

# A Very Brief History Of Thermodynamics

## John Murrell

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**Combinatorics: A Very Short Introduction** Robin Wilson 2016-04-28 How many possible sudoku

puzzles are there? In the lottery, what is the chance that two winning balls have consecutive numbers? Who invented Pascal's triangle? (it was not Pascal)

Combinatorics, the branch of mathematics concerned with selecting, arranging, and listing or counting collections of objects, works to answer all these questions. Dating back some 3000 years, and initially consisting mainly of the study of permutations and combinations, its scope has broadened to include topics such as graph theory, partitions of numbers, block designs, design of codes, and latin squares. In this Very Short Introduction Robin Wilson gives an overview of the field and its applications in mathematics and computer theory, considering problems from the shortest routes covering certain stops to the minimum number of colours needed to colour a map with different colours for neighbouring countries. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject

quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. *Marine Biology: A Very Short Introduction* Philip V. Mladenov 2013-09-26 The marine environment is the largest, most important, and yet most mysterious habitat on our planet. It contains more than 99% of the world's living space; produces half of its oxygen; plays a critical role in regulating its climate; and supports a remarkably diverse and exquisitely adapted array of life forms, from microscopic viruses, bacteria, and plankton to the largest existing animals. As the 21st century progresses human activities, such as overfishing, coastal development, plastic pollution, oil spills, nutrient pollution, the spread of exotic species, and the emission of climate changing greenhouse gases are posing a significant threat to the marine environment and to many of its life forms. In this

unique Very Short Introduction, Philip Mladenov provides a comprehensive overview of marine biology, providing a tour of marine life and marine processes that ranges from the polar oceans to tropical coral reefs; and from the intertidal to the hydrothermal vents of the deep sea. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

*Work: A Very Short Introduction* Stephen Fineman 2012-11-29 The image of a job captures our imagination from an early age, usually prompted by the question 'What do you want to be when you grow up?'. Work — paid, unpaid,

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voluntary, or obligatory — is woven into the fabric of all human societies. For many of us, it becomes part of our identity. For others it is a tedious necessity. Living is problematic without paid work, and for many it is catastrophic. Steve Fineman tells the fascinating story of work - how we strive for security, reward, and often, meaning. Looking at how we classify 'work'; the cultural and social factors that influence the way we work; the ethics of certain types of work; and the factors that will affect the future of work, from globalization to technology, this Very Short Introduction considers work as a concept and as a practical experience, drawing upon ideas from psychology, sociology, management, and social history. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new

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subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

British Politics: A Very Short Introduction Tony Wright 2013-05-30 Tony Wright's Very Short Introduction to British Politics is an interpretative essay on the British political system, rather than an abbreviated textbook on how it currently works. He identifies key characteristics and ideas of the British tradition, and investigates what makes British politics distinctive, while emphasizing throughout how these characteristics are reflected in the way the political system functions. Each chapter is organized around a key theme, such as the constitution or political accountability, which is first established and then explored with examples and illustrations. In this new edition Wright considers how the system has recently changed and continues

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to do so, in light of the coalition government and the fall of New Labour, as well as the impact of the financial crisis and issues such as terrorism and immigration. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

**Reality: A Very Short Introduction** Jan Westerhoff 2011-11-24 'What is real?' has been one of the key questions of philosophy since its beginning in antiquity. It is a question that, due to such films as The Matrix, has also made its way into popular culture. But it is not just a question philosophers ask. It is also asked by scientists when they investigate whether the fundamental constituents of matter are

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actually 'out there' or just a mere abstraction from a successful theory. Cognitive scientists ask it when trying to find out which set of the bewildering array of data processed by our brain could constitute the basis for such supposedly fundamental entities like the free agent or the self. This Very Short Introduction discusses what reality is by looking at a variety of arguments, theories and thought-experiments from philosophy, physics, and cognitive science. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. Three Laws of Nature R. Stephen Berry 2019-01-01 A short and entertaining introduction to

