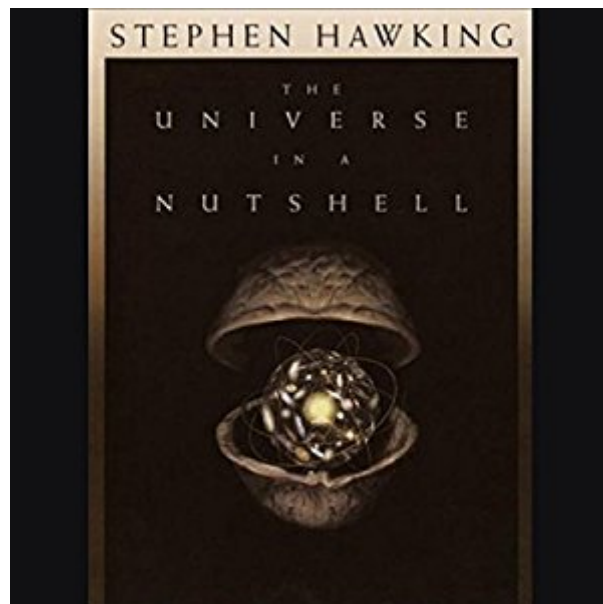


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# The Universe In A Nutshell



## Synopsis

Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* was a publishing phenomenon. Translated into thirty languages, it has sold over nine million copies worldwide. It continues to captivate and inspire new readers every year. When it was first published in 1988 the ideas discussed in it were at the cutting edge of what was then known about the universe. In the intervening years there have been extraordinary advances in our understanding of the space and time. The technology for observing the micro- and macro-cosmic world has developed in leaps and bounds. During the same period cosmology and the theoretical sciences have entered a new golden age. Professor Stephen Hawking has been at the heart of this new scientific renaissance. Now, in *The Universe in a Nutshell*, Stephen Hawking brings us fully up-to-date with the advances in scientific thinking. We are now nearer than we have ever been to a full understanding of the universe. In a fascinating and accessible discussion that ranges from quantum mechanics, to time travel, black holes to uncertainty theory, to the search for science's Holy Grail - the unified field theory (or in layman's terms the 'theory of absolutely everything') Professor Hawking once more takes us to the cutting edge of modern thinking. Beautifully illustrated throughout, with original artwork commissioned for this project, *The Universe in a Nutshell* is guaranteed to be the biggest science book of 2001. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Universe in a Nutshell is the best popular science book I have ever read. Professor Stephen Hawking deserves many more than five stars for this book!! If you have any interest in understanding

the latest attempts to create a unified scientific Theory of Everything in the universe, this is the book for you. Professor Hawking has combined many perspectives to show how Einstein's special and general theories of relativity have been updated to explain the big bang, black holes, and an expanding universe; superstring theory; p-branes; how many dimensions the universe has; whether the future can be predicted in a deterministic way; whether time travel is possible; how science will transform our biological and thinking futures in the context of Star Trek technology; and M-theory to consider whether "we live on a brane or are we just holograms?" Although any of these subjects can be found in popular science books, few such books discuss all of them simply and intelligently in terms of each other from the theoretical perspective and experimental evidence. Those who wonder what science has to say about religious ideas will find this book valuable, for Professor Hawking is unafraid to address questions about whether there can be a beginning to the universe in a scientific sense. What could or could not have preceded the big bang? Fans of *A Brief History of Time* (1988) will find that Professor Hawking has made two changes to make this book more accessible to the nonphysicist. First, he has written the book so that you can follow the argument solely through the many beautiful and helpful illustrations and their captions. The method parallels the one he used successfully in the 1996 book, *The Illustrated Brief History of Time*.

A number of years ago Stephen Hawking wrote a book that became, it is said, one of the bestselling, unread books of all time--*A Brief History of Time*. Now, I, being a physicist and teacher myself, actually read the book when it came out and enjoyed it immensely, though I admit it has its flaws. His new book has many of the same strengths and flaws. There is no doubt that Hawking loves his work and it is always fun to read someone who gets that love across in their writing. He covers a number of inherently fascinating topics--the birth of the universe, black holes, time travel, etc.--and offers reasonable explanations of these phenomena. This book also has the advantage of being beautifully made and offering much more in the way of illustrations than *A Brief History of Time* does to help visualize the difficult concepts he is describing. It is in some ways a coffee table book of cutting edge physics. On the other hand, the concepts described are difficult and no number of illustrations is going to change that. Hawking himself says he tried to write a simpler book this time but he only partially succeeds. Most of the world has a difficult time grasping Einstein's four dimensional spacetime let alone higher dimensional spaces, flexible time and branes. Additionally, though Hawking always gives credit where credit is due, he's not above tooting his own horn and a current of arrogance runs through his text. The explanations he offers are his own and he often seems close-minded to other ideas. Not that I'm against this, per se. As I tell my students,

confidence in the fact that you can get the right answer is a main ingredient of genius. It keeps someone like Hawking working through his unique ideas to their conclusion.

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