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Why Is Milk White?: & 200 Other Curious Chemistry Questions



Synopsis

When it comes to chemistry, most kids have more questions than answers. Why do you get cavities when you eat too much sugar? How does sun block protect your skin from getting a sunburn? What makes soda so fizzy? And why do you need antifreeze in your car? Teenager Alexa Coelho quizzed her neighbor, chemist Simon Field, with hundreds of perplexing questions, and now she has the answers. Field covers a wide variety of concepts from simple to complex, but always with straightforward, easy-to-understand explanations. And for those readers who want to see chemistry in action, *Why Is Milk White?* also includes a dozen unique experiments to try at home. Lift latent fingerprints from a "crime scene" using super glue (for a glass or smooth surface) or iodine (for paper). Hollow out the zinc interior of a penny using muriatic acid, leaving only a thin copper shell. Conduct a paper chromatography experiment to separate food coloring into its component dyes. Or use easy-to-find chemicals to create plastic "slime" Silly Putty, or a bouncing ball. This book is the perfect resource for budding scientists everywhere. Simon Field is the author of *Culinary Reactions*, *Why There's Antifreeze in Your Toothpaste*, and *Gonzo Gizmos*, and is the creator of the popular Web site www.scitoys.com. Alexa Coelho is a curious teenager who asks a lot of chemistry questions.

Book Information

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Age Range: 9 and up

Grade Level: 4 and up

Customer Reviews

I have always loved question/answer books of this type, and while I enjoyed seeing the questions in this book, the book could have been better. I couldn't help but smile when I read the preface in which author Simon Quellen Field explained how he accepted 11-year old co-author Alexa Coelho's generous offer to split the profits with Simon 50/50 if he took on the easy part of writing the answers to Alexa's questions. Alexa was on to something here.

Understanding begins with asking the right questions, and I was gratified to see many questions about some of the everyday things I had often wondered about but never had a chance to look up. Even though I minored in chemistry in college and learned many mechanisms, the applications that were emphasized in school were either largely demonstrative or related to industrial or pharmaceutical processes. I therefore still had no idea about how some of the most commonplace phenomena occur – an example is the difference between soap for sinks vs soap for the dishwasher. Naturally, I was quite excited to see these addressed in this book. It definitely opened (or re-opened) my eyes to the wonder of the things around me and helped me put the theory I learned a long time ago into perspective. In that way, seeing the questions in this book was a refreshing and fun experience. Or rather, it was a fun experience for the most part. I had a few frustrations. One thing that bothered me was the organization. I realize that this is not a textbook and does not purport to be complete. Still, the questions seemed to be haphazardly grouped together. For example, "How do people make lipstick different colors?" was in "Household Chemistry" while "Why is grass green?" was in "Color" and "How do we make different colored fireworks?"

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