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thermodynamics that uses real-world examples to explain accessibly an important but subtle scientific theory A romantic description of the second law of thermodynamics is that the universe becomes increasingly disordered. But what does that actually mean? Starting with an overview of the three laws of thermodynamics, MacArthur "genius grant" winner R. Stephen Berry explains in this short book the fundamentals of a fundamental science. Readers learn both the history of thermodynamics, which began with attempts to solve everyday engineering problems, and ongoing controversy and unsolved puzzles. The exposition, suitable for both students and armchair physicists, requires no previous knowledge of the subject and only the simplest mathematics, taught as needed. With this better understanding of one science, readers also gain an appreciation of the role of research in science, the provisional nature of scientific theory,

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and the ways scientific exploration can uncover fundamental truths. Thus, from a science of everyday experience, we learn about the nature of the universe.

*The Janus Point* Julian Barbour 2020-12-01 In a universe filled by chaos and disorder, one physicist makes the radical argument that the growth of order drives the passage of time -- and shapes the destiny of the universe. Time is among the universe's greatest mysteries. Why, when most laws of physics allow for it to flow forward and backward, does it only go forward? Physicists have long appealed to the second law of thermodynamics, held to predict the increase of disorder in the universe, to explain this. In *The Janus Point*, physicist Julian Barbour argues that the second law has been misapplied and that the growth of order determines how we experience time. In his view, the big bang becomes the "Janus point," a moment

of minimal order from which time could flow, and order increase, in two directions. The Janus Point has remarkable implications: while most physicists predict that the universe will become mired in disorder, Barbour sees the possibility that order -- the stuff of life -- can grow without bound. A major new work of physics, *The Janus Point* will transform our understanding of the nature of existence.

**Psychology: A Very Short Introduction** Gillian Butler 2014 "Fully updated new edition"--Label on cover.

**Climate: A Very Short Introduction** Mark Maslin 2013-06-27 In this wide-ranging Very Short Introduction to climate, Mark Maslin considers all aspects of the global climate system, exploring and explaining the different components that control climate on Earth. He considers the processes that allow energy to reach the Earth and how it is

redistributed around the planet by the ocean-atmosphere system; the relationship and differences between climate and the weather; how climate has affected life on Earth and human settlements; and the cyclic and quasi-cyclic features of climate such as the Milankovitch cycles and El Nino. He concludes by touching on the issue of climate change, and outlines some of the approaches that are now being taken to tackle it. **ABOUT THE SERIES:** The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. [Fractals: A Very Short Introduction](#) K. J. Falconer 2013-09-26 An essential discussion of the popular science and mathematics behind fractals reveals

how fractal shapes can be found everywhere in nature from clouds to coastlines, explaining how basic concepts in fractal geometry produced a revolution in mathematical understandings of patterns in the 20th century. Original.

**The BRICS: A Very Short Introduction** Andrew F. Cooper 2016-04-28 In the wake of the post-Cold War era, the aftermath of 9/11, the 2008 global financial crisis, and the emergence of the G20 at the leaders level, few commentators expected a reshaping of the global system towards multipolarity, and away from the United States. And yet, the BRICS - encompassing Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - has emerged as a challenge to the international status quo. But what is its capacity as a transformative force? And can it provide a significant counter-narrative to the Western dominated global order? In this Very Short Introduction Andrew Cooper explores the

emergence of the BRICS as a concept. Drawing on historical precedent, Cooper provides a contemporary analysis of the BRICS' practice and influence as a forum and a lobby group in advancing a distinctive but amorphous agenda amongst global politics. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

