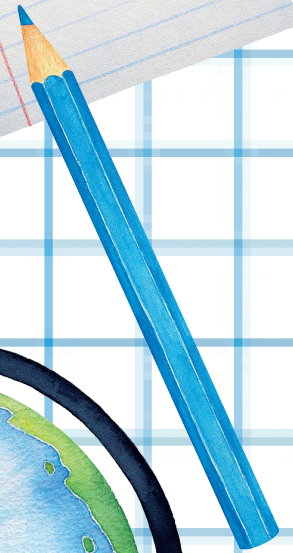
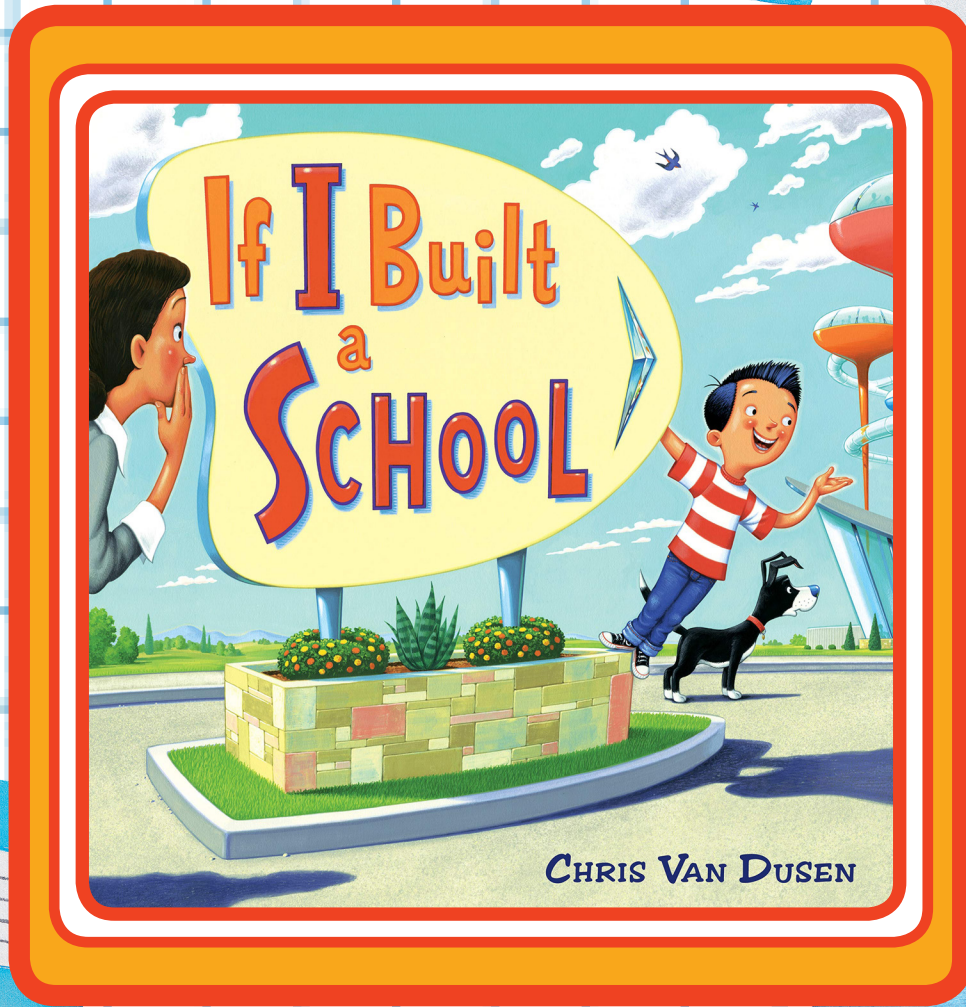


$1 + 1 = 2$



# CHRIS VAN DUSEN

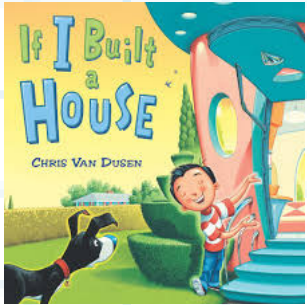


# Meet CHRIS



Chris Van Dusen is no stranger to IRW. He and Jeannie Brett are the wonderful creators of IRW's logo!

