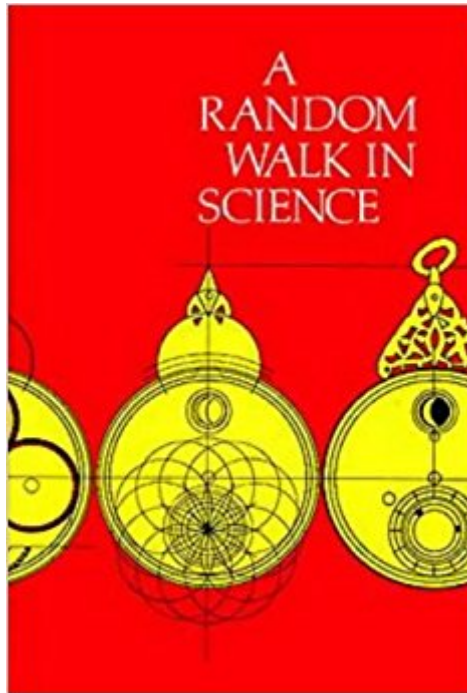




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# A Random Walk In Science,



## Synopsis

This anthology provides an insight into the wit and intellect of the scientific mind through a blend of amusing and serious contributions written by and about scientists. The contributions record changing attitudes within science and mirror the interactions of science with society.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 206 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

"... entertaining, pleasing and stimulating anthology ..." -- Europe and Astronomy

This is a very enjoyable collection of anecdotes from the history of science. Some are humorous like "Heaven is hotter than Hell" (p. 106) and some are more serious like "N rays" (p. 77). I routinely use "Alpher, Bethe and Gamov" (p. 70) as well as "N rays" in classroom discussions of scientific ethics. And there is even a you-tube version of "Turboencabulator" (p. 105) - but the written version is just as enjoyable.

Some dated bits but overall one of the greatest collections I have on my bookshelf

Severely abridged version of original book

This review is based on the German 2nd edition 1980. Overall impression: Once found this at a library sale and bought it out of curiosity, Since then I bought it a couple of times for colleagues to various occasions. It's just a great choice, as it includes a lot of interesting scientific information

without being just a textbook. It's booklet had the inscription "Even science isn't always deadly serious." And that describes the character quite well. What's in it: But it's not just a collection of scientific humor. It gives also insight to history of science and scientists. With some exceptions the articles are short, 0.5 to 2 pages. I like the numerous short quotes, useful here and there. To whom I recommend: The reader should have a strong scientific interest, at best be scientist himself, otherwise a good portion of the humor gets lost. The most is concerned with physics, so the closer the reader is to that, the more fascinating the book will definitely be. For me as marine scientist a couple of articles are just not interesting (thus 4 stars). Not keeping me from liking this book.

\*\*\*\*\*"This isn't right. This isn't even wrong." Wolfgang Pauli, on a paper of a physicist colleague  
There was an electron in gold  
Who said, 'Shall I do as I'm told? Shall I snuggle down tight  
With a brief flash of light  
Or be Auger outside in the cold?' (Arthur Snell, Fluorescent yield)  
A tour of Delightful Science: Such stimulating tour of witty and pleasing stories, memories, biographies, poetry, vocabulary and quotations with funny drawings and caricatures invoking fresh air for a mind eager for a relaxing massage of humor and a reassuring message whispering that clever scientists can be great fun! The wonderful collection seems like a coffee table book of science delights, but for an experienced sampler, "When does jam becomes marmalade," goes beyond such differences of beer and lager to a culture gap which Kipling's statement on East and West could not console. Creative Vocabulary! While philology is not closely related to natural sciences, the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts claims its original aims was to "care for the study of language and literature". A conference glossary informed me on the inner meaning of scientists' papers discussions. 'The physics terms made easy' cheered me up a lot, here are selected few: Conic section: Funny paper, Cosine: The opposite of stop sign, flux: past participle of the verb 'to flex', Harmonic function: Concert, Hypotenuse: Animal like rhinoceros but with no horn on nose, normal solution: the wrong answer, statistical correlation: 36-22-35, and, Watt: will you please repeat that remark. Promoting Academic Research? Being critical of scientific research is understandable, but when it comes from researchers it is normally funny sarcasm, and this book was not short of issues; In defense of pure research, American Institute of Useless Research, What do physicist do?, Pneumatic experiment, How a theoretical physicist works, Researcher prayer, ... In conclusion, a researcher's prayer: May be the best way to persuade readers of science, with PhD and MS incumbents to read this lovely anthology comes from the proceedings of the chemical society records, pray! "Grant, oh God, thy benedictions On my theory's predictions Lest the facts, when verified, Show Thy servant to have lied. May they make me B.Sc., A Ph.D. and then A D.Sc., and

F.R.S., A time Obit. Amen In Summa, a philosopher's note: "Scientists animated by the purpose of proving that they are purposeless are an interesting subject of study." Alfred N. Whitehead, The Function of Reason A quarter of a century after its publication, this collection is still so brisk Like fresh air. As the researcher's and the Fisherman's prayers express it best for me, "God give me strength to catch a fish, So Large that even I, When telling of it afterward, May never need to lie." This book is that magical fish, a precious catch!

I have had this book for years and given away a few copies. I'm back for one more. I first read this book when a young and relatively engaged biology student. It convinced me then, as it still does today, that doing science can lead to the expression of some of the best human characteristics: honor, commitment, courage compassion...(fill in your favorite virtue). The pieces are short and well written. They are all accessible at a least some level to the lay reader, and they range from historical accounts some very odd moments to wry assessments of personalities to some outrageous stories and hilarious spoofs. Even if the details are dated, the stories have a timeless quality because they are really about the human condition. The variety of entries pretty much guarantees that any one with an interest in science will find not one but many items well worth reading

I first read this book while a young and bored physics student. The excellent collection of sometimes irreverent articles soon made me realise that despite the having to wear spectacles and a white coat, being a scientist could still be fun. Read this book before you do any exams, and buy it for reference once you pass them all (also read and buy Further Random Walks in Science)

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