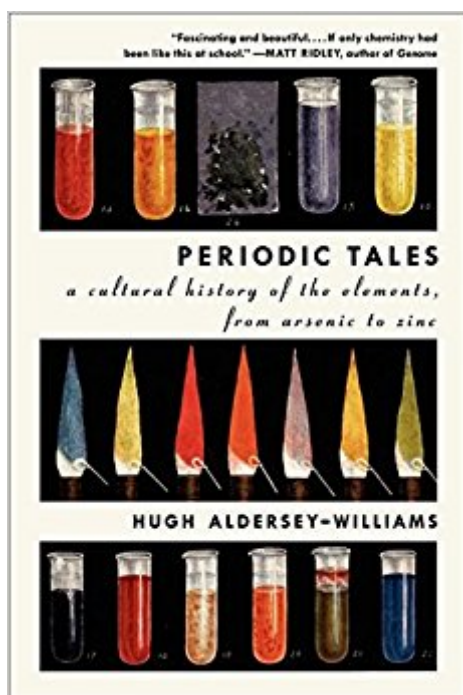


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# Periodic Tales: A Cultural History Of The Elements, From Arsenic To Zinc



## Synopsis

In the spirit of *A Short History of Nearly Everything* comes *Periodic Tales*. Award-winning science writer Hugh Andersey-Williams offers readers a captivating look at the elements and the amazing, little-known stories behind their discoveries. *Periodic Tales* is an energetic and wide-ranging book of innovations and innovators, of superstition and science and the myriad ways the chemical elements are woven into our culture, history, and language. It will delight readers of *Genome*, *Einstein's Dreams*, *Longitude*, and *The Age of Wonder*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A virtuoso tour of the periodic table." (Publishers Weekly) "harming. . . .

Aldersey-Williams writes with simplicity and elegance. The stories may not help you on your next chemistry test, but they'll help you appreciate the building blocks that are all around us yet all too

easy to overlook." (Associated Press) "A lucid, enjoyable collection . . . that, element by element, demystifies the iconic periodic table." (Kirkus Reviews) "Aldersey-Williams's

playful, hands-on approach to scientific exploration shines through the book." (Boston Globe) For

the UK edition: "fascinating and beautiful. . . . If only chemistry had been like this at school. . . .

[A] rich compilation of delicious tales." (Matt Ridley, Prospect magazine)

Like the alphabet, the calendar, or the zodiac, the periodic table of the chemical elements has a permanent place in our imagination. But aside from the handful of common ones (iron, carbon, copper, gold), the elements themselves remain wrapped in mystery. We do not know what most of

them look like, how they exist in nature, how they got their names, or of what use they are to us. Unlocking their astonishing secrets and colorful pasts, *Periodic Tales* is a passionate journey through mines and artists' studios, to factories and cathedrals, into the woods and to the sea to discover the true stories of these fascinating but mysterious building blocks of the universe.

The author gives a plethora of fascinating details and explains many little-understood facts. I highly recommend this book. The student as well as a learned scholar will benefit from reading this wonderful book.

This book looks at the social side of the elements - the impact they have on civilization and society, and how society in turn views them. How did aluminum go from being a precious metal to a standard for cheapness? And where does aluminium fit in? And tin was a useful commodity until it became junkified. What elements do we know little about, other than that they go BOOM!? Maybe they have other properties that are useful. Why did no one believe the discovery of neon? And why is it synonymous with shallow flashiness? (Gaudiness, perhaps?) A collision of chemistry, history, and sociology - well worth reading!

Buy the book. Interesting book that does not work on Kindle. Kindle cannot handle illustrations. Book 5\*, Kindle experience 1\* = 3\*.

I love this book but it is taking me awhile to get through it. I find it very entertaining and informative. It can be like a Sherlock Holmes detective story at times, which I love. I wish some chapters were given more detail with certain elements but I appreciate the effort. The stories behind these elements are sometimes very shocking. The excitement the author shows is infectious. I wish I had the periodic table available, or that he included it, to go along with some of his explanations. I also don't know how much I can remember from some of these stories so I may have to go back and start the reading over. It isn't the writing but sometimes it can get a little bogged down in details. I just finished watching the *Breaking Bad* series so I may go back to this book while the terminology is still in my head. Overall, I think the writing is wonderful and I am glad that I bought this book. I just need to devote the time to just this book instead of reading three or four at the same time.

This is a great book but is a long book. Did I mention it was long? Author Hugh Aldersey-Williams sets out to obtain all the elements on the periodic table that he is able to legally keep and invites us

along for the ride. He gives us a complete history of the element in question as well as its appearances in arts and literature. I found it fascinating reading how he could obtain the pure (or as pure as he could get it) element in our modern day, visiting craftsmen who still practice the ancient arts. Other than the fact that this book took me eons to read, I highly recommend it to those who enjoy history or for those of us who don't mind a little history with our science. Highly recommended. I give *Periodic Tales: A Cultural History of the Elements, from Arsenic to Zinc* a solid 5/5.

*Periodic Tales* was a Book Bub bargain for \$1.99 that has proved to be a fascinating way to appreciate the periodic table again and learn more about how so many of these elements touch our every day lives. Do you remember mercurichrome? Did you play with Mercury from a broken thermometer? These toxins almost made painters have to give up Cadmium. And some day we may have to remove teeth filled with metals before creating the bodies releases toxins into the air. Not my normal vacation read but it did prove to be one I keep reading parts of to my husband. Trekker Sue

Who knew that the dry dullness of chemistry could be made into riveting story? The book is a map of our world.

excellent history of the elements of the periodic table. Well researched and presented

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