



Is a Blue Whale the Biggest Thing There Is? (Wells of Knowledge Science Series)

By Robert E. Wells

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The blue whale is the biggest creature on Earth. But a hollow Mount Everest could hold billions of whales! And though Mount Everest is enormous, it is pretty small compared to the Earth. This book is an innovative exploration of size and proportion.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This raffish primer on the meaning of "big" delivers a healthy, age-appropriate jolt to common assumptions about proportion and numbers. Beginning with a blue whale's flukes ("the 'flipper' parts of the tail, all by themselves bigger than most of Earth's creatures"), Wells projects the relative sizes of Mount Everest (20 giant jars filled with 100 blue whales each), the earth, the sun, the Milky Way, right out to the universe itself. Child-friendly watercolors show a bag of 100 planet earths dwarfed by the sun, and a crate of 100 "sun-sized oranges" inconsequential atop Antares, "a red supergiant star." Somewhat understandably, Wells's pictures and analogies wither as he tackles the magnitude of galaxies and the universe. To prevent readers from choking on these perceptual mouthfuls, valuable introductory and final notes suggest a relatively concrete scale: for instance, counting to a thousand takes about 12 minutes, counting to a million takes 3 weeks at 10 hours per day, but counting to a billion takes a lifetime. Ages 6-11.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 2-3-With its bright primary colors; cartoon illustrations; and readable, conversational text, this picture book will find a niche in most collections. Not a story as such, it begins on the title page with the question, "Is a Blue Whale the Biggest Thing There Is?" and answers it in a series of cumulative examples. Millions of blue whales placed into enormous jars and stacked up don't begin to compare to the colossal size of Mt. Everest, just as even 100 Mt. Everests piled up only make up a whisker on the face of the Earth. Taking this comparison to the outer limits of the imagination, Wells ends up with the biggest thing there is-the universe. Librarians and teachers could use this book to introduce units on size, measuring, or relativity. And it would be useful to demonstrate how to make beginning graphs in a fun, accessible way.

Jan Shephard Ross, Dixie Elementary Magnet School, Lexington, KY

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From [Booklist](#)

Ages 4-8. In a picture book designed to expand children's horizons, Wells begins by comparing the hugeness of the blue whale with the relative smallness of an elephant. Next, he shows that even a tall tower of giant jars full of blue whales would be quite small compared with the size of Mount Everest. Even a tower of Mount Everests "would be a mere WHISKER on the face of the Earth," and so on, as he goes on to compare the size of the earth with that of the sun, and the sun with the red supergiant star Antares, which in turn is much smaller than our galaxy, which is tiny compared with the universe. What *How Much Is a Million* did for big numbers, this picture book does for big sizes, making the inconceivable more imaginable through original, concrete images: the earth as one of a packet of marbles dwarfed by the sun, or the sun as one orange in a crate that looks insignificant beside Antares. Lively ink-and-watercolor illustrations brighten the pages of this accessible concept book. The title and cover will draw a large audience of small children fascinated by big things. *Carolyn Phelan*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brandon Inouye:

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Kristina Keene:

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