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COMPTON'S. 26 vols. charts. diags. illus. maps. photos. reprods. index. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2008. Tr \$749. ISBN 978-1-59339-384-7. LC 2007929206.

Gr 5 Up—This almost annual, general encyclopedia continues to strengthen as an authentic resource. Only subtly tweaked with selective revisions and updates since the 2005 and 2007 editions, the most significant differences can be observed between this edition and the 2004 edition—800 new or revised articles and 900-plus new or revised illustrations. The articles fall into general categories: “Arts,” “Physical Science,” “Living Things,” “Medicine,” “Technology and Business,” “Geography,” “History,” “Social and Political Science,” and “Potpourri” (a catchall for topics such as sports, hobbies, and religion). Adhering to nearly the same volume divisions and pagination as its 2007 predecessor, the set contains nuanced changes including the addition of a photo of a surgical robot in “Surgery,” acknowledgment of the death of Kurt Vonnegut in 2007, and an update of “Electronic Games” that offers a photo of a Nintendo Wii demonstration. Biographical profiles tend to be historical and international in scope, so readers looking for current pop-culture icons will find few, if any. Some articles remain untouched, retaining outdated bibliographies or photographs. However, fabulous gems are found in most every volume, such as lengthy (10- to 30-page) treatments on horses, airplanes, anatomy, and nuclear energy, neatly subdivided and filled with color and black-and-white photographs and drawings. Geographical entries also shine and contain the most-often requested information for reports, including famous people associated with each U.S. state. The last volume, “Fact Index,” is a mini-encyclopedia of its own, integrating the set index with nearly 30,000 short articles and fact boxes.—*Vicki Reutter, Cazenovia High School, NY*