Chris has visited many schools with IRW – two tours with his book *If I Built a House*, and a major tour of islands with his incredible book, *The Circus Ship*. Chris is the illustrator of Kate DiCamillo's *Mercy Watson* series and many other books, and has authored and illustrated *If I Built a Car*, *Randy Riley's Really Big Hit*, the *Mr. Mageebooks*, and more. His *If I Built..* book series is being adapted for film by Greg Silverman's Stampede.

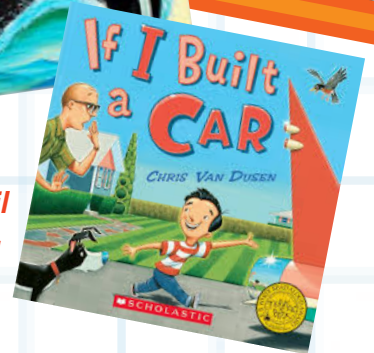


According to Chris, Dr. Seuss and Robert McCloskey were his childhood heroes. He said,

*I loved the rhythm of Dr. Seuss' words and I was fascinated by the meticulous detail of Robert McCloskey's illustrations. I had no idea back then that I'd end up writing and illustrating children's books when I grew up.*

For more information about Chris, visit his website at [WWW.CHRISVANDUSEN.COM](http://WWW.CHRISVANDUSEN.COM).

Interview with Chris: [HTTPS://WWW.READINGROCKETS.ORG/BOOKS/INTERVIEWS/VANDUSEN](https://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/vandusen)



# CHRIS VAN DUSEN



# Let's Talk

Chris' favorite children's book authors are Dr. Seuss and Robert McCloskey.

- Why do you think he likes them so much?
- Do you think they influenced this book? In what ways?
- What are your favorite children's authors? Why?

Have you ever seen a building similar to the school in his book? Chris uses architectural ideas from the 1950's-60's to create his pictures.

- Why do you think he does this?
- Does it make the book more interesting?
- What do you think of the colors?



## History: From Mimeograph to Google Doc: How have schools changed over time?

- Do you know the history of your school?
- When was it built and for how many students?
- Check with your town's historical society or library to find information about the schools in your town through the years. See if you can visit a site of an old school.

### TRADITIONS:

How many schools were in your town?

How many children attended?

Were any in just one room?

Why did some old schools have 2 doors at the entrance?

Can you find out any information about teachers?

Did the school have a bell in a tower?

Is the building still standing and being used for anything now?

What were desks like?

What did they write on? (students and teachers)

What about lunches? Who made them? What were they?

What books were they reading?

What did report cards look like?

Check out this list of 11 ways schools were different: <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/58705/11-ways-school-was-different-1800s>

Imagine that you have travelled back in time. Research the various ways children were transported to school between 1820 and 1950.

- How might they get to school in 3020? Draw a design template for your futuristic vehicle.

CHRIS  
VAN DUSEN



# Imagining your Dream School

## Creating A Vision. Think about...

Food, Transportation, Teachers, Writing methods, Playground, Sports, Art, Music, Class Pets, Report Cards, Classroom Supplies, Desk, Library or Learning Commons

Looking through the pages of the book make a list of all of the futuristic ideas that Chris Van Dusen put into the school. How many of them do you think will truly be reality in the future?

Write down your guesses and make a time capsule to bury and dig up 10, 20, or 30, years from now. (Art, History, Social Studies)



Look at an episode of “**The Jetsons**” What do you notice? Are the houses, buildings and vehicles similar to Chris’s books?

