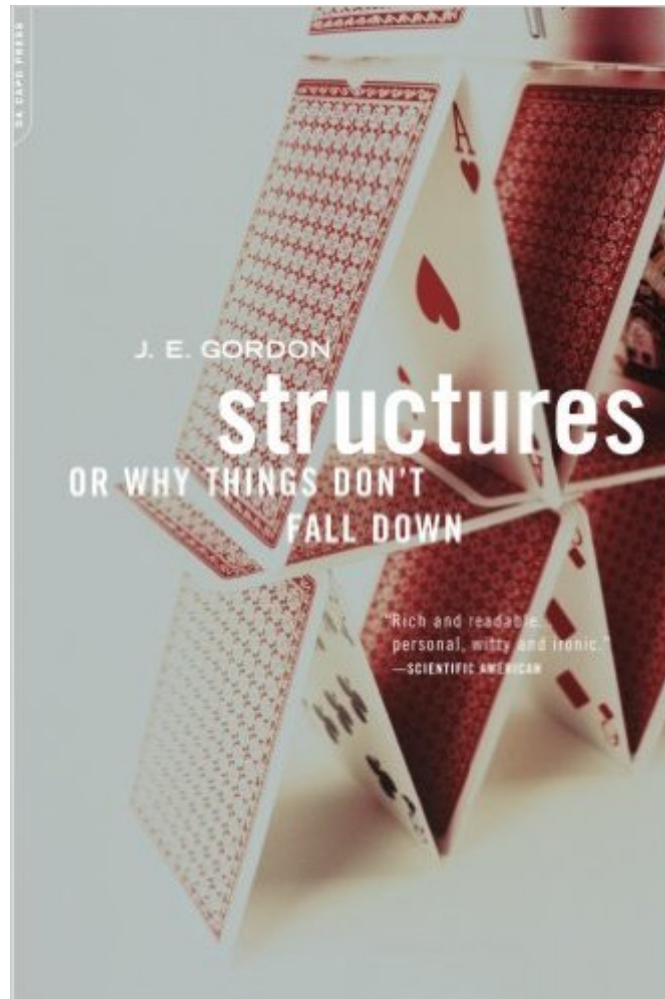


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# Structures: Or Why Things Don't Fall Down



## Synopsis

For anyone who has ever wondered why suspension bridges don't collapse under eight lanes of traffic, how dams hold back-or give way under-thousands of gallons of water, or what principles guide the design of a skyscraper or a kangaroo, this book will ease your anxiety and answer your questions. J. E. Gordon strips engineering of its confusing technical terms, communicating its founding principles in accessible, witty prose.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the wonderful tradition of Sagan, Cousteau and Asimov, Professor Gordon shows us that science and technology need not be abstruse and tedious, but can be made both pleasant and fascinating. Structures, or Why Things Don't Fall Down stands perfectly well on its own, but the best benefits are to be derived when reading it in tandem with its sister publication, The New Science of Strong Materials. In both books, Professor Gordon strikes the difficult balance between the ease of exposition and the exactness of detail that characterises only the very best of scientific popularisations. He combines his technical presentation with a warm and self-deprecating wit that will have you feeling that you are not being lectured to, so much as enjoying an engaging explanation from a friend. For example, in a typical moment of whimsy, Professor Gordon speculates upon the benefits of attaching army surplus chicken feathers onto motor cars - a suggestion designed to evoke a humorous image, except that his preceding explication on the structural properties of feathers is done so well that it lends the idea a certain fanciful credence. The pages

are filled with such moments. Professor Gordon delights in drawing parallels between the unlikeliest of phenomena - how an intelligent reflection on the properties of worms led him to the design of a better anchor bracket, or how his introduction to a circus proprietor's somewhat self-conscious invention ended up improving everything from military aircraft to household doors. Through the liberal use of such anecdotes, he leads us, gently but inexorably, to a fuller understanding of the interconnectedness of the physical world. While his book deals with abstract ideas, Professor Gordon comes across clearly as a practical man.

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