



Castles, Pyramids and Palaces

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Stephanie Morland](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

0

This popular introduction to architecture is well served by the familiar Usborne approach - pages crowded with colourful drawings with snappy captions and brief supporting text. The balance of visual and verbal is nicely judged - with the focus on famous buildings of our heritage that children should become familiar with, ranging from Skara Brae to Versailles, Ankor Wat to the Pompidou Centre (the latter following on neatly from the Crystal Palace and the Eiffel Tower).

The large format allows some impressive visual set pieces with cut-aways revealing interiors and active little figures busy building, emphasising the processes and problems of architecture. The architectural vocabulary is reinforced in the text and pictures, supplemented by a two-page glossary (helpfully illustrated). There is an index and a timeline of the major buildings but both here and in the text the problem of how to refer to dates has not been satisfactorily resolved.

A map of the world locating the main buildings would have been a helpful addition, and also a bibliography (to list such books as David Macaulay's Cathedral and Pyramid which have had some influence on the illustrations in this book).

The text is rather predictable, but it is laced with several memorable facts: Ivan is said to have blinded the two architects who built his St Basil's Cathedral!

The overall result is an attractive book for Junior age children to leaf through or refer to. Groups of younger children would enjoy discussing the pages, although the small scale would make it difficult to see the detail from any distance. Secondary age children without the stamina for a lot of text might find themselves reading more than they meant to.

Running Order:

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