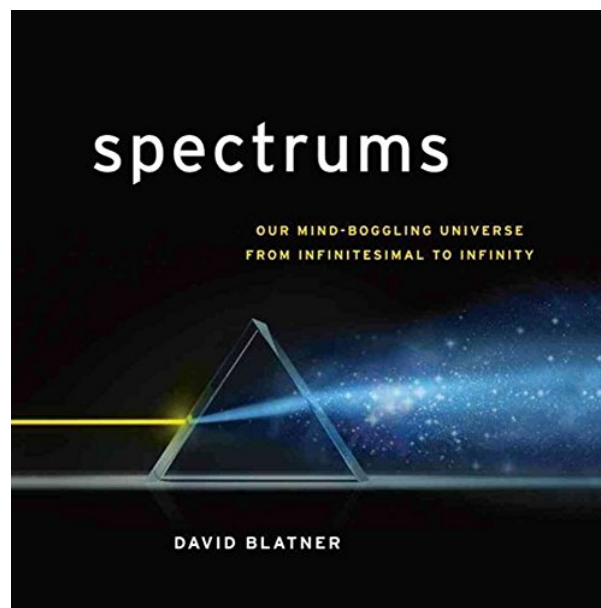
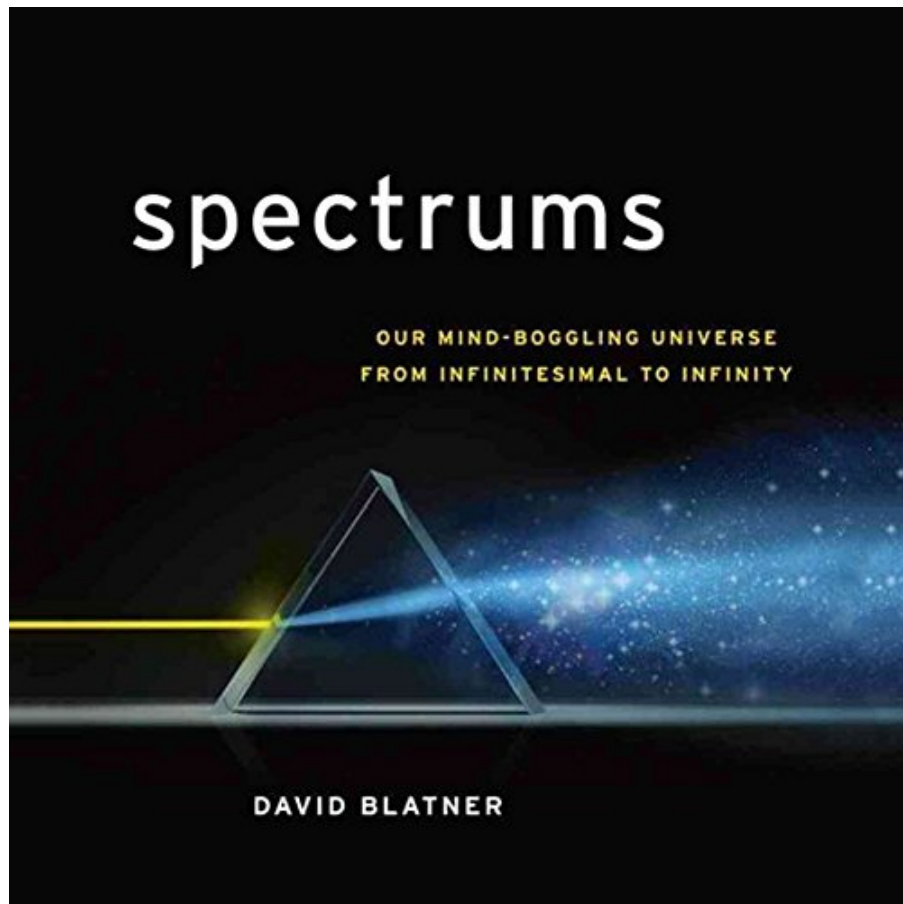


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In *Spectrums*, David Blatner blends narrative and illustration to illuminate the variety of spectrums that affect our lives every day: numbers, size, light, sound, heat, and time.

There is actually surprisingly little in the universe that we can feel, touch, see, hear, or possibly even comprehend. It's not an easy task to stretch the mind to encompass both billions of years and billionths of seconds; the distance to Jupiter and the size of a proton; the tiny waves of visible light and gargantuan but invisible gamma rays; or the freezing point of helium and the heat generated by the blast of an atom bomb. But exploring these far-reaching spectrums gives us invaluable perspective on our small but not insignificant place in the universe.

With easy-to-comprehend, engaging, and insightful observations, and brilliant photographs and diagrams, Blatner helps us "grok" - to understand intuitively - the six primary spectrums, making our daily lives richer and more meaningful through greater appreciation of the bizarre and beautiful world in which we live.

