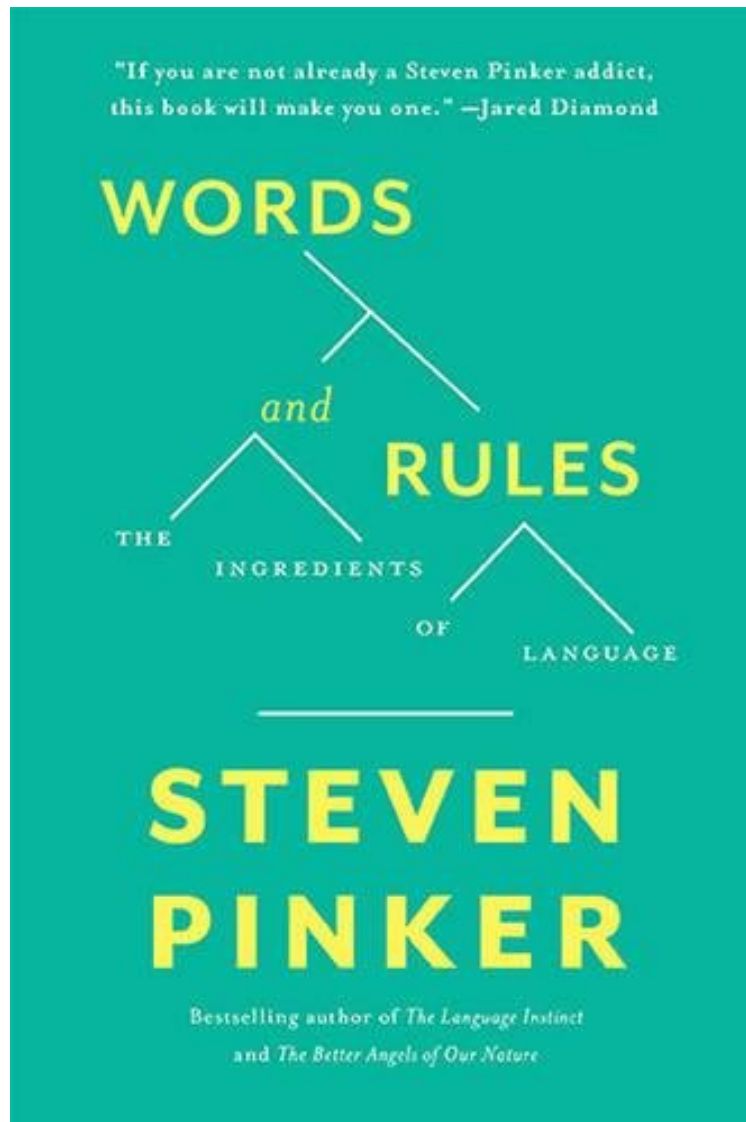


Words and Rules: The Ingredients Of Language

Steven Pinker

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#101292 in Books Basic Books 2015-07-14 2015-07-14 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x 1.25 x 5.501, .0 #File Name: 0465072704384 pages Words and Rules The Ingredients of Language Science Masters Series | File size: 50.Mb

Steven Pinker : Words and Rules: The Ingredients Of Language before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Words and Rules: The Ingredients Of Language:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of my favorite books. If you like to read books which ...By Eran One of my favorite books. If you like to read books which are somewhere along the spectrum between a textbook and a popular science book, this is a great read for you. It gives many examples of interesting phenomena in a few

