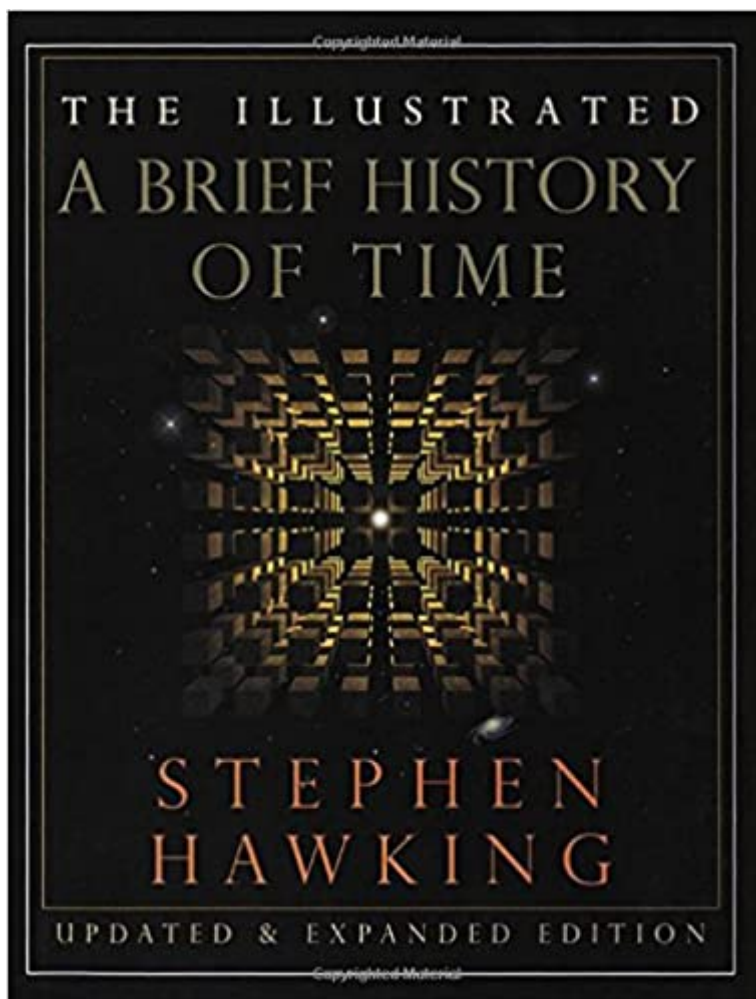


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# The Illustrated Brief History Of Time, Updated And Expanded Edition



## Synopsis

In the years since its publication in 1988, Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History Of Time* has established itself as a landmark volume in scientific writing. It has become an international publishing phenomenon, translated into forty languages and selling over nine million copies. The book was on the cutting edge of what was then known about the nature of the universe, but since that time there have been extraordinary advances in the technology of macrocosmic worlds. These observations have confirmed many of Professor Hawkin's theoretical predictions in the first edition of his book, including the recent discoveries of the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite (COBE), which probed back in time to within 300,000 years of the fabric of space-time that he had projected. Eager to bring to his original text the new knowledge revealed by these many observations, as well as his recent research, for this expanded edition Professor Hawking has prepared a new introduction to the book, written an entirely new chapter on the fascinating subject of wormholes and time travel, and updated the original chapters. In addition, to heighten understanding of complex concepts that readers may have found difficult to grasp despite the clarity and wit of Professor Hawking's writing, this edition is enhanced throughout with more than 240 full-color illustrations, including satellite images, photographs made possible by spectacular technological advance such as the Hubble Space Telescope, and computer generated images of three and four-dimensional realities. Detailed captions clarify these illustrations, enable readers to experience the vastness of intergalactic space, the nature of black holes, and the microcosmic world of particle physics in which matters and antimatter collide. A classic work that now brings to the reader the latest understanding of cosmology, *A Brief History Of Time* is the story of the ongoing search for the tantalizing secrets at the heart of time and space.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A new edition with pictures for those who couldn't fathom the original. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"He can explain the complexities of cosmological physics with an engaging combination of clarity and wit." • His is a brain of extraordinary power. "New York Review of Books" "Hawking has succeeded in writing two intertwined books, one a highly readable and popular account of the role of time in physics, the other an in-depth review." • What makes all this so interesting is Hawking's ability to convey the essential physics in words alone. "Physics Today" "In his first work of popular science, Stephen Hawking proves himself to be a master of vivid clarity." • It's difficult to think of anyone else living who could have put these mathematically formidable subjects more clearly. "Chicago Tribune" "A masterful summary of what physicists now think the world is made of and how it got that way." • "Wall Street Journal" "This book marries a child's wonder to a genius's intellect. We journey into Hawking's universe while marvelling at his mind." • "Sunday Times, London" "The famous theoretical physicist best known for his inquiries into the nature of black holes turns out to be as skilled a popular writer as he is a mathematician." • The result is probably the best single book on astrophysics for the common reader. Thank you, Dr. Hawking! "Booklist" "Lively and provocative." • Hawking clearly possesses a natural teacher's gift • easy, good-natured humor and an ability to illustrate highly complex propositions with analogies plucked from daily life. "New York Times" "Charming and lucid" • gives the general reader an opportunity to learn some deep science directly from the source • "[A book of] sunny brilliance." • "New Yorker

