



Get Real: What Kind of World are YOU Buying?

Mara Rockliff

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Can you change the world with your wallet?

You already do.

In this frank, teen-friendly manifesto, Mara Rockliff reveals what you're really buying when you spend your money on a cell phone, a cheap t-shirt, or fast food—and shows the way to better choices, both for people and the planet.

Start seeing the world for real, and discover how you can make a difference. You've got buying power—now let's see you change the world for good!

GET REAL has been selected as an Honor Book in the Nonfiction category for the 2011 Green Earth Book Award.

Get Real: What Kind of World are YOU Buying? Details

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Author : Mara Rockliff

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From Reader Review Get Real: What Kind of World are YOU Buying? for online ebook

Lola says

It is very informational. Makes you think twice before you go to the store and buy your groceries. I loved it!

Martha Guarisco says

I hope this will make a great nonfiction text for my students. I love all the recommendations for learning more.

Julie Miller says

My daughter's teacher introduced this book at school, and she talked about it so much that I bought it. I'm glad I did; this is information that everyone should read- not just teens. But getting this information about how the world works is so important to understand at a young age. If you want your kids to grow up as wise consumers, they should read this book.

The book explores the dark side of products like coffee, chocolate, fast food and cheap clothes. There are real environmental and social justice implications of our desire for cheap food and stuff. It also explains, in terms any middle-schooler can get--why the advertisements for things really work - and how to think about it critically.

We need to talk to our kids and teach them about what we buy and why. Know where the products are coming from, what impact they have on the planet as well as the people who work in often terrible conditions to produce them.

The way we live isn't sustainable, and our kids are going to have to face tough changes and choices in the future.

Tony Phan says

This is a good book because it told me what it takes and what goes into the product that people are purchasing. For example everyone loves chocolate, but they don't know that kids in distant countries are slaves to these coco plants. They work under extreme conditions, working endless hours for no pay at all. These kids get pesticides every day. After reading this it really opened my eyes to how the world really works, it makes me grateful to be living in America where it has laws against stuff like that. My favorite part was definitely when the author was talking about people getting scammed. This was my favorite part because I realized that people are so gullible, just because the product says "best" or the sales person will say something like "you won't get a better deal" doesn't mean that it is the "best" they feed the buyer lies and trick them to buy the product. I won't lie this just happened to me last week, but now I'll be a little more

cautious. My least favorite part was learning about what the kids have to go through to make the product. The style of this book was very entertaining. The author did a good job of setting up the sentence structure so that you stay entertained but puts the point across. I would recommend this book you get great crash course for youth in the evils of corporate marketing.

Natalie Cheetham says

This book was better than I thought it would be. It basically tells teens where their money is really going when they buy something, and how they can use their purchase power to maybe make a difference in the world. The cover and the illustrations spread throughout grab the readers attention. While there are a lot of facts, it's written and broken down in such a way that it's not overwhelming, and it was a pretty quick read. There's also a very good list of additional sources at the end, for those interested.

I think it would make a great read for teens, but again, I cannot help but think that teens wouldn't really flock to read this in their free time unless they were already interested in the topic.

Sydney Humphrey says

This book was wonderful! My sister teases me because of the Eco-friendly kicks I go on once or twice a year, but this book really hit me hard! It was relatively short and engaging despite the debatably boring subject matter. I actually read the whole second half of the book this afternoon. Although the facts seemed a little stretched at times (Can anyone verify that a cow actually poops 120 pounds every day?), the book was incredibly thought-provoking and eye-opening. I'll now be looking at everything I buy with new eyes!

(The book is also chock full of suggested books and websites for further research. I love it when authors do that!)

Sarah Noll says

Mara Rockliff's Get Real is a great informational book geared toward teenagers that discusses the harms that multi-national corporations can cause to the world, especially to the environment and living conditions of its workers. Albeit kind of preachy about the need to buy organic goods and not take the "easy" or cheaper way out by shopping at places like Wal-Mart, I found this book to be very informative about the world around me that I am kind of ignorant about, having grown up as an upper-middle class American girl. I could see myself possibly using this book with my high school to students to help teach them about ethic responsibilities and to help them see beyond the big brand names in the world around us. This is a good book to give someone a starting point on topics such as fair trade, organic goods, fair working conditions, and speaking up and out to local leaders to create change.

