



Author of the Week

Henry Petroski (February 6, 1942) is an American engineer specializing in failure analysis. He is a professor, both of Civil Engineering and History at Duke University. He is also a prolific author.

Petroski has written over a dozen books – beginning with *To Engineer is Human: The Role of Failure in Successful Design* (1985) and including a number of titles detailing the industrial design history of common, everyday objects, such as pencils, paper clips, and silverware. He is a frequent speaker and a columnist for the magazines *American Scientist* and *Prism*.

Life and education:

Petroski was born in Brooklyn, New York, and was raised in Park Slope and Cambria Heights, Queens. In 1963, he received his bachelor's degree from Manhattan College. He graduated with his PhD in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1968.



Born: February 6, 1942
Brooklyn, New York

Alma mater: Manhattan College (B.S., 1963)
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Ph.D. in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, 1968)

Occupation: Professor and author

"As engineers, we were going to be in a position to change the world - not just study it."

"Successful engineering is all about understanding how things break or fail."

"It is really want, rather than need, that drives the process of technological evolution."

"Read and write with a sensitive ear. The craft of writing is very important. Practice the craft."

Career :

Before beginning his work at Duke in 1980, Petroski worked at the University of Texas at Austin from 1968–74 and for the Argonne National Laboratory from 1975–80.[2] Petroski is the Aleksandar S. Vesic Professor of Civil Engineering and a professor of history at Duke University. In 2004, Petroski was appointed to the United States Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board[3] and was reappointed in 2008. Petroski has received honorary degrees from Clarkson University, Trinity College, Valparaiso University and Manhattan College. He is a registered professional engineer in Texas, a Distinguished Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society and the National Academy of Engineering

Henry Petroski

"Success and Failure in Engineering: A paradoxical Relationship"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ8oSTtq9FM>

Books by Henry Petroski

(Available in the Library)

1. Petroski, H. (1986). [*Invention by design: how engineers get from thought to thing.*](#) Cambridge: Cambridge Universities Press.
620.0042 PET 004775
2. Petroski, H. (2011). [*Engineer's alphabet: gleanings from the softer side of a profession.*](#) New York: Cambridge Universities Press.
601 PET 012943
3. Petroski, H. (1994). [*Design paradigms: case histories of error and judgment in engineering.*](#) New York: Cambridge Universities Press.
620.0042 PET 012944
4. Petroski, H. (2006). [*Success through failure: the paradox of design.*](#) Princeton: Princeton University Press.
620.0042 PET 015466
5. Petroski, H. (2003). [*Small things considered: why there is no perfect design.*](#) New York: Vintage books.
620.0042 PET 016154
6. Petroski, H. (2012). [*To forgive design: understanding failure.*](#) Harvard University Press: Cambridge.
620.00452 PET 020786

Books not available the Library

1. Petroski, H. (2011). *Essential Engineer: why science alone will not solve our global problems.* USA: Random House.
<http://www.randomhouse.com.au/books/henry-petroski/the-essential-engineer-9780307473509.aspx>
2. Petroski, H. (2011). *To Engineer is human: the role of failure in successful design.* USA: Vintage.
<http://www.randomhouse.com.au/books/henry-petroski/to-engineer-is-human-the-role-of-failure-in-successful-design-9780679734161.aspx>
3. Petroski, H. (1994). *Evolution of useful things: how everyday artifacts-from forks and pins to paper clips and zippers-came to be as they are.* New York: Vintage.
<http://www.randomhouse.com/highschool/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780679740391>

4. Petroski, H. (1992). *Pencil: a history of design and circumstance*. Canada: Knopf.
<https://www.randomhouseacademic.com/search?q=Pencil%3A+a+history+of+design+and+circumstance>
5. Petroski, H. (2008). *Toothpick: technology and culture*. New York: Vintage.
http://www.randomhouse.com/book/130246/the-toothpick-by-henry-petroski/9780307279439#blurb_tabs
6. Petroski, H. (2003). *Paperboy: confessions of a future Engineer*. New York: Vintage.
<http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375718984>
7. Petroski, H. (2005). *Pushing the limits: new adventures in Engineering*. New York: Vintage.
<http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9781400032945>
8. Petroski, H. (1998). *Remaking the world: adventures in Engineering*. New York: Vintage.
<http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375700248>
9. Petroski, H. (1996). *Engineers of dreams: great bridge builders and the spanning of America*. New York: Vintage.
<http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780679760214>
10. Petroski, H. (1986). *Beyond engineering: essays and other attempts to figure without equations*. St Martin's.
http://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Engineering-Attempts-Without-Equations/dp/0312077858/ref=la_B000APOBKA_1_17?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1385724588&sr=1-17
11. Petroski, H.(1999). *The Book on the Bookshelf*. New Delhi: Penguin Random House.
<http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/130243/the-book-on-the-bookshelf-by-henry-petroski/9780375706394/>
12. Petroski, H.(2014).*The House with Sixteen Handmade Doors: A Tale of Architectural Choice and Craftsmanship*. USA: Wiley.
<http://as.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0393242048.html>
13. Petroski, H.(2016).*The Road Taken: The History and Future of America's Infrastructure*. USA: Bloomsbury.
<http://www.bloomsbury.com/us/the-road-taken-9781632863607/>

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