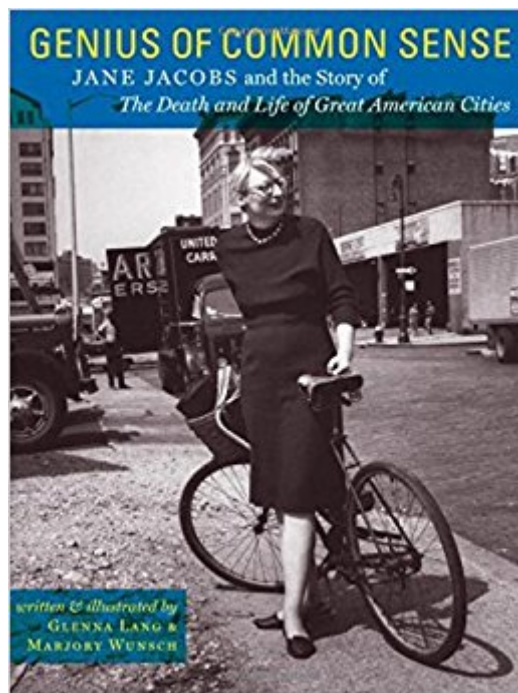




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# Genius Of Common Sense: Jane Jacobs And The Story Of The Death And Life Of Great American Cities



## Synopsis

Three books, all written by women in the early 1960s, changed the way we looked at the world and ourselves: Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, and Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. All three books created revolutions in their respective spheres of influence, and nothing affected city planning and architecture--or the way we think about how life is lived in densely packed urban centers--more than Jane Jacobs's far-sighted polemic. Here is the first book for young people about this heroine of common sense, a woman who never attended college but whose observations, determination, and independent spirit led her to far different conclusions than those of the academics who surrounded her. Illustrated with almost a hundred images, including a great number of photos never before published, this story of a remarkable woman will introduce her ideas and her life to young readers, many of whom have grown up in neighborhoods that were saved by her insights. It will inspire young people--and readers of all ages--and demonstrate that we learn vital life lessons from observing and thinking, and not just accepting what passes as "conventional wisdom."

## Book Information

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Age Range: 11 - 14 years

Grade Level: 6 - 9

## Customer Reviews

No stodgy history text . . . Genius of Common Sense throbs with [Jacobs's] passionate struggles . . . a handsome book, loaded with primary sources like photographs and contemporary news accounts that bring alive these stories for any teenager wondering how she can make a difference in the

world. --Ruth Conniff, New York Times  
There is much in the delightful book by Lang and Wunsch..Jacobs's exemplary life story is well enough told by Glenna Lang and Marjory Wunsch to engage young readers and interest their elders as well. --Jason Epstein, New York Review of Books  
Written for young adults, this story of an independent thinker is a good read for all ages.  
--ForeWord Reviews

Three books, all written by women in the early 1960s, changed the way we looked at the world and ourselves: Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, and Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. All three books created revolutions in their respective spheres of influence, and nothing affected city planning and architecture or the way we think about how life is lived in densely packed urban centers more than Jane Jacobs's far-sighted polemic. Here is the first book for young people about this heroine of common sense, a woman who never attended college but whose observations, determination, and independent spirit led her to far different conclusions than those of the academics who surrounded her. Illustrated with almost a hundred images, including a great number of photos never before published, this story of a remarkable woman will introduce her ideas and her life to young readers, many of whom have grown up in neighborhoods that were saved by her insights. It will inspire young people and readers of all ages and demonstrate that we learn vital life lessons from observing and thinking, and not just accepting what passes as "conventional wisdom."

When a young Jane Jacobs applied for jobs in New York City, she would also walk around and explore the area. She came to realize what made neighborhoods interesting, alive, and safe. The ideas she developed about what makes neighborhoods work well, her ability to mobilize her neighbors to prevent the razing of perfectly good neighborhoods to make way for highways for vehicles, her classic work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, and the interesting path her life took that earned her the status of trailblazer, are all fascinating. I bought my first copy of this book when I saw it in a bookstore. I've bought more, to give as gifts to grandkids and grandnieces, and am recommending it to my book group as a book for us to read and discuss.

An interesting introduction for young adults about an important and overlooked woman in American social history. Great photographs and an informative bibliography. Older adults would also find it interesting.

Good walk-thru of Jane Jacobs life. Lots of photos that help her come alive to readers. This book was purchased after I read other writings of her and allowed me to engage with who she was outside of her texts

My wife is a big Jane Jacobs fan, so I purchased "Genius of Common Sense" for my nephew. But before I gave it to him, I opened it up to a random page. I was totally glued to the book, and finished reading it to the end in one sitting, and then went back and read it from the start. It is an absorbing read with superb illustrations. I could not recommend it more highly. I just bought another copy to keep for myself. Why can't all kids books be this good and thought provoking?

Purchased by school district. Didn't hear any complaints from the teacher (and I would), so assume all's good.

Jane Jacobs won two battles with the most powerful man in New York, and this is the story of her life which encompassed much more than those fights. Photographs and superb drawings of the real places and the real people enhance this book. The writing is lovely and clear, and the story is a great one.

Very interesting story about how one person can make a difference in preserving what is important from being wiped from our history.

All young people should know of the life and work of Jane Jacobs. This book is the perfect introduction.

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