(Art); [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=tTq6Tofmo7E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTq6Tofmo7E)

Imagine your fantasy field trip. Where would you go? What would you see? Watch “**Magic School Bus Lost in Space.**”

Imagine and write about your own fantasy field trip. (ELA) [HTTPS://WWW.DAILYMOTION.COM/VIDEO/X3GW5WY](https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3gw5wy)

Create a pop-up book like in the library scene in the book. (Art) [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=Q36szLtsJ3U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q36szLtsJ3U)

## Composing a Story

- Thinking about the 3 books in the **If I Built** series, (House, Car, and School), what subject would you add to this list? Begin to sketch out your story. “If I Built a....” What time period will influence your story? (ELA)
- Write a letter to Chris and Jack telling them about your impressions of their dream school. (ELA)
- Try to create your own Seussian rhyme! (ELA) [HTTP://TAMISCLASS.BLOGSPOT.COM/2013/04/HOW-TO-WRITE-DR-SEUSS-STYLE-VERSE-BY-C.HTML?M=1](http://tamisclass.blogspot.com/2013/04/how-to-write-dr-seuss-style-verse-by-c.html?m=1)
- Here are some images of architecture from The Space Age for you to check out! [HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/SEARCH?Q=THE+SPACE+AGE+ARCHITECTURE&TBM=ISCH&SOURCE=UNIV&SA=X&VED=2AHUKEwi\\_xY-29KJMAhXChOAKHbM8B1oQsAR6BAgHEAE&BIW=964&BIH=653](https://www.google.com/search?q=the+space+age+architecture&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi_xY-29KJMAhXChOAKHbM8B1oQsAR6BAgHEAE&biw=964&bih=653)

CHRIS  
VAN DUSEN







## **Architecture and Design: Form, Function, Food and Fun! (Math & Science)**

**Think about: Blueprints, Building Materials, The Environment, Sustainability, Virtual experiences...**

Begin by using green paper and white chalk draw a blueprint of your ideal school. (see the endpapers of the book) Use this as the template for creating your dream school. (Art, Science, Math)

Below are some ideas to get you started on planning your school:

- In the book, Jack wants to Design a school where nature and outside are key features. Design a “green” school that brings the outside in. (Art, Math, Science)”
- Set up a maker space with all the things needed to create a futuristic school or one room of the school. Plastic tubes, Legos, cardboard tubes, boxes, silk flowers, toothpicks, popsicle sticks... (Art, Science, Math)
- Architecture-Design your own school or playground and draw or build a model out of recycled items. Explore some photos below:  
[HTTPS://WWW.ARCHDAILY.COM/869081/18-COOL-EXAMPLES-OF-ARCHITECTURE-FOR-KIDS](https://www.archdaily.com/869081/18-cool-examples-of-architecture-for-kids)
- List foods you would like to see Robochef make. Can you come up with new exciting meals? Make your new meals out of clay. (Art, science, Social Studies): [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=S1DQMLGOETI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1DQMLGOETI)
- The school that Jack designs in the book has elements of these themes; architecture, holograms, genetics and hovercraft. Take a look at the website below to get ideas for your own experiments and school designs. (Science/Math):  
[HTTPS://WWW.ARCHDAILY.COM/796083/ARCHITECTURE-FOR-CHILDREN-EXPLAINS-WHY-WE-SHOULD-TEACH-ARCHITECTURE-TO-KIDS](https://www.archdaily.com/796083/architecture-for-children-explains-why-we-should-teach-architecture-to-kids)

