



Physics Curiosities, Oddities, and Novelties

By John Kimball

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An Enlightening Way to Navigate through Mind-Boggling Physics Concepts

Physics Curiosities, Oddities, and Novelties highlights unusual aspects of physics and gives a new twist to some fundamental concepts. The book covers both classical and modern physics in an engaging, straightforward style.

The author presents perplexing questions that often lack satisfying answers. He also delves into the stories of famous and eccentric past scientists. Many examples reveal interesting ideas, including how:

- *Newton had trouble determining the mass of the moon*
- *An electric motor is an electric generator run in reverse*
- *Time travel that violates causality is not possible*
- *Schrödinger's cat may be both dead and alive, and there may be two of each one of us to observe the two possibilities*
- *Particle physics and the basic laws of thermodynamics can appear simple yet are very complicated*

Accessible to nonspecialists and beginning students, this book provides insight into physics using minimal mathematics and jargon. It summarizes many fascinating aspects of physics employing only essential formulas. Some familiar formulas are written in standard form while other equations are written in words for greater clarity.



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Editorial Review

Review

"... this author did a great job. I cannot imagine a better explanation of the whole of physics in plain text. ... The sections on the latest developments in physics are very short, but clear and full of information. ... The book closes with comments about Nobel laureates in physics: their lives and their ideas. It is interesting to read something about these important scientists, their family backgrounds, and philosophical ideas. These are important aspects, generally neglected, but of great importance to understand their approach to science and ideas. This book is recommended for everyone interested in physics, especially new developments."

?*MRS Bulletin*, January 2016

"... concise, clear, and insightful ... a useful, interesting, and accessible resource for physics teachers and interested students of all levels."

?David Bittel, Physics Teacher, Bristol Eastern High School

"All of the physical concepts are expressed in terms of common language. ... good as a reference for students [and] as popular reading for those having curiosity about physics and mathematics ..."

?Ching-Yao Fong, Distinguished Professor of Physics, University of California, Davis

"This book introduces important physical concepts in a casual and entertaining way. ... I recommend it to high school students curious about science and to anyone interested in qualitative physics."

?Oleg Lunin, University at Albany, SUNY

"As a teacher of physics, I like this book a lot. It lightens the subject nicely. I shall follow the author's advice and not try to teach my dog calculus. Whether to apply this to all my students is still undecided. PS: I think the author should be encouraged to be kinder about Aristotle."

?Philip B. Allen, Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Stony Brook University

"The book was inspired by the author's time at the United States Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, where she established the Bioinspired Photonics programme. That programme aimed to bring together scientists from several disciplines in order to advance the field of dynamic functional devices by taking ideas from biological systems. To have made the work of those cutting-edge scientists accessible to a more general audience is a considerable achievement. The style relies on photographs, diagrams and graphs rather than mathematical or chemical formulae, but there are extensive references to original papers and other reviews for the reader who wishes to go further. Some of the topics highlighted in boxes in most chapters also lead the reader deeper."

?*Contemporary Physics* (Mar 2016), review by A.H. Harker, UCL

"This book presents unusual, fascinating aspects of physics.... A highlight is the easy language in which concepts are presented, making the text accessible to general readers and lower-level students.... Despite the author's emphasis on simplicity, the book provides information that will engage even highly qualified physicists. Kimball draws from scientific history to reveal curious facts, such as Newton's difficulty calculating the mass of the moon and that Aristotle believed women had fewer teeth than men, but never bothered to check.... Some sections discuss the latest developments in physics in a superbly concise and lucid manner. The book closes with discussions of Nobel laureates, including the secrets of their success. Summing Up: Highly recommended."

About the Author

John Kimball is a professor emeritus of physics at the University at Albany, SUNY. His research has largely focused on condensed matter physics, including high-energy electron-positron pair production in crystals, exact solutions of a kinetic model of magnetism, relations between chaos and symmetry, and studies of magnetic impurities. Dr. Kimball is an enthusiastic sailor and author of the highly praised book *Physics of Sailing*. He earned a PhD from the University of Chicago.

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