### **Physical Chemistry: A Very Short Introduction**

Peter Atkins 2014-04-24 With the development of a variety of exciting new areas of research involving computational chemistry, nano- and smart materials, and applications of the recently discovered graphene, there can be no doubt that physical

chemistry is a vitally important field. It is also perceived as the most daunting branch of chemistry, being necessarily grounded in physics and mathematics and drawing as it does on quantum mechanics, thermodynamics, and statistical thermodynamics. With his typical clarity and hardly a formula in sight, Peter Atkins' Very Short Introduction explores the contributions physical chemistry has made to all branches of chemistry. Providing an insight into its central concepts Atkins reveals the cultural contributions physical chemistry has made to our understanding of the natural world. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make

interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

### **Nuclear Power: A Very Short Introduction**

Maxwell Irvine 2011-05-26 With the World desperate to find energy sources that do not emit carbon gasses, nuclear power is back on the agenda and in the news, following the increasing cost of fossil fuels and concerns about the security of their future supply. However, the term 'nuclear power' causes anxiety in many people and there is confusion concerning the nature and extent of the associated risks. Here, Maxwell Irvine presents a concise introduction to the development of nuclear physics leading up to the emergence of the nuclear power industry. He discusses the nature of nuclear energy and deals with various aspects of public concern, considering the risks of nuclear safety, the cost of its development, and waste disposal. Dispelling some of the widespread confusion about nuclear energy, Irvine considers the relevance of

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nuclear power, the potential of nuclear fusion, and encourages informed debate about its potential.

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**Astrophysics: A Very Short Introduction** James Binney 2016-03-24 Astrophysics is the physics of the stars, and more widely the physics of the Universe. It enables us to understand the structure and evolution of planetary systems, stars, galaxies, interstellar gas, and the cosmos as a whole. In this Very Short Introduction, the leading astrophysicist James Binney shows how the field of astrophysics has expanded rapidly in the past century, with vast

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quantities of data gathered by telescopes exploiting all parts of the electromagnetic spectrum, combined with the rapid advance of computing power, which has allowed increasingly effective mathematical modelling. He illustrates how the application of fundamental principles of physics - the consideration of energy and mass, and momentum - and the two pillars of relativity and quantum mechanics, has provided insights into phenomena ranging from rapidly spinning millisecond pulsars to the collision of giant spiral galaxies. This is a clear, rigorous introduction to astrophysics for those keen to cut their teeth on a conceptual treatment involving some mathematics. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts,

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analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable

### Philosophy of Law: A Very Short Introduction

Raymond Wacks 2014-02-27 The concept of law lies at the heart of our social and political life. Legal philosophy, or jurisprudence, explores the notion of law and its role in society, illuminating its meaning and its relation to the universal questions of justice, rights, and morality. In this Very Short Introduction Raymond Wacks analyses the nature and purpose of the legal system, and the practice by courts, lawyers, and judges. Wacks reveals the intriguing and challenging nature of legal philosophy with clarity and enthusiasm, providing an enlightening guide to the central questions of legal theory. In this revised edition Wacks makes a number of updates including new material on legal realism, changes to the approach to the analysis of

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law and legal theory, and updates to historical and anthropological jurisprudence. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

[A History of Thermodynamics](#) Ingo Müller  
2007-07-16 This book offers an easy to read, all-embracing history of thermodynamics. It describes the long development of thermodynamics, from the misunderstood and misinterpreted to the conceptually simple and extremely useful theory that we know today. Coverage identifies not only the famous physicists who developed the field, but also engineers and scientists from other disciplines

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who helped in the development and spread of thermodynamics as well.

*Microeconomics: A Very Short Introduction*

Avinash Dixit 2014-04-24 Microeconomics - individuals' choices of where to live and work, how much to save, what to buy, and firms' decisions about location, hiring, firing, and investment - involves issues that concern us on a daily basis. But when people think about economics, they tend to place importance on the bigger picture - macroeconomics - including issues such as unemployment, inflation, and the competitiveness of nations. In this Very Short Introduction, Avinash Dixit argues that the microeconomy has a large impact on the economic world, arguably as much as the issues of macroeconomics. Dixit steers a clear path through the huge number of issues related to microeconomics, explaining what happens when things go well, as well as showing how they fail,

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why that happens, and what can be done about it. Using real-life examples from around the world, using the minimum of mathematics and including simple graphs, he provides insights into economics from psychology and sociology to explain economic behaviour and rational choice. An ideal introduction for anyone interested in business and economics.

