

The Rough Guide to the Brain

By Barry J Gibb

Reviewed by Sam Hollis, UK

Details

Publisher: Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine, Berlin-Buch (MDC)

Publication year: 2008
ISBN: 9783938833322

Web reference

w1 –The book can be downloaded free of charge in PDF format from the MDC website (www.mdc-berlin.de) or via the direct link:

<http://tinyurl.com/3gkcyne>

Free print copies can be ordered from:

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The *Rough Guide to the Brain* is a thoroughly readable, interesting and informative book. It was so compelling that I read it in a very short space of time (having two small children, this is no mean feat!). As a non-biologist, I felt that the book was very accessible, benefiting from a lack of jargon. I suspect this will make it valuable to teachers whose first language is not English.

The author covers a wide range of topics, which include evolution, the development of brain science, how the brain and nervous system work, memory, consciousness, intelligence and mechanical brains. The book explores these areas in quite some detail, while remaining easy to read. Although clearly aimed at a lay audience, the book covers the relevant parts of the UK's syllabuses for 14- to 18-year-olds. I would recommend that the decision to use the book as a teaching tool or as student reading material is made according to age group: a 14-year-old would find the content understandable and engaging, although it is probably aimed above the level of the average 18-year-old.

In the past, I have taught several aspects of the brain to my 14- to 16-year-old students. Had I read *The Rough Guide to the Brain* first, I would not only have been far more knowledgeable of the subject area, but also able to retell some of the book's interesting and sometimes rather dramatic anecdotes about brain injuries that have affected people's behaviour.

Such as that of Phineas Gage, who while working on the railroad in the USA survived having a 3-cm-wide metal rod penetrate his skull and come out the other side! He became foul-mouthed and erratic, giving a clue as to the area of the brain that was destroyed – that concerned with higher thinking.

The Rough Guide to the Brain should be read and referred to by all of those teaching about the brain to students aged 14 and upwards. This book could make a real difference to your teaching, understanding and enjoyment of this important topic in today's secondary-school science syllabus.

Details

Publisher: Rough Guides
Publication year: 2007. A new edition is due to be published in May 2012
ISBN: 9781843536642

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