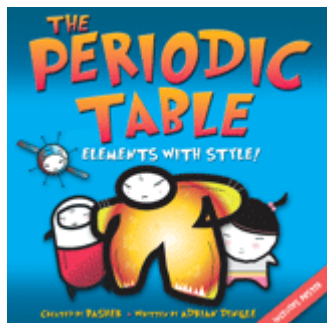


Press Release



THE PERIODIC TABLE: ELEMENTS WITH STYLE!

by [Adrian Dingle](#)

illustrated by [Simon Basher](#)

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About the Book

Ah, chemistry . . . that oft-dreaded yet essential science that so many students and laymen struggle to comprehend. The intangible elements, complex formulas, and emphasis on memorization have made chemistry one of the toughest subjects in schools today. But what if chemistry was fun? What if we could find a way to characterize the elements themselves in such a method that they become vivid, vibrant, and interesting?

That question has been answered in the form of *The Periodic Table: Elements with Style!* (Kingfisher Publications, April 2007). Written by acclaimed chemistry teacher Adrian Dingle and brilliantly illustrated by artist and designer Simon Basher, this charming and unique book will help budding chemists see the elements in a whole new light.

Each element has its own personal ad, wherein its individual chemical properties are phrased as personality traits, making a complex science fun and relatable. Brought to full-color life by imaginative illustrations, the distinctive characterizations of these once abstract elements won't soon be forgotten. Take the quiz below to test your knowledge of the elements and sample the fun yet scientifically accurate writing style that makes this book so different and exciting!

Perfect for the chemistry student in your life (from grade 5 through college!) and charming as a gift book for anyone, *The Periodic Table: Elements with Style!* features a large full-color poster of the periodic table of elements.

This book combines the hard facts of the elements, as written by an expert high school chemistry teacher, the fun and easy-to-understand readability of a personal ad, and the wonder of Basher's edgy but cute manga-like illustrations. *The Periodic Table: Elements with Style!* is truly a revelation in chemistry education.

About the Illustrator

Basher started work as an artist under the name Basher around the year 2000. Although he never studied chemistry at school (he hated the way it was taught and was, anyway,

too busy breakdancing), Basher has now applied his love of character design to the family of elements that make up the periodic table. View his work at www.basherworld.com.

About the Author

High school chemistry educator **Adrian Dingle** is the creator of an award-winning chemistry Web site, www.adriandingleschemistrypages.com. An Englishman, Adrian has extensive experience teaching in the UK and the USA. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia, where he teaches at the Westminster Schools.

A Conversation with Basher

How did the idea for this book come about?

I am very interested in the idea of taking abstract ideas, concepts, and theories and turning them into characters! I like to create new worlds and environments, and when I saw the periodic chart I could see an amazing opportunity to use these techniques. I think the periodic table is an incredibly interesting concept. It's just, the ones created so far all looked a little dull!

How did you get your inspiration for the characters?

I look at the elements themselves and use whatever their characteristics are and think of them as personalities. I have my own established style and work the two together.

Were you good at chemistry as a student? Would a book like this have helped you?

I liked the idea of chemistry but found the textbook really unstimulating. I always had more of an interest in art and music.

Did you have any inspirational teachers who got you excited about science or art?

I was lucky enough to have a great high school art teacher who really encouraged me to look at new art and also introduced me to a lot of great music. My passion for science and math came much later in life. While working on the book I did meet a materials scientist from MIT who really gave me some fantastic ideas and tips for the book. He had a real passion for art as well and he loved the idea.

How do you think this book will help students of all abilities cope with the periodic table?

I hope it will be a great starting point. It's really been designed to engage you on a gentle level and also to act as a memory trigger. There really is no reason to think of science as boring, as I've discovered, and I hope readers will see the fun side of it.

What kinds of challenges did you face in creating the characters?

The challenge was to keep all of the characters somehow different but to also keep the feel that they were connected and from the same world. Also, to use a solid factual basis

for the images, but keep them fun and playful.

What was the most surprising thing you learned while working on this book?

I learned so many new facts that it's hard to collate them all in a couple of sentences, but I think the main thing was how important and practical it was to have an awareness of the elements. I've been amazed by how many times this new knowledge has come in useful in everyday life.

A Conversation with Adrian Dingle

How did the idea for this book come about?

Well, really it was Simon Basher (the illustrator) and Ellen DuPont (at Toucan Books) that dreamt up the whole thing. My understanding is that Simon drew the characters and then asked Ellen what she could do with them. Ellen then approached me to do the writing.

Were you always good at chemistry as a student?

I could always "do" the chemistry, but I was a terrible student!

How do you think this book will help students of all abilities cope with the periodic table?

This is not an academic book by any stretch of the imagination, but it does offer a window or gateway to getting interested in the elements. I see it as a very accessible opportunity to learn a little about some chemistry.

What else can students/parents/teachers do to help make chemistry an exciting and comprehensible subject for students?

Science is a serious business, and I think the way to get people engaged is to make it accessible while still presenting hard facts and knowledge. Also, I don't believe that science is "for all." Some people will have an academic bent for it, others will not — that's fine, but the answer is not to dumb down science so that everyone can "get it."

What kinds of challenges did you face in creating this book?

I could produce the chemistry facts pretty easily, but making the elements come alive with personality was a completely different kind of writing and challenge for me. I got huge help from my editor at Kingfisher, who helped me to amend a lot of the material I initially wrote. Once I had his guidance, it became easier to work on my style, but his influence was crucial.

What was the most surprising thing you learned while writing this book?

That despite teaching chemistry for the best part of twenty years, I had managed to get away from knowing much about the elements themselves! Sounds strange, but it's true.

What advice would you give to a student who is really struggling with the periodic table?

First, read the book — maybe it will make things seem a little more approachable for you. Second, don't worry about it! Hundreds of millions of people are massively successful in life without ever learning a thing about chemistry.