The Next America: Boomers, Millennials, and the Looming Generational Showdown
By: Taylor, Paul and Pew Research Center Staff
HN90.I58 T39 2014

The latest book from Pew Research Center executive vice-president Taylor (See How They Run) is structured around the titular generational showdown, which the author sees chiefly in the graying of America and the wider world. The wealth of statistical data found here, based on the Pew Research Center’s archive of public opinion surveys (covering topics such as church attendance and sense of progress) proves tantalizing on its own, but chapters repeat conventional wisdom familiar to any newspaper reader. The old concern about fewer young workers supporting too many benefit-consuming baby boomer retirees resurfaces here, but without unique insight. The book’s greatest strength lies in its detailed analysis of significant trends—from politics to lifestyle choices—among the four generational groups surveyed. A real treat that might justify the price of admission can be found in the “Living Digital” chapter...

American Nietzsche : A History of an Icon and His Ideas
By: Ratner-Rosenhagen, Jennifer
B3317_.R338 2012 eBook

Review from: Choice June 01, 2012
“Nietzsche is us,” the philosopher and classicist Allan Bloom pronounced. This judgment informs historian Ratner-Rosenhagen’s powerful study of the influence of the German philosopher’s ideas and persona on Americans during his lifetime and throughout the 20th century. That influence spread well beyond academic circles to include men of letters and religion, as well as others interested in what the brilliant but ultimately insane thinker from across the Atlantic was trying to impart. What Nietzsche wrote in his native language defied definitive interpretation; translation muddied the waters...

Spell It Out: The Curious, Enthralling and Extraordinary Story of English Spelling
By: Crystal, David
PE1141_.C79 2013

Review from: Choice May 01, 2014
Written with both the specialist and general reader in mind, Crystal’s latest book makes sense of the complexity of English spelling. In 37 short, breezy chapters, Crystal (honorary professor of linguistics, Univ. of Wales, UK) traces the decisions—made by missionaries, scribes, publishers, compositors, dictionary makers, and teachers—that underlie the messy system of English spelling. Crystal has an eye for the cogent example, and he provides just the right level of detail to help readers understand the stories of the letters themselves and their linguistic context. Beginning with Christian missionaries’ reform of Anglo-Saxon spelling and moving on to the French influence after 1066, the importation of printing, the Renaissance, the dictionary tradition, and modern reform movements, Crystal shows how small practical decisions over the centuries explain the many eccentricities and exceptions of orthography: he explains the use of silent e and of doubled consonants...

Churchill: The Power of Words
By: Gilbert, Martin (Editor)
DAS66.9.C5 A25 2012 eBook

Review from: Choice December 01, 2012
Opening with an excerpt from Churchill’s only novel, the obscure Savrola, and closing with an excerpt from one of his final public speeches made in 1959, this volume chronicles the course of Winston Churchill’s life by means of 200 readings drawn from his vast canon of books, articles, and speeches. Selected and edited by Gilbert, Churchill’s indefatigable official biographer, this volume includes excerpts from his many famous speeches (e.g., “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat,” “Give Us the Tools,” and “Sinews of Peace,” aka the “Iron Curtain”); and from his writings on such varied topics as books, Colonel T. E. Lawrence, and the Boer War. Each reading is accompanied by an introductory paragraph describing its relevance and source...

The Story of Helium and the Birth of Astrophysics
By: Nath, Biman B.
QD181.H4 N38 2013

Review from: Choice July 01, 2013
This book is a labor of love and a rather personal document, shedding light on a portion of physics and chemistry history that previously seems to have received too little analysis. Lore still exists regarding how helium was discovered and by whom. The conventional story, oft quoted and in otherwise reliable sources, turns out to be largely a work of fiction. Astronomer Nath (Raman Research Institute, India) has done some key detective work in mid-19th-century physics, starting with helium and expanding into the transformational perspective created by spectroscopy. In many ways, this change mirrors that of the effect of quantum mechanics and relativity in the 20th century...
John Brown's Spy: The Adventurous Life and Tragic Confession of John E. Cook
By: Lubet, Steven
E451 .L83 2012 eBook

