

costumes, droids and equipment found in the Star Wars trilogy.

.com Watch the Star Wars trilogy enough times and you'll find yourself straining to catch all the little details. Not the subtle plot points (Darth is Luke's dad, check; Luke and Leia are brother and sister, check), but all the cool gear and gadgets that keep flashing in front of the camera. Like what are those pointy things on Boba Fett's kneepads? And what's with all that ammo on Chewie's bandolier? And does an Imperial Probe really need that many legs? Finally, we've got some answers. David West Reynolds, a boyish Ph.D. in archaeology who looks like he just rode in on the last Bantha, has catalogued the artifacts and inhabitants of the Star Wars universe with the same clinical thoroughness one typically reserves for studying Mesopotamia. His oversized, eye-pleasing picture book is packed with scrutinizing photos of actual props and characters from the movies, complete with systematic, scientific labels. And Reynolds's friendly, pseudo-academic style seamlessly blends new information with old. (In the Sand People description, you can't help but hear Alec Guinness's voice when Reynolds reveals that "Sand People ride in single file to hide their numbers.") In a few instances, the book shines an embarrassing light on the movies (Max Rebo is clearly no alien lifeform, just a poofy, blue elephant muppet), but the countless close-ups of thermal detonators, imperial blasters, and gaffi sticks more than make up the difference. --Paul Hughes
From Publishers Weekly
Guaranteed to catapult Star Wars fans directly into intergalactic orbit, this pair of oversize picture books provide a galaxy full of details about the inner workings of George Lucas's mythical universe. Eschewing the standard "behind-the-scenes" look at the making of the movies, both books take a realistic, reference-like approach to the imaginary realm. Reynolds's forthright treatment helps to further meld fact and fiction: an archeologist, he notes that he views the world of Star Wars as "a culture from another time and place to explore." In glorious photographs, *Star Wars: The Visual Dictionary* spotlights each of the characters by turn, from the big three (Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia and Han Solo) to the next tier, including Obi-Wan Kenobi, Darth Vader, Chewbacca, C-3P0 and R2-D2, as well as a vast supporting cast. Sidebars provide "backstories" on many of the characters (Han Solo, for instance, was raised by space gypsies), and a close examination of clothing, weapons (including a cutaway view of Darth Vader's lightsaber) and equipment provides the answers to such questions as what does a Wookiee carry in his pouch. But novices be warned: Vader's true identity is also revealed in these pages. For *Star Wars: Incredible Cross-Sections*, Jenssen and Chasemore have created intricate drawings of the guts of such assorted craft as Solo's souped-up Millennium Falcon, the Empire's battle station Death Star (highlighted in a four-page gatefold), the gargantuan robotic quadruped At-At and Jabba the Hutt's sail barge. These two stellar guides (created with the support of Lucasfilm Ltd.) are sure to soar off the shelves. All ages. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From School Library Journal
Grade 4 Up
This oversized volume is packed with full-color photographs of the characters and costumes, equipment, weaponry, mechanical droids, and assorted creatures from the Star Wars universe. Each character or category is contained within two pages and nary a space is left uncovered. Spreads that are meant to be held vertically are devoted to pictures of some of the larger-than-life figures, such as Darth Vader and Chewbacca. All of the equipment and other items are labeled. Reynolds profiles the personal histories of the creatures and characters and includes salient details about their gear. "Data Files" provide additional, often fascinating, and personal tidbits about the inhabitants of this fantasy world. While anyone interested in Star Wars will delight in viewing this book, the technological terms and descriptions may be too complicated for young children. Nevertheless, it is a visual treat—the clear, impressive photographs from the Lucasfilm Archives and other sources will capture and hold readers' attention. While not a dictionary in the traditional sense, this excellent guidebook to an appealing fantasy world will be a welcome addition to library collections. ?Linda Wadleigh, Oconee County Middle School, Watkinville, GA
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