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**British Politics: A Very Short Introduction** Anthony Wright 2013-05-30 An interpretative essay on the British political system looks at the key characteristics and ideas of the British tradition,

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explores what makes British politics distinctive, and considers how the system continues to evolve.

**Globalization: A Very Short Introduction** Manfred Steger 2013-04-04 Explores globalization from economic, political, cultural, ideological, and environmental perspectives, discussing the major causes and consequences of globalization and whether it is a good or bad phenomenon.

***Cryptography: A Very Short Introduction*** Fred Piper 2002-05-30 This Very Short Introduction provides a clear and informative introduction to the science of codebreaking, and its explosive impact on modern society. Taking the reader through the actual processes of developing codes and deciphering them, the book explains what algorithms do, how they are used, the risks associated with using them, and why governments should be concerned. Written in a fluid and lively style to appeal to the non-mathematical reader, this

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makes for fascinating reading.

**The History of Chemistry** William H. Brock  
2016-01 From man's first exploration of natural materials and their transformations to today's materials science, chemistry has always been the central discipline that underpins both the physical and biological sciences, as well as technology. In this Very Short Introduction, William H. Brock traces the unique appeal of this fundamental science throughout history. Covering alchemy, early-modern chemistry, pneumatic chemistry and Lavoisier's re-interpretation of chemical change, the rise of organic and physical chemistry, and the transforming power of synthesis, Brock explores the extraordinary and often puzzling transformations of natural and artificial materials, as well as the men and women who experimented, speculated, and explained matter and change. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from

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[Ancient Greece: A Very Short Introduction](#) Paul Cartledge 2011-10-27 Introduces major topics in ancient Greek civilization through the development of eleven characteristic city states, ranging from prehistoric Cnossos through Byzantion, and including the future Marseilles as well as Athens and Sparta.

[Agriculture: A Very Short Introduction](#) Paul Brassley 2016-04-28 Agriculture, one of the oldest human occupations, is practised all over the world, using techniques ranging from the profoundly traditional to the most scientifically advanced.

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Without it we would starve. Yet how many of us understand what is happening in the fields that we see as we drive through the countryside? How often do we think about the origins of the food in our trolley? In this Very Short Introduction Paul Brassley and Richard Soffe explain what farmers do and why they do it. Beginning with the most basic resource, the soil, they show why it is important, and how farmers can increase its productivity, before turning to the plants and animals that grow on it, and tracing the connections between their biology and the various ways in which farmers work with them. The authors conclude by looking at some of the controversial issues facing contemporary agriculture: its sustainability; its impact on wildlife and landscape; issues of animal welfare; and the affect of climate change and the development of genetically modified organisms on farmers. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short

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[Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction](#) William K. Kay 2011-01-27 An introduction to Pentecostalism that traces the religious movement's history throughout the twentieth century, discussing its origins, spread across the world, theological aspects, sociological influences, and other related topics.

[Causation: A Very Short Introduction](#) Stephen Mumford 2013-11-28 Causation is the most fundamental connection in the universe. Without it, there would be no science or technology. There would be no moral responsibility either, as none of

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our thoughts would be connected with our actions and none of our actions with any consequences. Nor would we have a system of law because blame resides only in someone having caused injury or damage. Any intervention we make in the world around us is premised on there being causal connections that are, to a degree, predictable. It is causation that is at the basis of prediction and also explanation. This Very Short Introduction introduces the key theories of causation and also the surrounding debates and controversies. Do causes produce their effects by guaranteeing them? Do causes have to precede their effects? Can causation be reduced to the forces of physics? And are we right to think of causation as one single thing at all?