languages, and it made me think of these ideas relating to languages I know.³ of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Valuable Popular Linguistics Book By Daniel L Pratt Having a 25-year-old degree in linguistics, I was pleased to read this book, refreshing my memory on some matters but for the most part showing that the field continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Focusing on a fairly narrow area ("irregular" verbs and also nouns in English and also other languages), the author presents theories to account for this aspect of language, and the experiments which tend to support or refute those theories. Not surprisingly perhaps, his own theories fare pretty well. Since the focus is somewhat narrow, I would recommend that you first read another of Pinker's language books. (The author would probably enjoy MacDonald's "Lilith" if only to add examples of glide/glode crow/crown to his collection of English irregular verbs!)² of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Fruit Flies of Language By John M. Ford Psychologist, linguist, and well-known author Steven Pinker illustrates the processes of human language through an extended discussion of regular and irregular verbs. He skillfully uses our grade-school struggles with the rules and exceptions of English vocabulary to explore the larger realm of human language competence. "Like fruit flies, regular and irregular verbs are small and easy to breed, and they contain, in easily visible form, the machinery that powers larger phenomena in all their glorious complexity." Pinker's book explores in great detail the two different systems of the brain that produce language. One is regular and rule-like and produces patterns that range from the regular forms of some verbs to the grammatical and organizational regularities of larger chunks of language. The other is idiosyncratic and irregular and stores pieces of our linguistic competence that frustrate linguists and second-graders alike. Our working language is shaped by the interplay between these systems. They both leave their traces in the historical changes in language, similarities between different languages, the creative mistakes children and adults make while learning language, and in the way we invent and reinvent new words. This book is recommended to anyone who wants to understand how our mind enables us to use language. Don't worry about being trapped into a narrow dissection of verbs--the book simply uses them as an increasingly-familiar theme to explore larger language issues. And don't shrink from an imagined tangle of technical terminology. Pinker's use of language is as deft as his grasp of it. His book is an enjoyable, as well as an informative read.

"If you are not already a Steven Pinker addict, this book will make you one." --Jared Diamond

.com Human languages are capable of expressing a literally endless number of different ideas. How do we manage it--so effortlessly that we scarcely ever stop to think about it? In *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language*, a look at the simple concepts that we use to devise works as complex as love sonnets and tax laws, renowned neuroscientist and linguist Steven Pinker shows us how. The latest linguistic research suggests that each of us stores a limited (though large) number of words and word-parts in memory and manipulates them with a much smaller number of rules to produce every writing and utterance, and Pinker explains every step of the way with engaging good humor. Pinker's enthusiasm for the subject infects the reader, particularly as he emphasizes the relation between how we communicate and how we think. What does it mean that a small child who has never heard the word wug can tell a researcher that when one wug meets another, there are two wugs? Some rule must be telling the child that English plurals end in -s, which also explains mistakes like mouses. Is our communication linked inextricably with our thinking? Pinker says yes, and it's hard to disagree. *Words and Rules* is an excellent introduction to and overview of current thinking about language, and will greatly reward the careful reader with new ways of thinking about how we think, talk, and write. -- Rob Lightner From Publishers Weekly MIT linguist Pinker builds on his previous successes (*How the Mind Works*; *The Language Instinct*) with another book explaining how we learn and deploy word, phrase and utterance. Some linguists (notably Noam Chomsky) have argued that everything in speech comes from hidden, hard-wired rules. Others (notably some computer scientists) claim that we learn language by association, picking up raw data first. Pinker argues that our brains exhibit both kinds of thought, and that we can see them both in English verbs: rule application ("combination") governs regular verbs, memory ("lookup") handles irregulars. The interplay of the two characterizes all language, perhaps all thought. Each of Pinker's 10 chapters takes up a different field of research, but all 10 concern regular and irregular forms of words. Pinker shows what scientists learn from children's speech errors (My brother got sick and puked); from survey questions (What do you call more than one wug?); from similar rules in varying languages (English, German and Arapesh); from theoretical models and their failings and from brain disorders like jargon anomia (whose victims use complex sentences, but say things like "nose cone" when they mean "phone call"). Sometimes Pinker explains linguists' current consensus; at other times, he makes a case for his own theoretical school. His previous books have been accused of excessive ambition; here he largely sticks to his own fields. The result, with its crisp prose and neat analogies, makes required reading for anyone interested in cognition and language. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal For more than a dozen years, Pinker (brain and cognitive sciences, MIT) has conducted experimental studies of human linguistic behavior and pondered the nature of language and its relation to the brain. He has thereby contributed voluminously to scientific literature in the still youthful field of cognitive science. In recent years, much of his time in the lab as well as theoretical analysis has focused on a single phenomenon--regular and irregular verbs. By attacking this phenomenon

from a wide variety of disciplines, Pinker enters some of the great debates about how the brain processes language. In explaining how language works and how we learn it, he summarizes current research and competing theoretical models in an extremely readable and enjoyable style. With this title and with his previous ones, *The Language Instinct* and *How the Mind Works*, Pinker joins Stephen J. Gould, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett as one of the great popularizers of modern science.-Paul A. D'Alessandro, Portland P.L., ME Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.