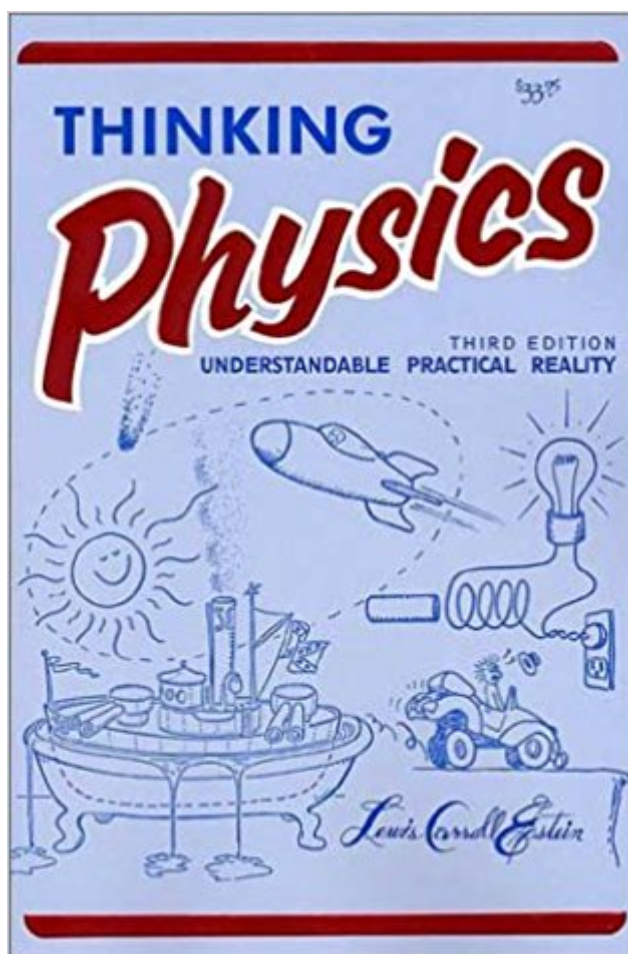


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Thinking Physics: Understandable Practical Reality



Synopsis

Lewis Carroll Epstein explains deep ideas in physics in an easy-to-understand way. Thinking Physics is a perfect beginner's guide to an amazingly wide range of physics-related questions. The book targets topics that science teachers and students spend time wondering about, like wing lift. Epstein elucidates the familiar but misunderstood – such as how tides work – along with more obscure but fascinating phenomena like the Bernoulli effect and the artificial aurora created by hydrogen bombs. Broken into many short sections and peppered with Epstein's own playful hand-drawn illustrations, the book does not simply give the right answer: It also goes into the answers that seem right but are wrong and shows why they are wrong – a rarity in science books. Thinking Physics is a rigorously correct, lighthearted, and cleverly designed Q and A book for physicists of all ages.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The physics Q&A format is marvelous. I look forward to sitting down with my kids when they're old enough to understand the easy stuff, and later on when they can tackle the harder ones. I truly loved working my way through this book. However, if you purchase this book, do yourself a massive favor and immediately cut out and throw away the 20 or so sheets following the index. Do not look at, do not read these when you do so. A brilliant book is enormously tarnished by the author's non-physics, off-topic crazy-person rant at the end. Trust me, you don't want to read it, as it will affect how you perceive the actual physics content of the book. I wish I had never seen it - it knocked a six star book down to three and made it much harder to recommend to others.

I intend to use this in my classes for the upcoming year both with my 8th graders as well as senior students many of the questions not only make students think but can also be used to identify misconceptions. The font is nice and big and the drawings are a plus I try to get my students to sketch their questions before they attempt them so this is lovely. I will just say it would have nice if all the scenarios were in S.I units but as I recognise this is written for an american audience it's not a big deal it will just give my students a chance to practice unit conversions!

I've enjoyed reading the lessons, and I appreciate that the author's approach is not the same as a standard textbook. I'm posting this rating as a warning about the unhinged and incoherent political rant published after the index. It has absolutely nothing to do with physics, and I found most of it to be offensive, incomprehensible, or both. Regardless of whether or not you might agree with the author's poorly thought-out political ramblings, it certainly doesn't belong in this book. It's a shame, because the fact that it's in there would prevent me from buying or recommending this book to students who might otherwise enjoy it. My advice is to skip this one. Or, if you do get it, follow the suggestion I saw on another reviewer's posting and rip out the garbage at the end.

Every so often I pick up a book that I wish I read 10 years ago. Feynman's Lectures on Physics and Van Hess's Thermodynamics are among these, as well as Polya's How To Solve It for those more mathematically inclined. These would have certainly saved me from much confusion during my college engineering curriculum, for they focus on teaching the material to the reader, as opposed to masking it in the equations of a textbook. Some lucky folks have the ability to glance at equations and immediately grasp their meaning; for the other 99.99% of us, an intuitive explanation replete with real-world analogies helps to bring the meaning to life. With a presentation both unique and entertaining, Lewis Carroll Epstein's Thinking Physics has certainly claimed a rightful seat at the roundtable of wonderful didactic books. Every page poses a question that challenges the reader on his view of the physical world, and nearly every answer tears down the fallacies of his intuition. Socrates would have been proud of the format, with each new question expanding on concepts developed in earlier answers. One of the 1-star reviews mentioned a lack of organization. This criticism completely misses the point. It is NOT a textbook, so "obviously" it will lack some of the rigorous development of concepts and precise organization that you would expect in a physics text. It IS a popular physics book with lots of cartoony pictures that a kid in elementary school could both enjoy and understand. At the same time, the insights will help build anyone's physics intuition,

regardless of age. I read this book when I was 30. I have since started going through problems in Kleppner and Kolenkow and some other more advanced texts, and I really think this book helped.

I am a physics teacher and this book is amazing. It has so many great examples and conceptual questions in it that I practically use it everyday. The explanations are for the most part easy to understand and well reasoned. The author is....a bit of a sexist so some of the questions are to be avoided lol

Excellent intro up to advanced info. Lucid and useful.

This is a great book that will test/help your understanding of some little details of physics. The problems are tricky in that there are some subtle physics understandings involved in finding the correct solution. Added attraction is the author gives you multiple choices - many of which "seem" like they could be the right answer.

I already had an old copy, but it deteriorated by time, so I decided to buy another one and treasure it in my library. If I were asked to choose a science book to take with to the end of the galaxy, I will choose this extra fantastic book.

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