- Sales Rank: #110467 in Audible
- Published on: 2015-01-06
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 331 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Entertaining and Educational

By Book Shark

Spectrums: Our Mind-Boggling Universe from Infinitesimal to Infinity by David Blatner

"*Spectrums: Our Mind-Boggling Universe from Infinitesimal to Infinity*" is a wonderful, educational book that provides a scale across six spectrums representative of our everyday experience: numbers, size, light, sound, heat, and time. Author David Blatner takes the reader on an exploration of the universe, from the smallest to the incomprehensibly large. This 192-page book is composed of the following six chapters: 1. Numbers, 2. Size, 3. Light, 4. Sound, 5. Heat, and 6. Time.

Positives:

1. An engaging, entertaining and an accessible book for the masses.
2. Very engaging prose which is atypical in science writing.
3. Excellent layout.
4. Great use of charts, illustrations and tables to assist the reader.
5. Immersed with thought-provoking quotes and interesting anecdotes.

6. A lot of great tidbits. Spoiler alert..."The only countries that haven't standardized on the metric system are the United States, Myanmar, and Liberia."
7. The author does a wonderful job of not just explaining complex topic to the reader but making it fun to do so.
8. The essence of numbers. Getting a grasp on numbers.
9. Infinity in its proper perspective.
10. Sizing up size, distance...helpful analogies.
11. Perhaps the best chapter in the book, Light. The author does a wonderful job of explaining the basic physics of light. A lot of complex topics made reachable to the general audience.
12. An excellent chapter on sound, the author provides plenty of interesting factoids and many great visual aids such as a table of "Intensity of Selected Sounds" and an excellent comparison pictorial of frequency hearing ranges among popular living creatures including humans.
13. The essence of heat, temperature...the scientists behind the greatest discoveries associated with the aforementioned topics.
14. Phase states of material. A table of phase change of popular elements.
15. Very promising science underway. Controlling fusion? The Large Hadron Collider...
16. An exploration into time. Atomic clocks, time zones, cosmic time...
17. The theory of relativity.
18. The book ends on a little philosophy.

Negatives:

1. A very limited notes and bibliography section.
2. The book covers a narrow "spectrum" of science.
3. Intended for the general audience. If you are looking for depth look elsewhere.

In summary, I really enjoyed this book. The author's engaging prose and ability to convey difficult scientific topics in an accessible way will win over the general audience. One really does get a better grasp of how infinitesimal and how enormous our universe truly is. This is the perfect book for the layperson interested in learning some of the basics of physics without sacrificing too much time. The book covers a narrow "spectrum" of science but what it covers it does so very well. I recommend it!

Further suggestions: "About Time" by Adam Frank, "The Laws of Thermodynamics: A Very Short Introduction" by Peter Atkins, "For the Love of Physics" by Walter Lewin, "Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100" by Michio Kaku, "A Universe from Nothing" by Lawrence Krauss, "Knocking on Heaven's Door: How Physics and Scientific Thinking Illuminate the Universe and the Modern World" by Lisa Randall, "Wonders of the Universe" and "Why Does $E=mc^2$? (And Why Should We Care?) Big Bang: The Origin of the Universe" by Brian Cox, "The Big Bang: The Origin of the Universe" by Simon Singh, and "The Grand Design" by Stephen Hawking.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

An eye-opening read

By S. Citron

Who knew? David Blatner's SPECTRUMS will blow your mind with smart and smartly written facts about things as basic as sound and light. Like taking a class from a great teacher, Blatner knows how to make sense of heady concepts. The illustrations and photos also help to make their point, as do the pithy quotes from people as diverse as Einstein and Steven Wright. A fun and fascinating read for the intellectually curious, that's never pedantic or boring.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Mind boggling!

By ServantofGod

On page9, the author quoted from Pascal, "Man is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he emerges and the infinity in which he is engulfed." Thanks to his excellent presentation in wise words, shrewd figures, smart charts and interesting pictures, my fair share of the aforesaid incapacibilities as a human had been lessened, at least a little bit. In short, highly recommended! A great gift from parents to children indeed!

p.s. Below please find some of my favorite passages for your reference.

Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac? - George Carlin pg5

Information is a difference that makes a difference. - Gregory Bateson pg7

Distance lends enchantment to the view. - Mark Twain pg29

You can visualize a package of light leaving the surface of the sun at the stroke of 12:00a.m.. At just after 12:08, it would reach Earth (1AU away). By 1:00p.m. the light would have traveled past Jupiter....It wouldn't reach the outer edge of our solar system until 20 months after it left the sun. pg39

As far as astronomers can tell, our universe likely has a radius of about 46 billion light years. This is far, far larger than it should be if the universe is - as astrophysicists also believe - only 13.7 billion years old. Pg45

The only animal that can see both infrared and ultraviolet light is the goldfish. Pg75

Speed of sound in different material (m/sec): CO2 259; Air 20°C 343, Distilled water 1497, Gold 3240, Pyrex Glass 5640, Steel 5790 pg87

Arthropods such as spiders and cockroaches have special hairs on their legs that can sense sound. The antennae of mosquitoes and many other insects can sense minute variations in air pressure. Pg102

Absolute hot (Planck Temperature) $1.42 \times 10^{32}K$, Sun's core 15 million°C, Center of Earth 6650°C, Filament inside light bulb 2500°C, Alcohol freezes -114°C, Gasoline freezes -150°C pg121

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