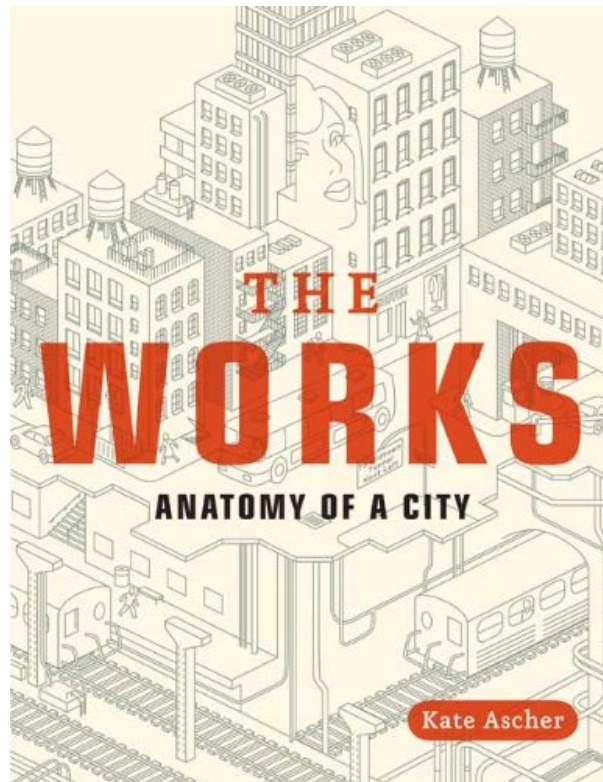
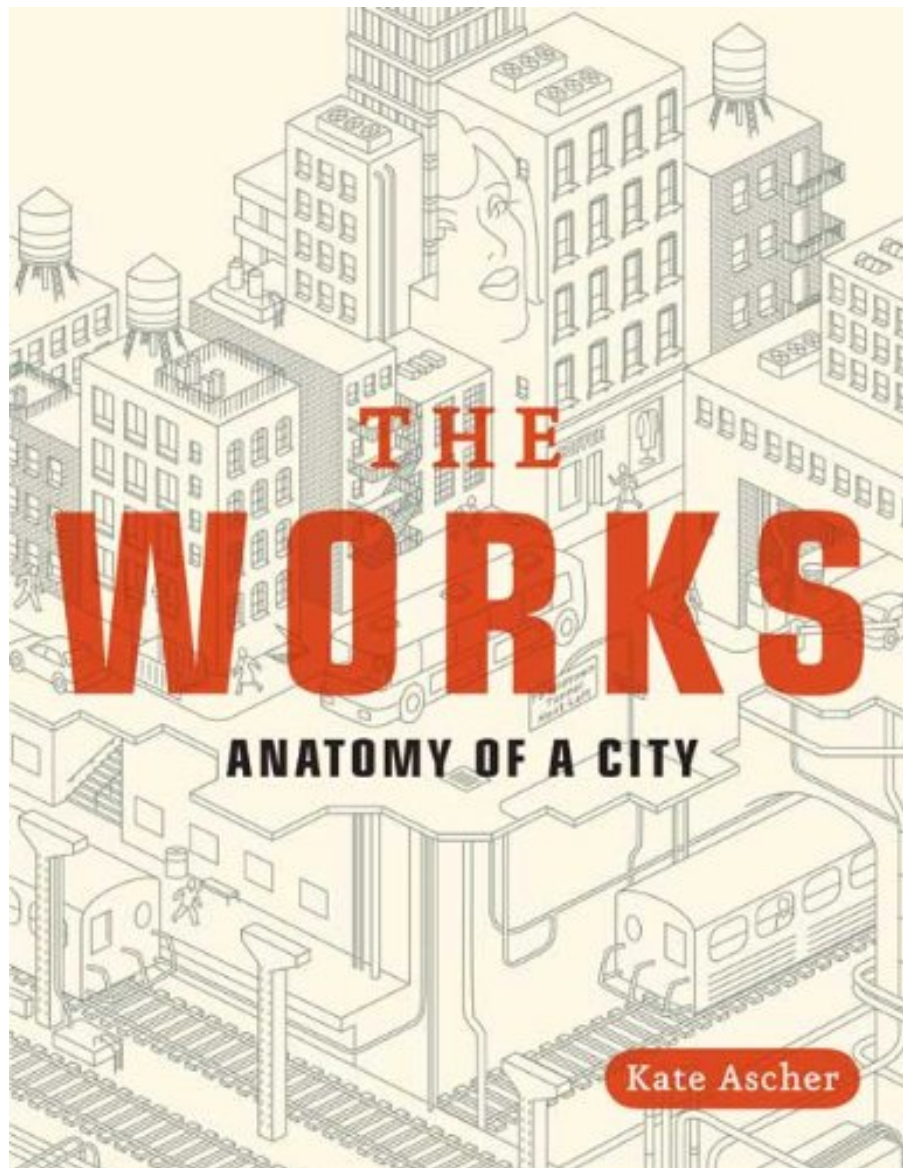


# THE WORKS: ANATOMY OF A CITY BY KATE ASCHER



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## Amazon.com Review

Kate Ascher could not have chosen a much drier topic for a book than water mains, parking meters, railroad classification yards, and the other doodads of city infrastructure. But in Ascher's captivating book, *The Works*, the innards of New York City come alive. Wonderfully illustrated, the book combines text, maps, and other graphics to tell the story of the systems that keep America's greatest city running smoothly. How are traffic lights coordinated? How do potholes form and which areas have streets with the best "smoothness score"? How is mail processed? What happens when you flush the toilet? Ascher, who has a PhD in government from the London School of Economics and is now executive vice president of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, dissects the colorful workings of all these systems and much more.

