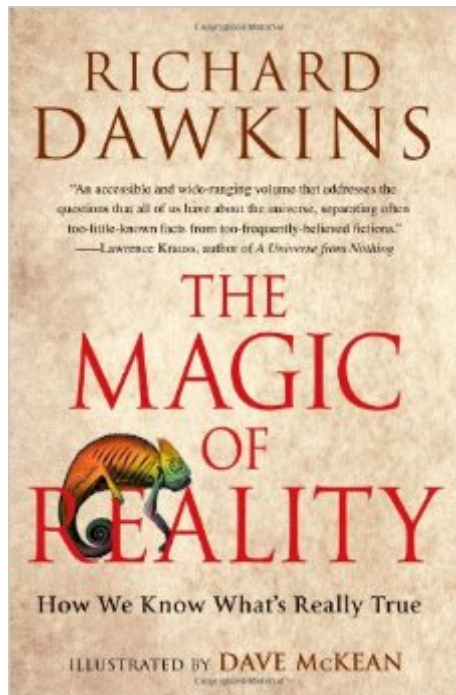


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The Magic Of Reality: How We Know What's Really True



Synopsis

An elegant, text-only paperback edition of the New York Times bestseller that's been hailed as the definitive authority on everything. Richard Dawkins, bestselling author and the world's most celebrated evolutionary biologist, has spent his career elucidating the many wonders of science. Here, he takes a broader approach and uses his unrivaled explanatory powers to illuminate the ways in which the world really works. Filled with clever thought experiments and jaw-dropping facts, *The Magic of Reality* explains a stunningly wide range of natural phenomena: How old is the universe? Why do the continents look like disconnected pieces of a jigsaw puzzle? What causes tsunamis? Why are there so many kinds of plants and animals? Who was the first man, or woman? Starting with the magical, mythical explanations for the wonders of nature, Dawkins reveals the exhilarating scientific truths behind these occurrences. This is a page-turning detective story that not only mines all the sciences for its clues but primes the reader to think like a scientist as well.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Exhilarating. The clearest and most beautifully written introduction to science I've ever read. Again and again I found myself saying "Oh! So that's how genes work!" (or stars, or tectonic plates, or all the other things he explains). Explanations I thought I knew were clarified; things I never understood were made clear for the first time. My favourite adjective of praise has always been "clear," and this book has clarity all the way through." --Philip Pullman, author of "The Good Man Jesus and the

Scoundrel Christ" and the "His Dark Materials" trilogy "I wanted to write this book but I wasn't clever enough. Now I've read it, I am" --Ricky Gervais "I am often asked to recommend good books on science for young people. From now on, I will not have to hesitate. "The Magic of Reality" provides a beautiful, accessible and wide ranging volume that addresses the questions that all of us have about the universe, separating often too-little known facts from too-frequently believed fictions. For this reason it should be a powerful resource for people of all ages, written with the masterful and eloquently literate style of perhaps the best popular expositor of science, Richard Dawkins, and delightfully illustrated by Dave McKean. What more could anyone ask for?" --Lawrence Krauss is Foundation Professor and Director of the Origins Project at Arizona State University and the author most recently of "Quantum Man", and "A Universe from Nothing"

Richard Dawkins is a Fellow of the Royal Society and was the inaugural holder of the Charles Simonyi Chair of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He is the acclaimed author of many books including The Selfish Gene, Climbing Mount Improbable, Unweaving the Rainbow, The Ancestor's Tale, The God Delusion, and The Greatest Show on Earth. Visit him at RichardDawkins.net.

First, if you're just going to write a scathing review (not of the book but of Richard Dawkins) because you blindly follow B.S. artists like William Lane Craig, save it for you tube. Second, to those complaining about (or defending the virtue of) the book's apparent simplicity, stop pretending you aren't a layman. Isn't everyone else as sick as me of the endless complaints of books which they claim "dumb down" scientific subjects, as if the average reader in the market for scientific broadening is a trolling world-class scientist? We all know REAL scientists don't have time to review books on ! Quit trying in vain to show off here. Just review the effing book...and keep it real! Here's mine: This is one of my favorite Richard Dawkins books. He may be aiming for children in the way the information is presented. But, I think most people (the average adult-like me) is not scientifically brilliant. We can quote basic facts about science, which we are most likely regurgitating anyway-not truly understanding. Dawkins gives simple, yet clear explanations for many scientific truths that escape me. He brings me closer to a clearer understanding of the world around me. Aiming for children or not, this book will educate anyone who's highest level of science education was in an American high school 20 years ago, despite their viewing of countless Attenborough narrated documentaries. Many of us think we understand evolution. Nonsense. Most people who say they understand it, have nothing more than a confused idea of it. For those people (of which I am one)