Sandy Stiles says

Would everyone at my school please read this book? I mean it! And I will read it again, and this time I am

going to take notes!! And check out all of the references she provides. It is another in a string of some of my faves, including Fast Food Nation, which have opened my eyes to ugly corporate practices. My personal problem is that I feel like I can only meet this book half way because it would require too much change on my part. I try to buy fair trade goods, and support local organic sources, but in the end I also appreciate my out-of-season produce and inexpensive clothes. Tough choices, but I don't mind continuing to try to do better. Thanks for the great information, Ms. Rockliff!!

Beth says

This book is the starting point for readers to reflect upon their purchases and habits. Additional books, websites and videos are included to dig deeper. The parts that stick with me include that water bottles are a huge mess and cell phones are not always recycled as we think and there is e-waste. The sections are listed very cleverly, particularly "Trash Talk: your cell phone's secret life" and "Buys in the Hood: Burst out of that big box."

Becca says

I'd give it 3.5 stars. Lots of great information and facts about the reality of how America spends and consumes. Motivated me to make a few small changes, although I already feel like we live more simply than just about everyone we know! Overall message: Buy less, consume less, recycle more. I'm passionate about healthy eating and supporting the "real" farmers. Hope I'm making a small bit of difference in this crazy world!!

Fiona says

'Get Real' is a nonfiction YA book about voting with your dollar, a subject that my mom believes quite strongly in. I spotted it while browsing the shelves at our school library, and thought "Hmm. May as well pick it up. It looks interesting." That's how I find the majority of the books I read. So I checked it out and took it home.

First of all, this book is a fun read, but it's also quite frightening. Believe me, if you read it, you'll start to have serious doubts about whether or not you really want to be eating hamburgers. And if you ever decide you want to buy a new pair of jeans (which you probably will), you'll think twice about where they come from.

But enough with the warnings. It really is an amazing book, and you should read it. It takes important issues stemming from corporate America. Speaking as a teen, I loved the tone. It was fun and easy to understand, but I never felt like the author was talking down to me. This is saying a lot- the only other book like this that I've read is 'A World Without Fish', and this problem is the main reason that I don't read as much nonfiction.

Also, each source used is clearly listed at the back, and the list takes up about three pages, even in a tiny font size- the author clearly wasn't making this up.

So, overall, I'm going to give this book a **10/10!**

Shanna says

A great crash course for youth in the evils of corporate marketing. Rockliff breaks down the environmental and cultural destruction brought on by the manufacturing of everything from computers to jeans to McNuggets. The chapters on food were particularly disgusting and reminded me yet again why I am a vegetarian.

Rockliff also does a good job recommending places where kids can learn more. My only criticism of this book is that it did not go into enough detail. But with all the recommended websites, films, and books, a curious youth could most certainly go out and learn more about any of the topics presented.

While the book does not really talk about advertising per-se, I still think this would be a great way to wrap up a unit on advertising. Maybe combine it with some kind of social justice project or something...

My non-fiction book for March. Reading this as a way to incorporate some YA nonfiction into lessons about advertising.

Jennifer Lavoie says

I thought this was a fantastic book that not only was an easy read for nonfiction, but shows readers how what they purchase affects the environment. Even before I finished reading the book I started to make changes. When I need to buy produce, I buy organic, if not local. I am planting my own organic garden. I make sure the meat I eat is free range if I can find it.

Students are clamoring for this book as well, which shows how interested they are in protecting the environment as well. My current wait list is about ten students! I ended up having to get a second book to keep up with demand.

Carrie says

I really liked this book. It was a little bit harsh, but it did open my eyes to some of the things that go on to make certain products. I will be MUCH more careful about what I buy!

Donna says

I agree with Rockliff's message, and think that this is a great idea for a YA book. Also, the design is fun: punchy graphics, compelling photos, and a funky red-green-aqua color palette.

In chapters like, "And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt," "Trash Talk" and "Sweeter Treats," Rockliff encourages teens to think before they buy - about where their products are coming from, who made them, what will happen to them when they're no longer wanted, and whether they really need them. "Buys in the Hood" extolls the virtue of buying locally, and "Green Warriors vs. Greenwashers," provides tips to determine whether a company is really making an effort to go green or just trying to make it appear that way. Teens are encouraged to not only consume wisely, but to consume less.

The writing is casual and in your face, as if you are having a conversation with a very passionate, fired-up person. Rockliff throws a lot of inflammatory information at you without immediately backing it up with sources. There is an extensive list of books, articles, websites, and documentaries at the end, but no notes to show you which statements come from where. Unfortunately for Rockliff (and any teens who read this book and are inspired by the contents) people who assault you with their opinions are really annoying, especially when they can't provide any hard facts or expert sources. There's also nothing more futile than trying to convince somebody of something when you can't explain it yourself.
