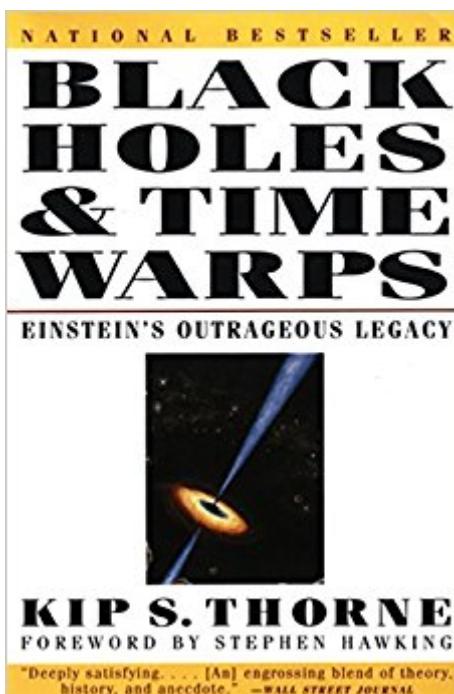


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# Black Holes & Time Warps: Einstein's Outrageous Legacy (Commonwealth Fund Book Program)



## Synopsis

Ever since Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity burst upon the world in 1915 some of the most brilliant minds of our century have sought to decipher the mysteries bequeathed by that theory, a legacy so unthinkable in some respects that even Einstein himself rejected them. Which of these bizarre phenomena, if any, can really exist in our universe? Black holes, down which anything can fall but from which nothing can return; wormholes, short spacewarps connecting regions of the cosmos; singularities, where space and time are so violently warped that time ceases to exist and space becomes a kind of foam; gravitational waves, which carry symphonic accounts of collisions of black holes billions of years ago; and time machines, for traveling backward and forward in time. Kip Thorne, along with fellow theorists Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, a cadre of Russians, and earlier scientists such as Oppenheimer, Wheeler and Chandrasekhar, has been in the thick of the quest to secure answers. In this masterfully written and brilliantly informed work of scientific history and explanation, Dr. Thorne, the Feynman Professor of Theoretical Physics Emeritus at Caltech, leads his readers through an elegant, always human, tapestry of interlocking themes, coming finally to a uniquely informed answer to the great question: what principles control our universe and why do physicists think they know the things they think they know? Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* has been one of the greatest best-sellers in publishing history. Anyone who struggled with that book will find here a more slowly paced but equally mind-stretching experience, with the added fascination of a rich historical and human component. Winner of the Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

Dr. Thorne is intelligible, conversational and enlightening. He discusses an area that is of interest and many topics that touch on it. He engages in some Science Fiction fancy, but only by way of a form of preface to his serious talk. While this section is not a strength of the work, it gets its points across for the uninitiated in a reasonable manner avoiding the more flighty manner taken up by Michio Kaku in a recent reading of his Hyperspace. There is interesting history in a memoir fashion in a good deal of the recent events and in a more distant narrative from earlier periods. All is engrossing and paced as lively as I could imagine the material can be so presented. I can imagine that some may have difficulty understanding a few of the concepts, but they have been presented about as simply as I believe it to be feasible.

I really enjoyed this book. Truly amazing!! I consider it one of the best I have ever read. Too bad there is not a more recent version that includes the latest discoveries around black holes. Perhaps Mr. Thorne will venture to write a couple of update chapters?

Although I have not read the book completely I have thoroughly enjoyed it so far. Kip Thorne has an engaging style of presenting both scientific research and personal anecdotes. I wish he had written more such books. The recent announcement of success of the LIGO project validates his life's work as a scientist and is sure to open up new possibilities in using gravitation to study physics using astronomical phenomena. I hope Black Holes and Time Warps is part of the library collection in many high schools as it will greatly promote interest in physics and scientific curiosity among students.

An excellent introduction to the science and sociology of black holes and a very good read. Thorne is one of the world's foremost astrophysicists. He has written and engaging and informative history of how we came to understand that black holes exist (and are even compulsory!) despite the early skepticism of the scientific community. I hope he updates his history with another book describing

the exciting developments in this field in the 20 years since the book first appeared.

I am currently 3/4 of the way through this book. I have enjoyed the read and the history of the recognition and discovery of the black holes. There is just enough technical discussion to explain the science behind the discoveries but not too much that you get lost in the details. Recommended for readers with a general interest in the subject matter.

I guess I will be reading this all year

Exciting to read.

While kind of technical in places, this book gives a great insight into modern physics. I would highly recommend for anyone interested in this field.

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