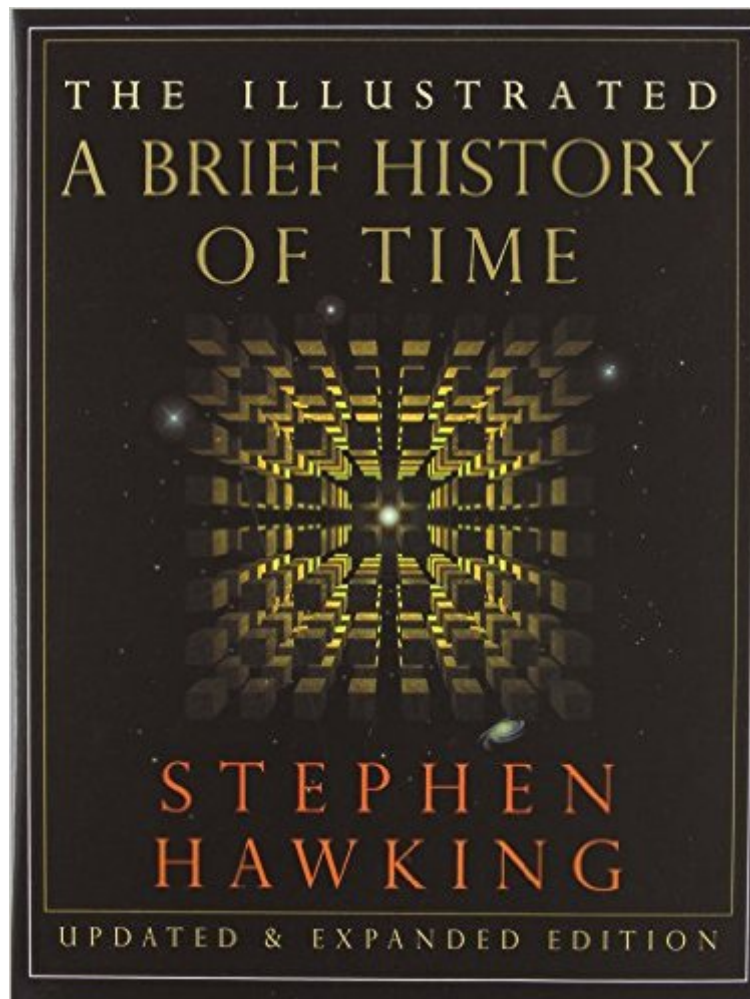


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The Illustrated Brief History Of Time, Updated And Expanded Edition



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.

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Customer Reviews

Stephen Hawking is an established scientific genius, but this book establishes him as a brilliant writer - an extremely rare, yet valuable combination. A point he brings to attention is that it had been possible for the philosophers of ancient times to master practically all the knowledge of academia. Today, however, only a handful of extremely specialized scientists understand the latest ideas in their fields. While men of ancient times could easily understand the latest scientific ideas, people today are lost. Enter "A Brief History of Time." This book helps fill in that gap between an average person's understanding and the highly specialized scientists' knowledge. This book covers ideas that are profound and affect everyone. It explains theories that concern the creation of the universe, time travel, light-speed travel, and many more topics. Imagine actually having some grasp of Einstein's general relativity. Ever heard of string theory? How might time travel actually be possible? What are these black holes of which I've heard? This book packs an incredible amount of information into its 248 pages, yet somehow is still easily read - this is the true marvel of this book. The illustrated version is worth the extra money. It contains many updates and additions throughout the book by Hawking (including the time travel chapter!). Every (and I mean every) concept throughout the book is accompanied by at least one illustration - think about it: 240 color illustrations with only 248 pages! Towards the middle of the book, some of the concepts get more complex (when he really gets into the details of sub-atomic particles). However, as a recent high school graduate, I can say with some level of certainty that the average person can understand 90% of this book - and those parts are the most interesting! It will change the way you look at the universe.

Most people know that Hawking is a brilliant physicist, but after reading this book, one develops a respect for his other talents as well. Most noticeable is Stephen Hawking's ability to make very complicated ideas seem quite clear through good explanations, clear comparisons to real life events, and a soft humor. The organization of chapters mostly follows a chronological order, which gives a sense of history from Aristotle to present day, yet also establishes concepts in an order that builds on itself. One also realizes that A Brief History of Time was written by a writer, not a scientist who happened to put ideas to paper. This makes a big difference in the enjoyment of a book, since good information in a dry, dull form can be difficult to read (remember trying to keep your eyes open

while reading a dull textbook in a subject of interest?). On the other hand, interesting information presented in an interesting manner make A Brief History of Time as much of a 'page-turner' as physics can be. In summary, a fountain of information from galaxies and black holes to quantum mechanics presented in such a way that is not only as easy to understand as it can be, but is an enjoyable experience to read.

I read the original version of 'A Brief History of Time' back in 1988. At the time, Hawking was into ground-breaking territory. The fact that his theories have gained such universal acceptance and that many of them have since been proved is evidence of the brilliance of the mind that thought through the logic. In this updated version, Hawking moves from time travel to black holes to general relativity, quantum mechanics and even string theory, he never fails to captivate and entrance, even though some of the theories are difficult to grasp. The sections devoted to black holes and time travel are, in my view, the most interesting... putting a human slant on a highly theoretical subject. With the addition of hundreds of amazing illustrations and photos, Hawking has made his revised book extremely readable and colorful, both comprehensive and comprehensible, as one reviewer put it. An excellent introduction to relativity, big bang, and anything else you might have scratched your head about!

I must say my first reaction was to be surprised at how much better Hawking is at explaining modern physics than my college instructors were. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle was just an equation I learned. Hawking made it seem like common sense. Hawking tries a little too hard to be witty at times (and punctuates all of his jokes with exclamation points! just in case you missed them!), but all-in-all, this was a quite readable account of what's presently known about cosmology. I use the term "presently" guardedly, as just recently there was some big finding about dark matter (it exists!), but from now on, when there are new findings in physics, I want Hawking to explain them to me, because I feel like then I might understand them. That's why you should read this book. The reason you should not read this book is because you have no interest in wrestling with abstractions with which you will never interact in daily life, and would rather read about global warming or Darfur or something a bit more topical and practical. This was still a hard read, and I feel like I grasped maybe 80% of it. For you to decide, but for a former engineering student, this was something I wish I had read when I was taking physics.

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