### **Just for Fun! Scientific Exploration**

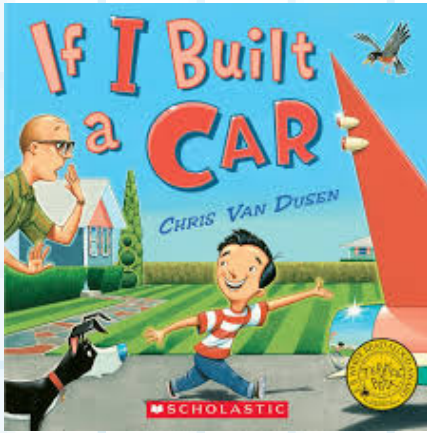
- Research holograms and see if you can make one using a cell phone like this one: [HTTPS://WWW.QUESTACON.EDU.AU/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/RESOURCES/TEACHER-RESOURCES/FILE/HOLOGRAMS%20SHORT%20ACTIVITY.PDF](https://www.questacon.edu.au/sites/default/files/resources/teacher-resources/file/holograms%20short%20activity.pdf)
- Research hovercraft, who invented it? Why was it invented? When? Try to make your own by using the instructions from this website: [HTTPS://WWW.EXPLAINTHATSTUFF.COM/HOVCRAFT.HTML](https://www.explainthatstuff.com/hovercraft.html) and [HTTPS://WWW.SCHOLASTIC.COM/PARENTS/SCHOOL-SUCCESS/LEARNING-TOOLKIT-BLOG/MAKE-HOMEMADE-HOVCRAFT-YOUR-KIDS.HTML](https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/learning-toolkit-blog/make-homemade-hovercraft-your-kids.html)



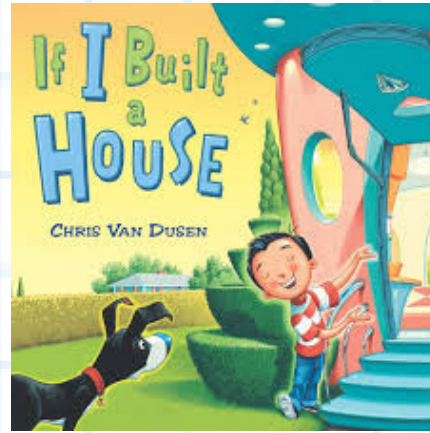
**CHRIS  
VAN DUSEN**



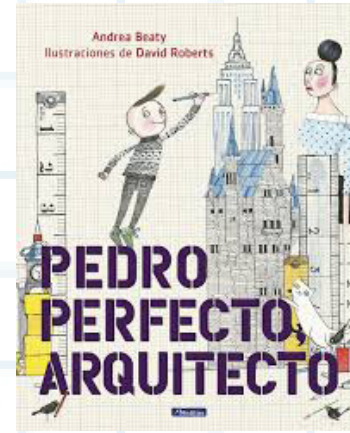
# Read More



*If I Built a Car*  
by Chris Van Dusen



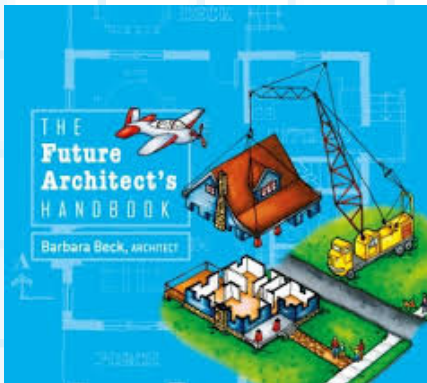
*If I Built a House*  
by Chris Van Dusen



*Iggy Peck Architect*  
by Andrea Beaty,  
illustrations by David Roberts



*The Pigeon Has to Go to School*  
by Mo Willems



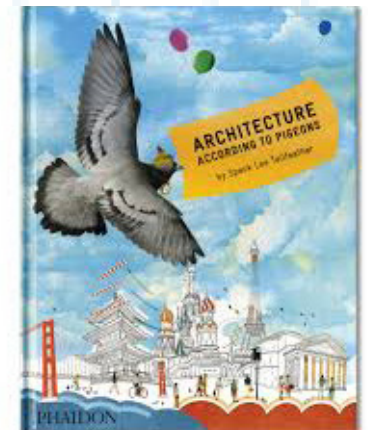
*The Future Architects Handbook*  
by Barbara Beck



*Cool Architecture:  
Filled With Fantastic Facts  
For Kids Of All Ages*  
by Simon Armstrong



*Steve Caney's Ultimate Building  
Book*  
by Steve Caney



*Architecture According to  
Pigeons*  
by Speck Lee Tallfeather

## CHRIS VAN DUSEN

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