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*Classical Literature: A Very Short Introduction*

William Allan 2014-03-27 From popular histories through to reworkings of classical subject matter by contemporary poets, dramatists, and novelists, the classical world and the masterpieces of its literature continue to fascinate readers and audiences in a huge variety of media. In this Very Short Introduction, William Allan explores what the 'classics' are and why they continue to shape our Western concepts of literature. Presenting a range of material from both Greek and Latin literature, he illustrates the variety and sophistication of these works, and considers examples from all the major genres. Ideal for the general reader interested in works of classic literature, as well as students at A-

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Level and University, this is a lively and lucid guide to the major authors and literary forms of the ancient period. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. *The Computer: A Very Short Introduction* Darrel Ince 2011-11-24 Discusses the basic components of computers; how increasingly miniature parts have led to products, applications, and networks that solve problems; the issues that increased connectivity has produced; and some of the emerging technologies in the field.

*Agnosticism: A Very Short Introduction* Robin Le Poidevin 2010-10-28 What is agnosticism? Is it just

the 'don't know' position on God, or is there more to it than this? Is it a belief, or merely the absence of belief? Who were the first to call themselves 'agnostics'? These are just some of the questions that Robin Le Poidevin considers in this Very Short Introduction. He sets the philosophical case for agnosticism and explores it as a historical and cultural phenomenon. What emerges is a much more sophisticated, and much more interesting, attitude than a simple failure to either commit to, or reject, religious belief. Le Poidevin challenges some preconceptions and assumptions among both believers and non-atheists, and invites the reader to rethink their own position on the issues. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine

facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

*Theology: A Very Short Introduction* David Ford  
2013-10-24 This is an introduction to the subject of academic theology. Its basic approach is interrogative, raising key questions so as to lead into a range of selected topics such as knowledge community, salvation, God, prayer and evil.

*Fungi: A Very Short Introduction* Nicholas P. Money  
2016-01-28 The variety of the mycological world is far greater than most people imagine. Tens of thousands of fungal species have been described and many more are known only from the abundance of their genes in soil and water. Fungi are hugely important as agents of wood decay in forests, and, as parasites, they have caused the deaths of millions of people by ravaging crops and reshaping natural ecosystems. Fungi perform a

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variety of essential functions in ecosystems, and are important to both agriculture and biotechnology. Their importance is now becoming better appreciated among scientists, though there is much still to be understood concerning their taxonomy and evolution. This Very Short Introduction highlights the variety and extraordinary natures of fungi, revealing the remarkable facts of fungal biology and the global significance of these enchanting organisms. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

**Advertising: A Very Short Introduction** Winston Fletcher  
2010-06-24 How advertising works is not a

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question that has a simple answer. Advertising is a diverse entity and different campaigns work (or fail to work) in a plethora of different ways. Most advertising persuades people to buy things, but how? And who does it aim to persuade? And how are these decisions made? In this Very Short Introduction Winston Fletcher, an expert with extensive knowledge of advertising from the inside, aims to answer these questions, and in doing so, dispels some of the myths and misunderstandings surrounding the industry. The book contains a short history of advertising and an explanation of how the industry works, and how each of the parties (the advertisers, the media and the agencies) are involved. It considers the extensive spectrum of advertisers and their individual needs. It also looks at the financial side of advertising and asks how advertisers know if they have been successful, or whether the money they

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have spent has in fact been wasted. Fletcher concludes with a discussion about the controversial and unacceptable areas of advertising such as advertising products to children and advertising products such as cigarettes and alcohol. He also discusses the benefits of advertising and what the future may hold for the industry. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Public Administration: A Very Short Introduction

Stella Z. Theodoulou 2016-08-18 Public

administration ensures the development and

delivery of the essential public services required for

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sustaining modern civilization. Covering areas from public safety and social welfare to transportation and education, the services provided through the public sector are inextricably part of our daily lives.

