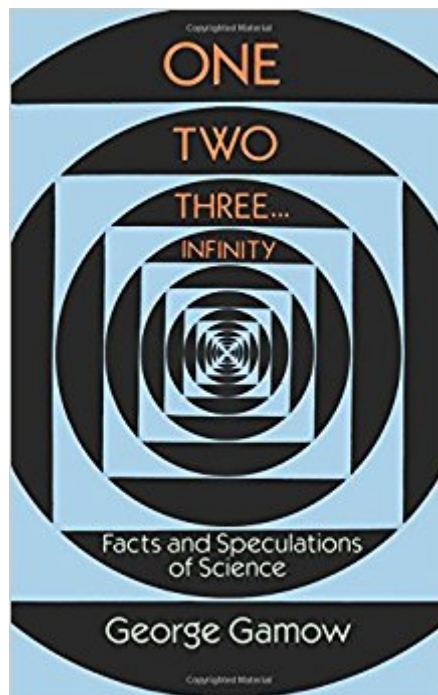




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One Two Three . . . Infinity: Facts And Speculations Of Science (Dover Books On Mathematics)



Synopsis

"... full of intellectual treats and tricks, of whimsy and deep scientific philosophy. It is highbrow entertainment at its best, a teasing challenge to all who aspire to think about the universe." — New York Herald Tribune

One of the world's foremost nuclear physicists (celebrated for his theory of radioactive decay, among other accomplishments), George Gamow possessed the unique ability of making the world of science accessible to the general reader. He brings that ability to bear in this delightful expedition through the problems, pleasures, and puzzles of modern science. Among the topics scrutinized with the author's celebrated good humor and pedagogical prowess are the macrocosm and the microcosm, theory of numbers, relativity of space and time, entropy, genes, atomic structure, nuclear fission, and the origin of the solar system. In the pages of this book readers grapple with such crucial matters as whether it is possible to bend space, why a rocket shrinks, the "end of the world problem," excursions into the fourth dimension, and a host of other tantalizing topics for the scientifically curious. Brimming with amusing anecdotes and provocative problems, *One Two Three . . . Infinity* also includes over 120 delightful pen-and-ink illustrations by the author, adding another dimension of good-natured charm to these wide-ranging explorations. Whatever your level of scientific expertise, chances are you'll derive a great deal of pleasure, stimulation, and information from this unusual and imaginative book. It belongs in the library of anyone curious about the wonders of the scientific universe. "In *One Two Three . . . Infinity*, as in his other books, George Gamow succeeds where others fail because of his remarkable ability to combine technical accuracy, choice of material, dignity of expression, and readability." — Saturday Review of Literature

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Customer Reviews

Modern Science Made Easy By one of the leading physicists of the twentieth century, George Gamow's *One, Two, Three— ∞* is one of the most memorable popular books on physics, mathematics, and science generally ever written, famous for having, directly or indirectly, launched the academic and/or scientific careers of many young people whose first real encounter with the wonders and mysteries of mathematics and science was through reading this book as a teenager. Untypically for popular science books, this one is enhanced by the author's own delightful sketches. Reviewers were enthusiastic when *One, Two, Three— ∞* was published in 1947. In the **Author's Own Words**: "If and when all the laws governing physical phenomena are finally discovered, and all the empirical constants occurring in these laws are finally expressed through the four independent basic constants, we will be able to say that physical science has reached its end, that no excitement is left in further explorations, and that all that remains to a physicist is either tedious work on minor details or the self-educational study and adoration of the magnificence of the completed system. At that stage physical science will enter from the epoch of Columbus and Magellan into the epoch of the National Geographic Magazine!" • George Gamow **Critical Acclaim for *One, Two, Three— ∞*** : "This skillful presentation is for the non-professional and professional scientist. It will broaden the knowledge of each and give the imagination wide play." • Chemistry and Engineering News "A stimulating and provocative book for the science-minded layman." • Kirkus Reviews "This is a layman's book as readable as a historical novel, but every chapter bears the solid imprint of authoritative research." • San Francisco Chronicle "George Gamow succeeds where others fail because of his remarkable ability to combine technical accuracy, choice of material, dignity of expression, and readability." • Saturday Review of Literature

This is a great book. Some parts were over my head, and other parts I had a sneaky suspicion that the information presented was a bit dated. But overall I enjoyed it quite a bit. If you're worried that you won't be able to understand the book, I'd recommend you go ahead and buy it. Even the parts that are a bit complicated become a lot more clear when you stop and think for a moment.

George Gamow's book "One Two Three...Infinity" is a good survey of the sciences. I bought this book after hearing Noam Chomsky speak highly of it while being interviewed. His chapters on space, the fourth dimension, and relativity dig a bit deeper than "Hawking's Brief History of Time." Some knowledge of algebra is helpful with this book as seen in chapter five, "Relativity and Time and Space." His exploration of quantum mechanics through dissection and examination of the atom is a good starting point. Gamow stops short of delving into John Wheeler's 1955 quantum foam concept and moves on to the properties of light. It's odd that he didn't cover it in this 1961 edition.

An all-time classic. I own several copies of this book, all of which have been borrowed (and never returned). I bought this one as a gift for a friend's schoolgoing child. Good for all ages, the only pre-requisites needed for this book are curiosity and an open mind. Highly recommended for curious children of all ages.

Like so many other reviewers, I have fond memories of this book as a child. It really is a book that piques the interest of anyone with even the faintest appreciation of numbers and science and makes a great gift. Gamow's description of "how to count infinities" created a life-long interest in transfinite numbers. For a one-two "punch" one might consider this book as a starting gift and a few years later follow up with "Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid" by Hofstadter. There are a few issues with some of the information contained in the book (e.g. the age of the universe as ~3 billion years) but these are easily noted and are themselves useful for demonstrating how scientific knowledge is constantly being updated. For some reason I find the hand drawn sketches in the book much more effective than the slickest, computer generated graphic.

This is a very interesting read, but I've been attempting to read this while on my lunch break at work. It is NOT a "pick up a book and read for a second" type of book. This book, while in the preface explaining that it was originally meant for children, has very mind boggling concepts regarding infinity and a mindset has to be adopted to read with ease. Fantastic concepts, not finished with the book at this point as I've struggled to find the time to dig into it.

My father was stunned by the fact that while playing Monopoly I explained (in the wrong words) where and why my mother should place a 7th house. He raced up to the attic and came down and announced, "M***** look at this - this was my college book on probability and statistics. He intuitively understands expected value and the probability of rolling various numbers. " To cut to the chase I

was presented with 1 2 3 infinity a week later. I don't know how much effect that on my career choice, there were other factors, but needless to say, 55 years later I still remember this and am ordering a copy for myself. It may or may not have driven me to as doctorate in mathematics, but it surely must have had some effect. Eight may be a little bit early, but 10-12 certainly isn't it. Definitely give your child(ren) this book before he/she/they take Algebra 1..

This is the book that convinced me as a child that science was the way to learn about the world. It probably has saved me from the parapsychologists and astrologists too...I read the book at age ten, and bought a copy for my ten year old last year. It is a bit out of date, but there are many things that are timeless...Buy this book...it is available cheap, and it is a fun read.

Gamov's books, though dated, remain classics for teaching young people, and neophytes, the joys of Physics and Mathematics. I bought this as a Christmas gift for my 11 year-old grandson. I know he will enjoy, and treasure it.

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