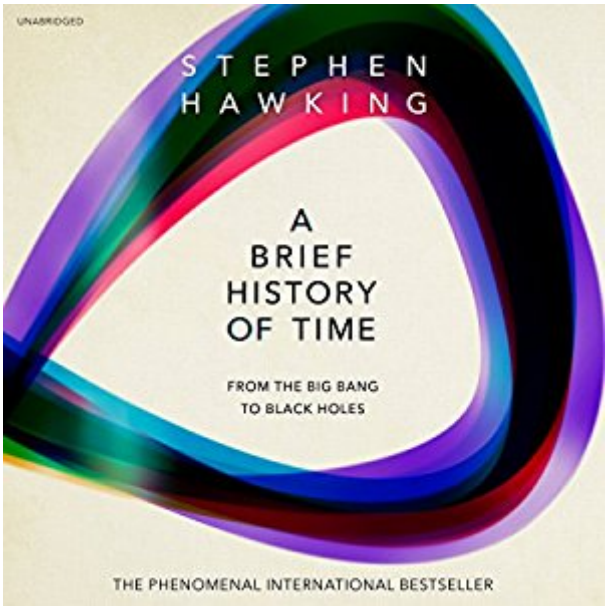
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A Brief History Of Time: From Big Bang To Black Holes



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Synopsis

Was there a beginning of time? Could time run backwards? Is the universe infinite, or does it have boundaries? These are just some of the questions considered in an internationally acclaimed masterpiece by one of the world’s greatest thinkers. It begins by reviewing the great theories of the cosmos, from Newton to Einstein, before delving into the secrets which still lie at the heart of space and time, from the big bang to black holes, via spiral galaxies and strong theory. To this day A Brief History of Time remains a staple of the scientific canon, and its succinct and clear language continues to introduce millions to the universe and its wonders.

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Customer Reviews

"...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 Aristotel 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 day Douglass 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 its 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 its 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 its 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 idea 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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