

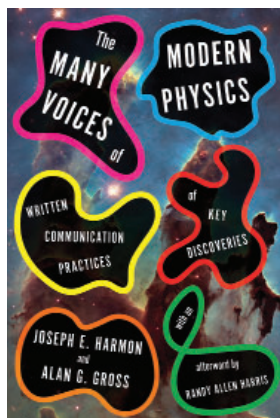
NEW BOOKS & MEDIA

The Many Voices of Modern Physics

Written Communication Practices of Key Discoveries

Joseph E. Harmon and Alan G. Gross
U. Pittsburgh Press, 2023. \$65.00

Since 2007 Joseph Harmon, a science writer, and Alan Gross, a scholar of scientific rhetoric, have coauthored a series of books on the methods and practices of scientific communication, both past and present. Their latest volume, *The Many Voices of Modern Physics*, presents a history of physics rhetoric since 1900. Using an extensive set of written and graphical examples from such authors as Albert Einstein, Richard Feynman, and Steven Weinberg, the two authors illustrate how visuals, thought experiments, and analogies have been used to advance arguments in physics. Sadly, Gross died suddenly in 2020, so this will be his and Harmon's last book together. It is a fitting capstone to their joint scholarly project.



—RD

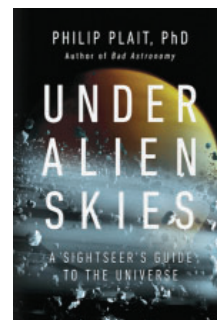
Under Alien Skies

A Sightseer's Guide to the Universe

Philip Plait
W. W. Norton, 2023.
\$30.00

What would it be like to travel to the Moon, Mars, Saturn, and beyond? In *Under Alien Skies*, the astronomer Philip Plait takes the reader on such a journey—starting in our solar system and continuing on to other cosmic objects, such as exoplanets, nebulae, and even black holes. Each chapter centers on a destination, such as Pluto, and Plait sets the scene by writing a few introductory paragraphs that place the reader in a space suit or spaceship, looking out. He then proceeds to describe the alien environment's terrain, atmosphere, gravity, and other physical details. Plait's engaging narrative brings to life the data that have been collected by Earth- and space-based telescopes.

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Great Mysteries of Physics

Miriam Frankel, host
The Conversation, 2023—

As the title suggests, this new podcast delves into larger philosophical questions in physics. Hosted by Miriam Frankel, a science editor at the Conversation, *Great Mysteries of Physics* covers such topics as the existence of time, the multiverse theory, and why physics can't explain consciousness. The second episode is a highlight: Based on interviews Frankel conducted with the physicists Fred

Adams and Paul Davies, it explores the nature of fundamental constants like the speed of light. Although some researchers have argued that the constants have been fine-tuned to allow for life to exist, Adams suggests that the universe might be more conducive to life if the constants had different values. The podcast is supported by the Foundational Questions Institute.

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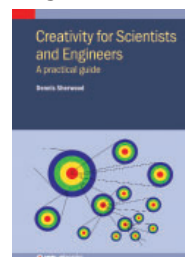
Creativity for Scientists and Engineers

A Practical Guide

Dennis Sherwood
IOP, 2022. \$50.00

Ingenuity or creativity is typically thought to be an innate or unteachable quality. Some people are creative; others aren't. That's not true, according to Dennis Sherwood, who completed a PhD in biology at the University of California, San Diego, in the 1970s before embarking on a long career in consulting. In this book, Sherwood first defines the word "creativity." He cites the author and journalist Arthur Koestler, who argued in 1964 that the act of creation "uncovers, selects, re-shuffles, combines, synthesizes already existing facts, ideas, faculties, skills." Sherwood then presents his own six-step recursive process that he argues will help anyone develop great ideas. Even if it won't be a magic bullet for all creative problems, it's nonetheless an illuminating look at the creative process.

—RD PT



What's Gotten into You

The Story of Your Body's Atoms, from the Big Bang Through Last Night's Dinner

Dan Levitt
Harper, 2023. \$32.00

What are we made of? That's the question that prompted the science and history documentarian Dan Levitt to write *What's Gotten into You*, in which he recounts the epic journey of the atoms that make up the human body. In some 400 pages, Levitt covers the Big Bang, the evolution of the universe, and four centuries of scientific investigations into the origin of life and the lives of the scientists who conducted them. Yet, Levitt writes, for all we've learned, some mysteries remain, such as how our consciousness arises from a conglomeration of molecules and cells.

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