Review from: Booklist November 01, 2012
*Starred Review* Lubet, Williams Memorial Professor of Law at Northwestern University, brings to center stage a man who, until now, has been a footnote in American history: John E. Cook, one of the chief architects of the Harper’s Ferry armory raid, in 1859. John Brown, alone of his men, has grabbed the historical spotlight. This compulsively readable history's focus on Cook gives readers a behind-the-scenes look at both this gentleman rogue and all the machinations that led to the disastrous raid and the trial and imprisonment of both Brown and Cook. Lubet emphasizes the moral choices made by both men. Most perplexing are the choices made by Cook, who spied for Brown in order to set up the raid, knew more than anyone about the plan, and then betrayed Brown. ...

Margaret Fuller: A New American Life
By: Marshall, Megan
PS2506 .M37 2014

Review from: Booklist March 01, 2013
*Starred Review* The mind has a light of its own, wrote Margaret Fuller, and the radiance of her inner world vitalizes Marshall's profoundly simpatico portrait of this path-breaking feminist and courageous journalist and writer. Marshall encountered Fuller while working on her acclaimed first book, The Peabody Sisters (2005), and she inhabits Fuller's dramatic, oft-told story with unique intimacy by virtue of her fluency in and judicious quoting of Fuller's extraordinarily vivid letters. Marshall conveys Fuller's passionate intensity, unusual intellect and outsized personality, expansive sympathy, and extraordinary valor as she illuminates family struggles, social obstacles, and private heartache in conjunction with each phase of Fuller's phenomenal achievements as an innovative teacher, lecturer, and editor. Marshall brings stirring historical and psychological insights to Fuller's complicated relationship with Emerson and the other transcendentalists, her journey west and response to the horrific plight of Native Americans, her gripping dispatches on social ills as a front-page columnist for Horace Greeley's New York Tribune, and her triumphs in Europe as America's first female foreign correspondent...

The Trivia Lover's Guide to the World: Geography for the Lost and Found
By: Fuller, Gary
G131 .F87 2012 eBook

Review from: Choice December 01, 2012
In this enjoyable book Fuller (formerly, Univ. of Hawai'i) explores and answers 150 geographical trivia questions. However, instead of listing the questions and providing the corresponding answers, which would make for a very boring read, he spins his responses into geographical explorations of various topics: climate and weather, maps, islands, rivers, parks, sports, and more. In 46 chapters addressing the questions and associated topics, Fuller does a wonderful job of providing historical context for his answers, in a way that is both entertaining and engaging...

Computing for Ordinary Mortals
By: St. Amant, Robert
QA76 .S7375 2013

Review from: Choice December 01, 2013
St. Amant (North Carolina State Univ.) covers the topic of computer science in a nontechnical way, primarily with stories, though no comprehensive work would be complete without pseudocode and trees. The book begins with an introduction to computing and electronic computers, and progresses through core topics, including architecture, programming, and systems and networks; it ends with theoretical computing, artificial intelligence, and human-computer interaction. Each chapter concludes with additional reading suggestions. While this work is readable, engaging, informative, and purposefully lacking rigor in order to be approachable, it is text-based coverage, best for those with strong linguistic abilities who would benefit from the broad overview of the discipline...

The New Industrial Revolution: Consumers, Globalization and the End of Mass Production
By: Marsh, Peter
HD2321 .M237 2012 eBook

Review from: Choice January 01, 2013
In The New Industrial Revolution, Marsh (business journalist, Financial Times) presents a panoramic view of manufacturing, from the first through the current (new) industrial revolutions—a span of some 250 years. Along the way, he traces key industrial revolutions brought about by developments in transport, science, and computer technology, which culminate in a glimpse of global manufacturing over the next few decades. Although some of the author's projections may be controversial, they are well supported and logically derived. Marsh exudes a positive outlook for the future in which he contends both developing and developed economies will find opportunities to benefit from the coming new industrial revolution...