"...our goal is a complete understanding of the events around us, and of our own existence." ~ Stephen Hawking. Hawking's book is a history of the scientific theories about the universe; how it came to be, how it works, and how it will end. Starting with the theories of Aristotle and Copernicus, he discusses their theories and the advancement on those theories made by other scientists up to and even beyond Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity. The ultimate goal of all the scientists

is to provide one unified theory that explains everything (but not quite the way Douglas Adams would imagine it). I found this book to be a challenging read, which is to be expected, because it is a book dealing entirely with science and the advancement of scientific theory. Hawking did a good job of putting much of it in terms easy to understand, but I think it would be impossible to cover this subject that way in its entirety. One thing I did find very interesting is the way theories are proposed and then models are developed to test them. Then further theories are developed to correct flaws and science progresses.

Probably not to everyone's taste (though that's what he's famous for isn't it? making Physics understandable to the masses) Professor Hawking is a very interesting man who is refreshingly straightforward. I say it's not for everyone because I have an engineering degree and understand the academic method, am familiar with Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics so I find it fairly clearly written. But even so, Einstein's theories are not well understood even today. Perhaps I like this book as much for how forthright he is about his life, how it has gone, and how it's not necessary to be dealt the right "cards" to take advantage of what you have. The book is probably worthwhile for the one point he makes about how it's been a blessing for him to be non-communicative (or rather severely communication challenged). He says straight up people leave him alone so he has time to think and prepare his hypotheses and write about them, something that he didn't have time to do when he could easily communicate. He's a very interesting human and has profound observations about the universe that do explain in greater detail than I ever previously understood. His descriptions of Black Holes are thought provoking.

Somewhat shorter than I expected it to be, I nevertheless found this classic book fascinating and genuinely funny in parts. I've always been an avid science enthusiast, but had never taken the time to read this book. I know it was written quite some time ago, but a few 'tones' seemed discordant with modern scientific writing to me. Firstly, why does Professor Hawking eschew scientific notation when describing very large or small numbers? Does he feel the target audience incapable of grasping the concept? I found it unnecessarily cumbersome and ludicrous to have to parse "ten thousand million million" into a digestible format. The other, more worrisome, flavor to his writing is the frequent nods toward and mentions of "God", or the intentions of "God" in "creating" the universe and its underlying physical laws upon which the book is based. In doing so, some of the material came across as woo instead of proper scientific discourse. I can't help but think I am missing an underlying aspect to this, but there it is.

The book was very interesting. It really opened me to many existing ideas other than just general relativity. However, it's not really for people who never actually studied physics or very interested in physics. I struggled through the book especially at the end. Regularly, I have to pause the book and google what I was reading about. Anyway, I really liked the book and would recommend to anyone.

Hawking's book is very clear and despite the complexity of the subject understandable to a person like me who has not had a science lesson in his life. It is true that I had to read a few sections a few times until I got it, but that is not his fault but rather my ignorance. I also like the way he slips through the theologically tricky parts of our present knowledge, where others have been truly dogmatic and unpleasantly partisan. About the most comprehensive book on cosmology I have read. Since 1996 I am sure that much has happened and many new discoveries made. I cannot help wondering what he would say about the implications of the discovery of Higgs Boson. It is a fascinating read and particularly useful for getting a broad grasp of the subject. I now look forward to getting myself more up to date.

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