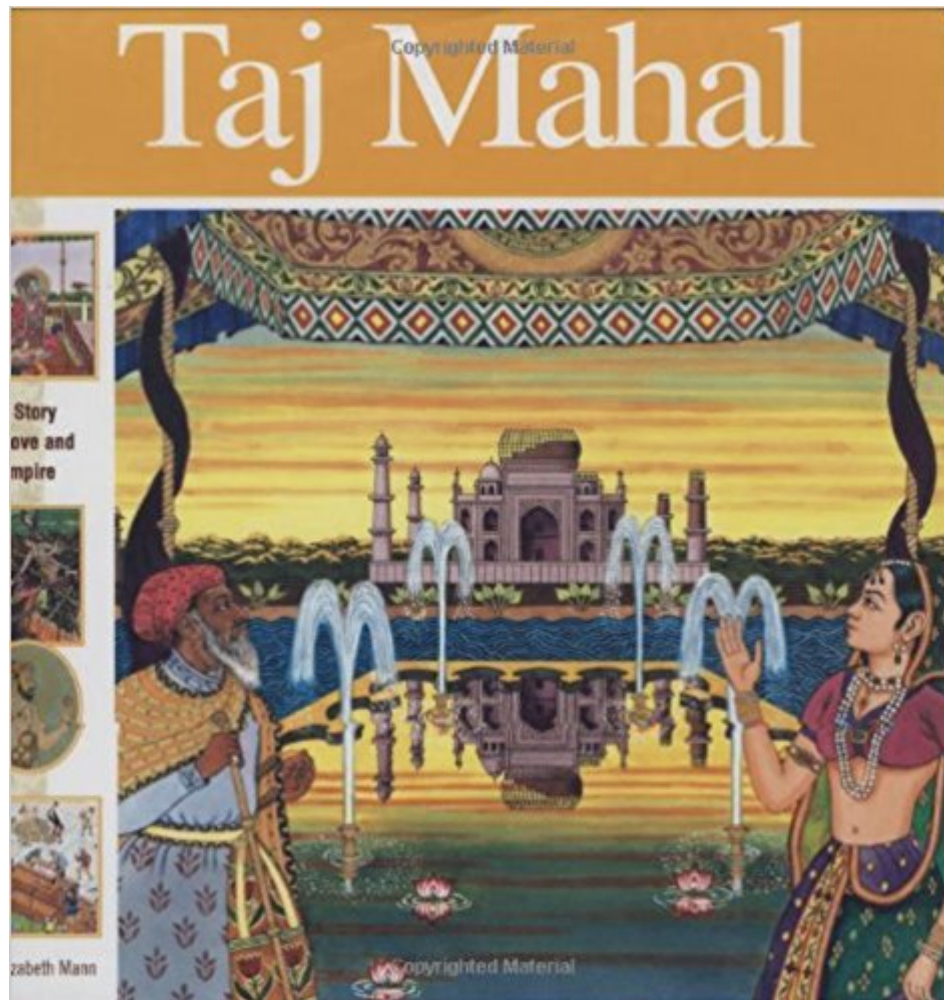




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# Taj Mahal: A Story Of Love And Empire (Wonders Of The World Book)



## Synopsis

The Magnificent Mughals of India. Shah Jahan, ruler of India, murdered three of his brothers in his bloody rise to power. Yet when his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, suddenly died, the grief-stricken emperor built the world's most beautiful tomb as a monument to her memory. Shah Jahan was the fifth emperor of the Mughal dynasty. The Mughals combined the brute force and fierce ambition of their legendary ancestor Genghis Khan with a delicate artistic sensitivity. Theirs was a world where even forts were architectural gems, where emperors had their life stories told in exquisite miniature paintings, and where each new ruler competed with the previous one by building a grander palace, fort, mosque and city. The Taj Mahal tells the story of this remarkable dynasty through its greatest artistic achievement. From the soaring domes, to the marble columns inlaid with precious gems, to the vast gardens, to the perfect symmetry of its design, the Taj Mahal expressed the power, grandeur, glory and beauty of the Mughal world.

## Book Information

Series: Wonders of the World Book

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Age Range: 9 - 13 years

Grade Level: 4 - 12

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5  
•This installment in the series begins with a two-page retelling of the love story between Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and his wife, Mumtaz Mahal. After her death, the emperor wanted to create a monument to their enduring love and left the world the iconic building that also became a symbol of the period of Mughal reign in India. The blueprints followed the classic

Persian charbagh design of quadrilateral garden squares divided by walkways, but Shah Jahan's architectural choices also incorporated Central Asian and Indian influences. Over several pages, the author explains the practical challenges that builders had to overcome during the long construction process, such as protecting the complex from the annual monsoon swelling of the nearby Yamuna River. A double foldout gives an impressive aerial view of the entire complex. Captioned photographs of artifacts and original paintings enhance the well-written text. Beautiful full-page illustrations in the detailed style of Mughal miniature paintings depict scenes of the construction process. A list of important historical dates and dimensions of the building are included. A beautiful book that highlights a stunning accomplishment in architecture. —Monika Schroeder, American Embassy School, New Delhi, India Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** The ongoing Wonders of the World series hits a high point with this dramatic retelling of the construction of the Taj Mahal. Mann begins with two pages of prose that relay the commonly told legend, but then proceeds to explode that legend with descriptive writing, colorful illustrations, ancient paintings, maps, and photographs. Some readers may hesitate over the density of the first few pages, but the information is quickly broken up by portraits introducing the major players—most notably Shah Jahan, the Mughal leader who combines his adoration of opulence and his grief over the death of his beloved, Mumtaz Mahal, to create one of the most recognizable structures in history. Startling details abound: Shah Jahan's founding of an entire city to house all the necessary nobles, the irrigation system keeping flood waters from Mumtaz Mahal's tomb, and the shocking decapitation that brings about the next ruler. The photos of priceless relics bring the story alive, and young readers will love the fold-out Taj Mahal diagram, which resembles a game board. Shah Jahan's excesses helped bring about the demise of the Mughal Empire, and this insightful book will bring readers closer to understanding the meaning of what has been left behind. Grades 3-6. --Daniel Kraus

pretty good read

I checked this out, along with about 50 other but similar books, for my kid to do her 7th grade homework. She read them all and only used this book. Fell in love with this book. Fell in love with the Taj Mahal. Fell in love with history. I read it because she wouldn't stop bugging me to read it. I am now in love with Elizabeth Mann and off to the library to check out her others from the series.

And asking for them all for Christmas- along with my 7th grader.

Elizabeth Mann has created a series of non-fiction books on the great buildings of world civilization. Her series explores structures ranging from the pyramids of ancient Egypt to the Empire State Building. Each book combines history and a description of the building techniques that were used to create the structure. Built in the Seventeenth Century, the Taj Mahal was the cultural high point of the great Mughal Empire that once ruled the India. Mann begins her story by explaining of the origins of the Mughal Empire and then moves on to a detailed description of how the Taj Mahal was built. Her story is enriched through the use of miniature paintings produced during the era. In turn, these illustrations are supplemented by new detailed illustrations created in the Persian miniature tradition. Elizabeth Mann writes well and does a great job of explaining a history that will be unfamiliar to most of her readers. The carefully rendered illustration add an additional layer of pleasure to the book. This book is a great purchase for children who love that heady combination of history and architecture. Highly recommended.

A beautifully illustrated, well told story. It begins with two pages of text, telling pretty much what most everybody knows. Then.....Read the book to find out what really happened.

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