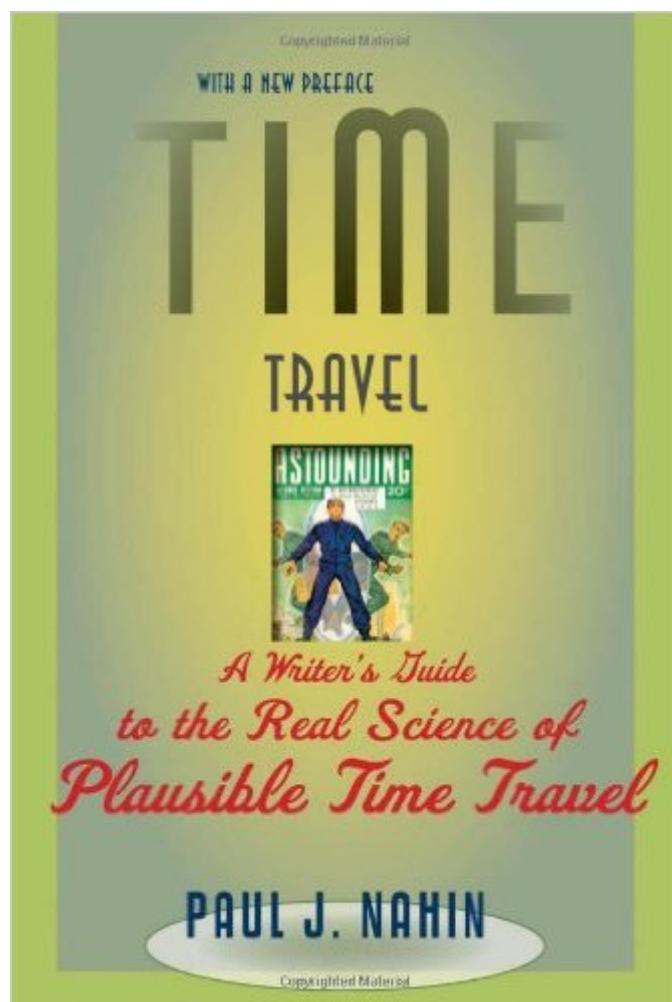


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Time Travel: A Writer's Guide To The Real Science Of Plausible Time Travel



Synopsis

From H.G. Wells to Isaac Asimov to Ursula K. Le Guin, time travel has long been a favorite topic and plot device in tales of science fiction and fantasy. But as any true SF fan knows, astounding stories about traversing alternate universes and swimming the tides of time demand plausible science. That's just what Paul J. Nahin's guide provides. An engineer, physicist, and published science fiction writer, Nahin is uniquely qualified to explain the ins and outs of how to spin such complex theories as worm holes, singularity, and relativity into scientifically sound fiction. First published in 1997, this fast-paced book discusses the common and not-so-common time-travel devices science fiction writers have used over the years, assesses which would theoretically work and which would not, and provides scientific insight inventive authors can use to find their own way forward or backward in time. From hyperspace and faster-than-light travel to causal loops and the uncertainty principle and beyond, Nahin's equation-free romp across time will help writers send their characters to the past or future in an entertaining, logical, and scientific way. If you ever wanted to set up the latest and greatest grandfather paradox—or just wanted to know if the time-bending events in the latest pulp you read could ever happen—then this book is for you.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the best writer's reference books that I have come across. The text is very accessible. The science is very readable and very precise. Nahin does a fine job of walking the line between the novice and the experts in the fields. Although this could hardly be considered a physics text

book, the Author's theories and ideas should make for excellent reading to anyone who enjoys the nature of science and the possible overlap of science fiction and reality. For the novice in the field, the author takes good care to be as involving and complete as possible without boring the rest of his audience. The text is very complete covering everything from relativity and FTL to causal loops and time paradoxes. Possible and probable time shifting machines are discussed and related to the effect they might have on the real world as well as discussing how to properly treat them in a fictional world. The overlap between fictional world and reality is the key in this book. Nahin has taken great care to write a book that isn't a physics text and isn't a writing text but instead fills the exact niche that exists where a person is trying to express the former study in the context of the second.

So, you think you'd like to write a story about time travel? If you think it's as easy as writing a fairy tale, read this book. Surprisingly, the theory of time travel lies well within the laws of physics. In this book, Paul J. Nahin explains the basics, the possibilities, the paradoxes, and best of all, common mistakes science fiction writers make when plotting literary courses through time. Unless you want to leave your editors laughing at your lack of research, read this book. Base your story as much in real science as you can. Also, check out Nahin's *Time Machines*, for more information.

I'm a layman when it comes to science, but I was interested in the theories of the reality of time travel. I tried another book (that will remain nameless) which didn't work at all for me. It was just way over my head. This one's great! It's got all of the same kind of information that the first one had, but Nahin is so much more understandable and gets his points across in a much more organized way. He's literally writing for the lay person here-- the book is intended for writers who would like write science fiction, but want to be scientifically updated on the scientifically possible realities of time travel (both to the past and to the future), teleportation (through wormholes, bending of the 4 dimensions, etc.), the special and general theories of relativity and more. His premise is that science fiction could get away with anything even 50 years ago, when most people and most scientists thought time travel to be impossible, but nowadays, you have to be scientifically sound if you don't want to be laughed out of the literary world. True Sci-fi readers will know if you're legit or not, so Nahin is educating them. I'm not a writer, but because of the nature of his premise, the book is extremely clear and thus much more informative than the first one ever was. This book even answers questions that I was high-and-dry on before (after reading the first book I picked up). Some of the math may be over the layman's head (some of it's over mine!) and more than you care to

know, but he includes a lot of thought-provoking information about the paradoxes of time travel and explains things in pictures very well. He colors his book with quotes and anecdotes from all kinds of works of science fiction and from scientists in the past to make the book fun (and sometimes humorous!). It's a must-read for anyone interested in the possibilities of time travel and a must-MUST-read for anyone interested in writing a book on anything scientific.

Before you read this book, when someone tells you, "Time travel is not real," you will agree. After you read this book, when someone tells you, "Time travel is not real," you will object strongly and start explaining to them all of the REAL laws of time travel and the REAL concept of time travel. If you are a science fiction writer, I STRONGLY suggest that you read this so that your story will not be a heap of junk in a garbage can. You will learn many, many, things such as the REAL science of hyperspace, which is the possible fifth dimension,(the fifth dimension is not simply something that someone made up) and the REAL science of wormholes. This book will thoroughly educate you on the real idea of time travel.

A great read about how to write time-travel science fiction, with a bit of neat physics and math thrown in. The book almost reads as science fiction itself for the memes and topics discussed. I had to reread a few sections a few times, due to the heady content. A couple of passages I had to skim, as things can get quite complex (time-loops, information created from nothing, etc). There are many great references to short stories and books as examples and I hope I can hunt some of these down. (Some going back to the 1800's and earlier, with lots of great material from the old pulps). One possible confusion is in Chapter 10, regarding the future weather telephone. It seems to me that the future self simply has to get today's weather and recite it into the telephone connect to the old self 30 days in the past. No paradox or bilking universe or ex-temporal information creation that I can tell, just like in the lottery example.

Great book. I hope the author has seen my favorite time travel story "A Stitch in Time". It was one of the episodes on the New Outer Limits and was originally on around 1995. A female time traveler goes back in time and kills 17 serial killers before they can strike. Lots of cool twists like the bullets taken from the killers are from a gun that wasn't manufactured until decades after the fact. The actress playing the scientist is that Amanda Plummer, the mousey little woman from Pulp Fiction and Fisher King. I just watched it again for free over on Youtube.

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