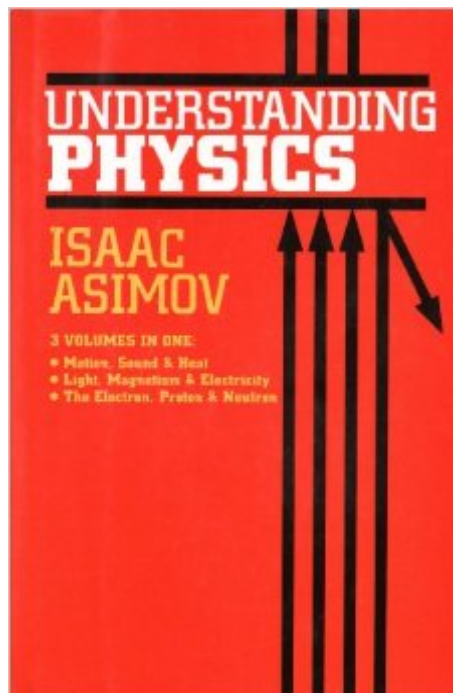


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Understanding Physics (Motion, Sound, And Heat / Light, Magnetism, And Electricity / The Electron, Proton, And Neutron)



Synopsis

Dr Isaac Asimov, famed science fiction writer and science popularizer, presents an introduction to the complexities of modern physics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let me start with a word of warning: this is not a simple book. If you are interested in learning what physics is all about but are wary of drowning in equations and technospeak, you might want to start with Tony Rothman's or Larry Gonick's. Both provide a sampler platter of the key concepts in physics. If, however, your appetite is already whetted, then by all means dive into this three-course meal. Though he is best known for his science fiction, Isaac Asimov is well grounded in science fact. It should be noted that he was originally a professor of biochemistry at the Boston University School of Medicine before becoming a full-time writer. And this book certainly shows he's a master of both teaching and writing. Like most other books on physics, Asimov starts volume one with the concept of motion and expands on it leading up to a rudimentary introduction to relativity. Volume two begins with the properties of light and ends by tying together the notions of electricity and magnetism. And volume three travels from the electrons on the edge of atoms to the subatomic particles in the nucleus. Each chapter provides a solid foundation for the next, and there are generous notations back to previous concepts if the reader gets lost. But what I feel is most remarkable about this book, is the attention it pays to the wrong turns taken through the course of history. It's far too easy to think of science simply as facts handed down from on high. Asimov shows us how it's actually a process of stumbling in the mists towards the Truth. Each mistaken

belief is examined in its historical context to show us why it was accepted. Then the next set of discoveries is used to explain why those beliefs were modified or discarded outright. Not only does he illuminate the nature of the universe, but the nature of science itself. I hesitate to give this five stars for two reasons. First, there are very few diagrams. While Asimov is as clear a writer as there is, "a picture is worth a thousand words". Secondly, as I mentioned in the beginning, a reader with little to no experience with physics may be put off by its in-depth nature. However, it's not really set up to work well as a reference book for those readers who are well versed in physics (though they would most likely appreciate the historical perspective). Thus, it seems to me that this book would be best suited for those who are currently or are soon to be taking coursework in physics. Student or not, anyone approaching this collection with a desire to learn will not be disappointed.

After engineering school, I finally found that what I was missing most was the fundamental development and transgression of ideas over time. Not understanding the nature of those formulae and equations kept me from doing some better work. If I had read this book prior to (or even during) my education I might well have been more relaxed and entrained on the topics. I found physics to be daunting when in actuality, it is great fun. I highly recommend this book for the beginning student and even for the seasoned engineer (who could still learn a few things after all). This book makes conversational sense of the topic of physics.

Back in high school, my physics course was a complete joke. Our teacher was a football coach who was more interested in that than teaching us physics. Then in college, I was forced to take Physics 101 and 103. I hated them with an undying passion. I didn't understand most of what the textbook was trying to tell me, the teachers were boring and monotonal...I had a real mental block about pretty much anything having to do with physics. I thought I was a hopeless case. Then, a few years ago, I was browsing the "bargain books" bin at a Barnes & Noble in Birmingham, Alabama. And there it was. A Physics book. By Isaac Asimov. Isaac Asimov. It was \$5. I bought it without hesitation and started reading it immediately in the book store while waiting on my friends to get done. Not only did I understand every word Mr. Asimov wrote, I found that it all made perfect sense. It was as if a locked door had been blown off its hinges. I avidly read the entire book cover-to-cover. Motion, sound, heat, light, magnetism, electricity, atomic structure...I understood it all. For the first time, my eyes didn't cross when the equations were given. Because Asimov explains the formulae. Explains how they were arrived at. Gives the history of the discoveries. Leads you along WITH the men and women who figured it all out. Makes it make SENSE. Because of this book. Because of Isaac

Asimov's wonderful ability to write engagingly about topics that would put sugar-laden, hyperactive, caffeine-infused three-year-olds to sleep. I've read many books about physics, math, and such since then, and thanks to the foundations this book laid, I understood them. If you can find a copy of this, get it. Check the bargain bins. Check used book stores. Check library sales. Just. Get. It.

this book can teach anyone physics. it should be a "must" in all high schools from america to africa. With these other books, Secrets of the universe by Paul Fliesher, and Physics made simple by Ira Freeman should make a great introductory course for anyone.

Everyone knows Asimov was "the man" of Physics and other hard sciences but what makes him stand out to me is that he can communicate in plain english. Lots of people can understand quantum mechanics, very few can explain them in language every man can understand. This book does just that. I used it as a supplement to all Physics text books in college, when I was unable to catch on to what the book was trying to explain. Asimov has yet to let me down, and though Physics class is long gone, I still refer to and enjoy reading this book.

Issac Asimov knows how to explain and this book is him at the top of his game. You will learn about Physics and history in a very engaging way. Don't pass up an opportunity to read this book. Even if you don't think you like Physics, this book might just change your mind by showing you the human side of Physics ideas.

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