

# Inflight Science: A guide to the world from your airplane window

By **Brian Clegg**

Reviewed by **Friedel Krotscheck, Austria**

**H**olding this book in my hands as I boarded what would be an eight-hour flight, I planned to read the modest 204 pages whilst airborne. When we landed, I had managed just 70, thanks to all the observation, thinking and note-taking that *Inflight Science: A guide to the world from your airplane window* inspired.

*Inflight Science* uses science to explain every technical detail of a commercial aeroplane flight and helps address many of our preconceptions about flying. The book is best described as a science encyclopaedia written like a novel. It grabs you and will not let you go; every other page introduces a new flight-related scientific topic, connected to the next in logical sequence.

The author, Brian Clegg, keeps the reader entertained by covering a most interesting combination of unexpected topics, including archaeology, Newton's laws, the taste of aeroplane food, Maxwell's equations and brain function. Despite their broad range of subject matter, the chapters are neatly categorised, following the progress of a normal flight and covering topics that feature in the science curriculum of students aged 12-18.

The scientific information is not only presented in an unusual context, but also often explained in a very funny way, making it easy to remem-

ber. Understanding the principles of relativity or grasping the function of the human eye has never been easier. And reading the book while actually on a flight makes the learning experience even better – you can understand events as they happen.

Younger students (aged 12-16) could use *Inflight Science* as the basis of a project that simulates a flight, performing experiments and building models detailed by the author (some of these are even suitable to be carried out during a flight!). Such a project could be carried out over a whole school year, by the end of which students could become very literate in the relevant areas of science. With older students (aged 17-18), the book could be used more like a textbook.

I highly recommend *Inflight Science* to all science teachers who have been airborne at least once. Its use in the classroom will enrich the learning of numerous students through their teachers' new approach to familiar science. For this reason, it would be fair to change the last sentence of the book from "With science as your guide, the everyday will never appear quite so ordinary again" to "With this book as your guide, everyday science will never appear quite so ordinary again".

I have only one wish: that the book be translated into all languages so it can be available on every aeroplane.

## Details

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To date, only a translation into German (*Warum Tee im Flugzeug nicht schmeckt und Wolken nicht vom Himmel fallen*) is available.

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