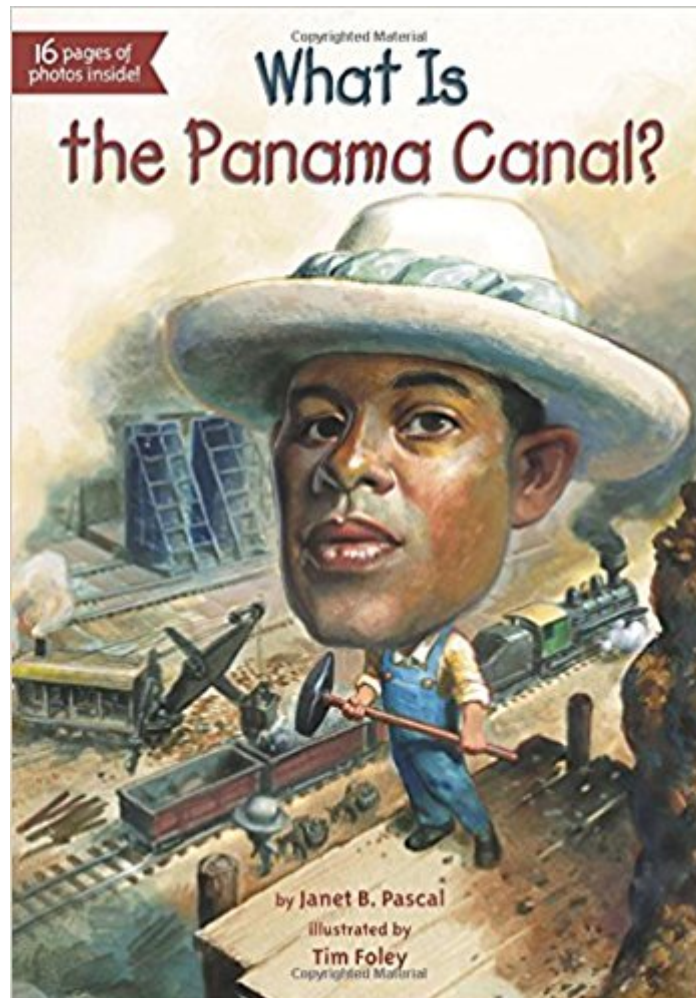




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What Is The Panama Canal? (What Was?)



Synopsis

Before 1914, traveling from the East Coast to the West Coast meant going by land across the entire United States. To go by sea involved a long journey around South America and north along the Pacific Coast. But then, in a dangerous and amazing feat of engineering, a 48-mile-long channel was dug through Panama, creating the world's most famous shortcut: the Panama Canal!

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Janet Pascal is an Executive Production Editor at Viking Children's Books and the author of *Who Was Dr. Seuss?*, *Who Was Maurice Sendak?*, and *Who Was Abraham Lincoln?* She lives in New York City.

What Is the Panama Canal? "I would never . . . navigate . . . round that wretched place again. It is the kingdom of Satan," said a sailor in the nineteenth century. He was speaking of the trip around Cape Horn between South America and Antarctica. "Rounding the Horn," as sailors call it, is one of the wildest, most dangerous trips a ship can make. For as many as two hundred days a year, gale-force winds blow there with gusts ranging from fifty to eighty miles per hour. The waves can reach ninety feet high or more. Yet for hundreds of years, if anyone

wanted to sail west from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, they had no choice. They had to round the Horn. Surviving the trip became the sign of a truly brave seaman. After a sailor had managed to sail around the Horn three times, he could wear a silver earring, as a badge of honor. Many did not make it. No one knows for sure, but there may be one thousand shipwrecks lying under the water, and as many as fifteen thousand drowned sailors. People dreamed of an easier way to sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. On maps, one place looked very promising. This was the Isthmus of Panama. An isthmus is a narrow strip connecting two pieces of land. The Isthmus of Panama joins Central America to South America. On one side is the Caribbean Sea, which runs into the Atlantic Ocean. On the other, the Gulf of Panama flows into the Pacific. At its narrowest, the isthmus is only thirty miles wide. The Atlantic and the Pacific looked so close together there! Surely some way could be found to cut across. Then ships would be able to sail right through Panama. The trip would become thousands of miles shorter, and no one would have to risk their lives sailing around Cape Horn.

Granddaughter loved this book

My son loves all the Who was and what was books. He has learned so much from them and cannot wait until new ones are released

Easy read and very informative

Instead of picking up the Land Between the Seas by McCullough as we cruised out of Ft. Lauderdale in November, I ran to B&N and picked up this delightful book. Less expensive, but significantly less weight. We loved it. We gave it to our twin grandsons in Dallas and purchased this for our grandsons in ABQ. Great little book!

Great

great

Entertaining and Educational.

Purchased this book for my 10 yr. old grandson to give him a better understanding on what we'll be

seeing on our Panama Canal cruise. I haven't given him the book yet. He is an avid reader. The book may be too easy of a read for him, but I'm sure he'll enjoy all the info on the Panama Canal.

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