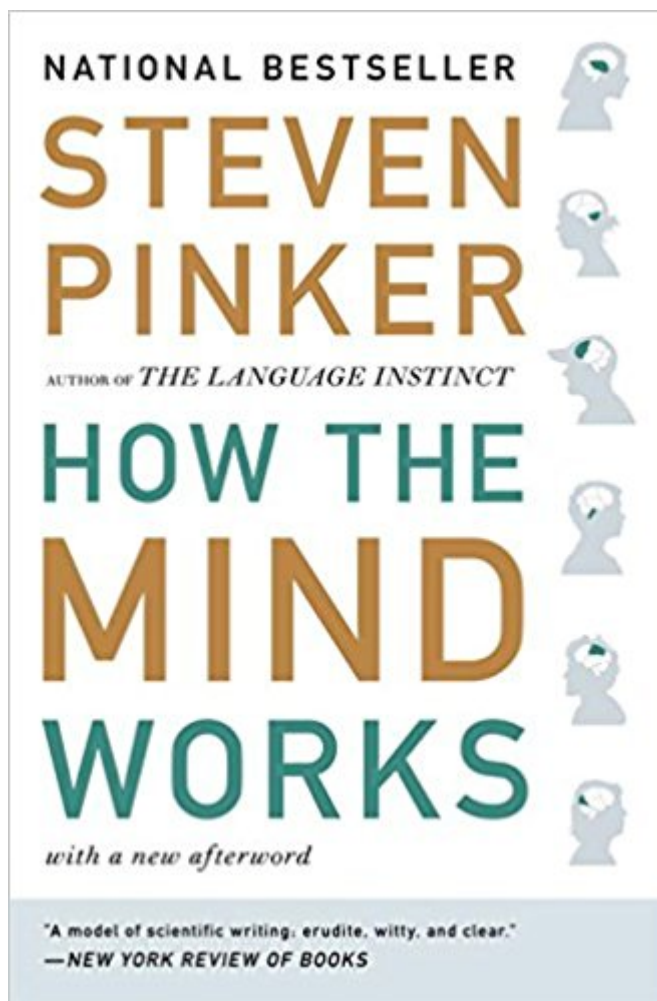


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# How The Mind Works



## Synopsis

"A model of scientific writing: erudite, witty, and clear." *New York Review of Books* In this Pulitzer Prize finalist and national bestseller, one of the world's leading cognitive scientists tackles the workings of the human mind. What makes us rational and why are we so often irrational? How do we see in three dimensions? What makes us happy, afraid, angry, disgusted, or sexually aroused? Why do we fall in love? And how do we grapple with the imponderables of morality, religion, and consciousness? *How the Mind Works* synthesizes the most satisfying explanations of our mental life from cognitive science, evolutionary biology, and other fields to explain what the mind is, how it evolved, and how it allows us to see, think, feel, laugh, interact, enjoy the arts, and contemplate the mysteries of life. This edition of Pinker's bold and buoyant classic is updated with a new foreword by the author.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Why do fools fall in love? Why does a man's annual salary, on average, increase \$600 with each inch of his height? When a crack dealer guns down a rival, how is he just like Alexander Hamilton, whose face is on the ten-dollar bill? How do optical illusions function as windows on the human soul? Cheerful, cheeky, occasionally outrageous MIT psychologist Steven Pinker answers all of the above and more in his marvelously fun, awesomely informative survey of modern brain science. Pinker argues that Darwin plus canny computer programs are the key to understanding ourselves--but he also throws in apt references to Star Trek, Star Wars, The Far Side, history,

literature, W. C. Fields, Mozart, Marilyn Monroe, surrealism, experimental psychology, and Moulay Ismail the Bloodthirsty and his 888 children. If How the Mind Works were a rock show, tickets would be scalped for \$100. This book deserved its spot as Number One on bestseller lists. It belongs on a short shelf alongside such classics as Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life, by Daniel C. Dennett, and The Moral Animal: Why We Are the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology, by Robert Wright. Pinker's startling ideas pop out as dramatically as those hidden pictures in a Magic Eye 3D stereogram poster, which he also explains in brilliantly lucid prose. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

MIT's Pinker, who received considerable acclaim for The Language Instinct (LJ 2/1/94), turns his attention to how the mind functions and how and why it evolved as it did. The author relies primarily on the computational theory of mind and the theory of the natural selection of replicators to explain how the mind perceives, reasons, interacts socially, experiences varied emotions, creates, and philosophizes. Drawing upon theory and research from a variety of disciplines (most notably cognitive science and evolutionary biology) and using the principle of "reverse-engineering," Pinker speculates on what the mind was designed to do and how it has evolved into a system of "psychological faculties or mental modules." His latest book is extraordinarily ambitious, often complex, occasionally tedious, frequently entertaining, and consistently challenging. Appropriate for academic and large public libraries. ?Laurie Bartolini, MacMurray Coll. Lib., Jacksonville, Ill. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a very mind opening book, with a lot of heavy concept that took me a long time to read and understand. Steven Pinker is a genius and his argument about natural selection and how it shaped the very low levels of brain's neural network is on point. This book is very informative for the average science fan who wants to know more about the nature of intelligence and the substance in our brain that makes us conscious. I highly recommend this book.

Excellent book that unravels the mysteries of the mind. As always, Mr. Pinker takes a systematic in-depth process and goes step by step explaining how the various modules of the mind work, and how these modules interact with each other. This is not a philosophical treatment, like Daniel Dennett's Consciousness Explained, but rather a scientific work that is closer to psychology and cognitive science.

I highly recommend this book for psychology students. Especially those who are unfamiliar with American Psychology that combine Biological and Computational Science theory. Those who become knowledgeable in this field and are familiar with the Continental or European tradition will take a further advantage from those who knows only the Scientific paradigm in the study of the human mind.

I dont have much to add to the other reviews, only that if you want to know something about our brain, our mind, about how unique life is etc, this book is one to read, just like Chance and Necessity is, or the Anthropic Cosmological Principle, to give some examples. His style of writing is, as a review put is, as scientific writing should be: witty, erudite, and clear. the facts, and his conclusion about them are good reading, and at the end it leaves enough space to make up your mind yourself. You will be sure not to agree with all in it, but you will definitely read some facts about human nature you never thought of like that before: and you keep them for the rest of your life, not bad for a few dollars!

...but what else would you expect from a book with a title like that?Pinker has some fine insights into our thought processes, and it got me thinking on many an occasion.However, there did seem to be a few things that he didn't touch upon which I found unsatisfying. Here's one: He spoke of the "language of music", but there is a lower-level discussion to be had; \*Why\* do we associate low, deep sounds with power, foreboding and fear? \*Why\* do high, piercing sounds denote energy, movement and alarm? Do these relate to our distant past in the wild, or are there other psycho-acoustic reasons?Couple this book with Robert Wright's "NonZero", and you pretty much have an abbreviated profile of the driving forces behind the mind of the modern human.The mind is an amazing thing.

This is such a well written book on such fundamental concepts.I have enjoyed the clear and understandable writing style.It is so well narrated that it grips you for long periods of listening!

Some very interesting concepts, highly encouraged reading for anyone who would like to learn more about themselves and others. Some of the "thought experiments" were very intriguing and insightful!

My only complaint is that it wasn't read by Pinker himself. As always, I am grateful for the massive

amounts of research he must do to complete his books, as well as his comprehensive delivery of ideas. His is a brilliant mind, indeed!

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