



How Language Works

David Crystal

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Steven Pinker meets Bill Bryson in this landmark exploration of language.

In the author's own words, "*How Language Works* is not about music, cookery, or sex. But it is about how we talk about music, cookery, and sex—or, indeed, anything at all." Language is so fundamental to everyday life that we take it for granted. But as David Crystal makes clear in this work of unprecedented scope, language is an extremely powerful tool that defines the human species.

Crystal offers general readers a personal tour of the intricate workings of language. He moves effortlessly from big subjects like the origins of languages, how children learn to speak, and how conversation works to subtle but revealing points such as how email differs from both speech and writing in important ways, how language reveals a person's social status, and how we decide whether a word is rude or polite.

Broad and deep, but with a light and witty touch, *How Language Works* is the ultimate layman's guide to how we communicate with one another.

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