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"*The Works* is both a reference guide and a geeky pleasure."

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# THE WORKS: ANATOMY OF A CITY BY KATE ASCHER PDF

Read Kate Ascher's posts on the Penguin Blog.

A fascinating guided tour of the ways things work in a modern city

Have you ever wondered how the water in your faucet gets there? Where your garbage goes? What the pipes under city streets do? How bananas from Ecuador get to your local market? Why radiators in apartment buildings clang? Using New York City as its point of reference, *The Works* takes readers down manholes and behind the scenes to explain exactly how an urban infrastructure operates. Deftly weaving text and graphics, author Kate Ascher explores the systems that manage water, traffic, sewage and garbage, subways, electricity, mail, and much more. Full of fascinating facts and anecdotes, *The Works* gives readers a unique glimpse at what lies behind and beneath urban life in the twenty-first century.

- Sales Rank: #41600 in Books
- Brand: Ascher, Kate
- Published on: 2007-11-27
- Released on: 2007-11-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 10.80" h x .60" w x 8.50" l, 1.92 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

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"The Works is both a reference guide and a geeky pleasure."

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"It's a rare person who won't find something of interest in The Works, whether it's an explanation of how a street-sweeper works or the view of what's down a manhole."

-New York Post

## Most helpful customer reviews

65 of 68 people found the following review helpful.

Fantastic work

By I should be at the gym

Imagine:

\*an illustration of the special machinery used just to clean the ceiling of the Holland Tunnel.

\*a sidebar on the "Poo-Poo Choo-Choo" that for years transported waste 2,000 miles (!) from NYC to a dump in Texas.

\*a graphic showing payphone distribution density in all 5 boroughs.

\*a drawing of the simple but effective interlocking bolts and cross-tie latching that keep the corrugated metal containers on barges connected to each other so upper containers don't slide off lower ones and fall into the water.

\*a key to reading construction markings that crews spray paint on the streets.

Such drawings, historical tidbits, and facts are more abundant in this book than leaves in Central Park.

This book is exceptional. As the former Vice-chair of Manhattan Community Board 5 (greater midtown Manhattan), chair of its parks committee, and member of its land use and zoning committee, I can attest to the great value of Kate Ascher's remarkable accomplishment, "The Works." New York City's infrastructure--from garbage collection to traffic control; subway signaling to cable TV distribution among franchise-controlled territories--is one of the world's most multifaceted, and at times a curious mix of the high-tech and the antiquated.

Reviews suggesting that the text is for teenagers may be accidentally misleading. "The Works" by no means is for teenagers either \*primarily\* or \*at the exclusion of\* adults. Yes, the book--especially its more heavily-illustrated sections--will no doubt fire the imagination of many teens who have engineering, design, line drawing, architectural, historical analysis, or problem-solving aptitudes. (Have a teenager who loved Legos as a kid but has outgrown them? This book will probably make a good gift.) Just because the book is broad in scope and doesn't examine each urban work it covers with the detail of a textbook for electrical

engineering students at M.I.T. doesn't make it merely for adolescents.

If you enjoy TV shows on The Science Channel or Discovery, shows like "Building the Ultimate," if you are a history trivia buff, if you just like looking at diagrams or line drawings of machinery and equipment, if you're fascinated by cities, or if it is simply the cast that you love New York City, this is a great book, and I highly recommend it.

22 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

learn how it all works--with diagrams!

By R. Larsen

This book has not left the coffee table. Everyone who has come over picks it up and inevitably remarks, "Oh, so that's how it works! I always wondered how they timed the traffic lights" or some such comment. This is a book you can return to again and again--one day it's telecommunications, the next, sewage. It contains so many answers to questions you never knew you had.

After reading "The Works," I now walk around New York with a completely different awareness of the incredible infrastructure that quietly undergirds the city: I constantly notice the design of fire hydrants, street signs, and man holes; I know what a "sidewalk neckdown" is; I understand how my water gets to me from the Ashokan Reservoir in the Catskills through those crazy aqueducts (and they ARE crazy! they have a submersible submarine that perouses that thing for leaks!).

This book is a perfect gift for any man/boy/girl/hippo who likes to know how things work and likes to see them diagrammed in beautiful, scrumptious illustrations. I am one of these people.

But perhaps most importantly, this book made me forgive those terrible yellow trash trains that pull into subway stations late at night and immediately mean you will be waiting twenty more minutes for your train. I used to fear them. Now I know what they do. I forgive you, yellow trash trains.

21 of 23 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Reference - Incredible Graphics

By Louis A. Rodriguez

I am a licensed professional civil engineer that worked for the Philadelphia Water Department for 10 years and I found this book to be an excellent piece of work. This book would be a great reference for anyone ranging from a high school student to an engineer/architech/planner. The book focuses on New York City so people from the northeast USA may find some of the topics hit close to home. However, the principles and diagrams in the book apply to most cities. One of the best book I've bought in a while!

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