However, mandatory budgetary cuts in recent years have caused public administrators to radically re-think how they govern in the modern age. In this Very Short Introduction Stella Theodoulou and Ravi Roy offer practical insight into the major challenges confronting the public sector in the globalized era. Tackling some of the most hotly debated issues of our time, including the privatization of public services and government surveillance, they take the reader on a global journey through history to examine the origins, development, and continued evolution of public administration. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every

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subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

*Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction* Alan Taylor 2012-11-08 In the traditional narrative of American colonial history, early European settlements, as well as native peoples and African slaves, were treated in passing as unfortunate aberrations in a fundamentally upbeat story of Englishmen becoming freer and more prosperous by colonizing an abundant continent of "free land." Over the last generation, historians have broadened our understanding of colonial America by adopting both a trans-Atlantic and a trans-continental perspective, examining the interplay of Europe, Africa, and the Americas through the flow of goods, people, plants, animals, capital, and ideas. In this

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Very Short Introduction, Alan Taylor presents an engaging overview of the best of this new scholarship. He shows that American colonization derived from a global expansion of European exploration and commerce that began in the fifteenth century. The English had to share the stage with the French, Spanish, Dutch, and Russians, each of whom created alternative Americas. By comparing the diverse colonies of rival empires, Taylor recovers what was truly distinctive about the English enterprise in North America. He focuses especially on slavery as central to the economy, culture, and political thought of the colonists and restores the importance of native peoples to the colonial story. To adapt to the new land, the colonists needed the expertise, guidance, alliance, and trade of the Indians who dominated the interior. This historical approach emphasizes the ability of the diverse natives to adapt to the

newcomers and to compel concessions from them. This Very Short Introduction describes an intermingling of cultures and of microbes, plants, and animals--from different continents that was unparalleled in global history. Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library.

Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

**Astrobiology: A Very Short Introduction** David C. Catling 2013-10-24 Examines the origins of life on Earth and the search for extraterrestrial life, through an understanding of the factors that have allowed life to exist on this planet and the commonalities on others that may enable life elsewhere.

**Heat and Thermodynamics** Christopher John Tudor Lewis 2007 Provides a short history of the ideas behind some of the most powerful ideas in physics: heat and energy

**Symmetry: A Very Short Introduction** Ian Stewart 2013-05-30 In the 1800s mathematicians introduced a formal theory of symmetry: group theory. Now a

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branch of abstract algebra, this subject first arose in the theory of equations. Symmetry is an immensely important concept in mathematics and throughout the sciences, and its applications range across the entire subject. Symmetry governs the structure of crystals, innumerable types of pattern formation, how systems change their state as parameters vary; and fundamental physics is governed by symmetries in the laws of nature. It is highly visual, with applications that include animal markings, locomotion, evolutionary biology, elastic buckling, waves, the shape of the Earth, and the form of galaxies. In this Very Short Introduction, Ian Stewart demonstrates its deep implications, and shows how it plays a major role in the current search to unify relativity and quantum theory.

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entrepreneurs can be found, and look at the diversity in their backgrounds, experience, and how they think and learn. Lastly, they consider the impact that entrepreneurs have on modern market economies and look at the future of entrepreneurship in our increasingly globalized world. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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Kimberley Reynolds 2011-10-06 Children's literature takes many forms - works adapted for children in antiquity, picture books and pop-ups - and now includes the latest online games and

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eBooks. This vast and amorphous subject is both intimately related to other areas of literary and cultural investigation but also has its own set of concerns, issues and challenges. From familiar authors including Beatrix Potter and Roald Dahl, classic books such as Pooh, Alice in Wonderland, and The Secret Garden, to modern works including Harry Potter and the Twilight series, this Very Short Introduction provides an overview of the history of children's literature as it has developed in English, whilst at the same time introducing key debates, developments, and figures in the field. Raising questions about what shape the future of literature for children should take, and exploring the crossover with adult fiction, Reynolds shows that writing for children - whether on page or screen - has participated in shaping and directing ideas about culture, society and childhood. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series

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environment, and is not contained in a single authoritative text. In this Very Short Introduction,

Martin Loughlin examines the nature and authority of the constitution, and its challenging prospects for the future.