you will find the section entitled, "Who was the first person?" a really great place to start. Having a firm grasp of the basic idea of evolution is the first step. Get that before you move on to weightier concepts. Most people have HEARD of evolution, fewer people actually study it. This book will inspire children to ask deeper and more profound questions about the things they don't yet understand. Parents will fill in some of the many gaps in their own scientific shortcomings...so hopefully they will be able to have discussions with their children about science. It's either that, or look ignorant in front of your children as their knowledge surpasses yours by age fifteen. In fact, this should be a great book to read WITH your child. I am really looking forward to sharing it with my four-year-old in a few years. Or, you could skip this one and pick up another volume of "biblical stories for children" such as Noah's Ark, or The Garden of Eden. What kind of parent will you be?

This is one of the most fantastic books you could ever purchase. It may be a quick and easy read but the information it provides is more precious than any mineral. I would say that it's like a handbook for beginner science and I can only wish that I had this when I was in school many years ago. The way Richard Dawkins presents the information is, somehow, very easy to absorb. And that statement is coming from someone who didn't absorb information to well in a classroom setting. As a matter of fact, the information is presented in such an amazingly simplistic way that even kids could get a lot out of it. I bought the audio book as well and in the beginning of the book there is talk about how to tell if radio waves are real even though we can't detect it with our senses. My 7 yr old was so fascinated that I had to pause the book because my child and I immediately got in to a detailed discussion about this. That's a priceless moment that I could not have done without this tool to present the information in this manner. There is a lot of misinformation out there and teaching children at a young age about how to tell if something is real or not is unimaginably valuable. Do you think you already know enough and this would be too small of a thing to take up your valuable time? Look at what some of the most intelligent people in the world have said about this book. It was worth their time ;) just saying. But all jokes aside, I'd guess that this would be a welcomed refresher even for an advanced scientist. Great gift for anyone, especially for someone who may be confused about how to tell if something is real or not. This book will help tackle big issues in a delicate manner. Thank you Richard Dawkins.

THE MAGIC OF REALITY is a wonderful book, suitable for readers of all ages, explaining what

science has learned about the world in the last 400 years. This has been a pretty late development as modern humans have been on earth for about 100,000 years. Science has enabled humans in this recent period to vastly improve the quality of life over what humans enjoyed/endured for the previous 99,600 years. During that long older period, humans invented stories to explain the world, and Dawkins reports many of these stories, myths, before he explains the scientific story.

Astronomers, for example, with instruments to extend the power of our senses, have discovered many suns at various stages of their life cycle, so that they can form a story about the birth and death of stars. Our sun, a star, is about 4.5 billion years old, will be too hot in about 2 billion years for life to exist on earth, and "humans will almost certainly be extinct long before then" -- could this knowledge cause us to value life more and stop killing each other? The ancient stories had a long time to become embedded in our culture and language. The scientific stories are harder to understand sometimes, though Dawkins does a good job giving clearly understandable summaries of some science, but he says he does not fully understand some scientific stories outside his specialty, biology. He teaches us a scientific way of seeing and understanding the world. For example, he discusses "why do bad things happen" and "luck, chance and cause" (p.223). When we say "it happened for a reason" do we mean "a past cause" or "purpose"? Bad things have causes, not necessarily purposes. A great scientist and a great writer, Dawkins earns our gratitude for the dozen books he has written for us non-scientists. This one ought to be given to every young student who has been introduced to some science in school.

This is pretty simple basic science. If you have any depth of knowledge when it comes to any of the areas of science then this book will probably disappoint you. But if you are a science novice then you will probably find this book is a good place to start. It would also appeal to middle school children that have an interest in science.

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