived from other cultures shows just how interconnected we all are. The text is very brief, offering the pronunciation, origin, English meaning, and original meaning, followed by a paragraph giving some context. This makes the book fast and easy to consume, but overall, its information lacks some needed depth. Additionally, four of the twelve nouns are names of animals, and it would have been nice to see more of a range of word types and forms. One strength of this book is the illustrations, which make up for some of the text's lack of depth by showing the definitions of the words (both past and present) in unique ways. Splattered paint dots give the illustrations a textured look, and the way Stevenson plays with perspective and scale gives the pictures a unique sense of movement. The pictures also illustrate each word into the image with fun fonts and colors, another aspect that brings great power to the overall intent of the book. Ending with a map of language families and an author's note, this book is sure to entice young linguists into learning more about the history of words.