

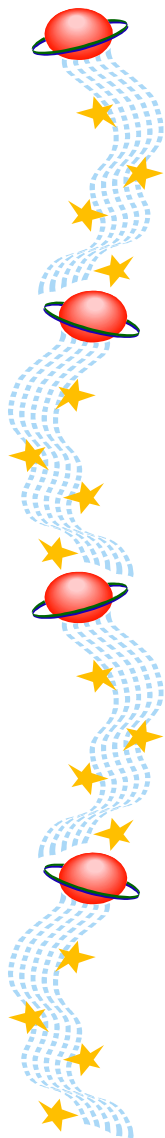
How to read "A Brief History of Time" by Stephen Hawking

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Have you started reading this book and given up after the first chapter? Are you interested in getting through the whole thing?

My four-step guide is based on actions I carried out myself. I managed to read the whole book, and so can you.



- **Step 1: Ask yourself "Why do I want to read this?"**

The phrase "Quantum Physics" sounds exotic and mysterious. This alone is a good reason to read the book; but if you don't know anything about physics apart from what you learned at school, then it might be difficult to get this area of science into context.

If you want to learn about "why" quantum physics before "what" then read "The Physicists" by C. P. Snow. This gives some historical context, as well as introducing you to the main players. If you are unfamiliar with popular science literature in general then this is a well written and informative book to get started.

- **Step 2: Be honest about how much background knowledge you have**

Reviewers claim that "A Brief History of Time" was written for the lay-person. I would argue that the book is a lot more digestible if you understand some of the theories. For example, there is a small section on 'the red-shift' which had me stumped. I couldn't remember learning this at school and I didn't really understand it.

If you need some more help with understanding some of these theories, try dipping into "Asimov's New Guide to Science" by Isaac Asimov. Asimov is a fiction writer, so his style is very accessible. His guide is written in clearly headed sections, so it is easy to dip in where you need information.

- **Step 3: Take your time**



Have Asimov's guide with you when you are reading "A Brief History of Time". Use it when you get stuck, or use another book or the internet. Take it one step at a time. When I started reading this book I realised that I didn't know anything about the origins of the universe, where planet earth came from or how long they had been around. I had to start slowly and build up my knowledge.

- **Step 4: Go with it!**



When you have finished reading "A Brief History of Time" it is unlikely you will really understand it, because very few people do. It's a bit like reading about true crime; you can understand what happened when a crime took place, but that doesn't mean that you understand the mind of a criminal.

Enjoy reading the book, let it lead you to pursue this area of science more fully but don't expect to truly grasp all the theories. Happy reading!

