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Professor Povey's Perplexing Problems: Pre-university Physics and Maths Puzzles with Solutions

By Thomas Povey



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In *Professor Povey's Perplexing Problems*, Thomas Povey shares 109 of his favorite problems in physics and maths. A tour de force of imagination and exposition, he guides us through uncompromisingly challenging territory that expands our minds and encourages a playful and exploratory approach to study. "The puzzles," he says, "are like toys. We should pick up the one we most enjoy, and play with it."

Whether you are an aspiring scientist or an old-hand, pitting yourself against these problems will test your ability to think, and inspire you with curiosity and enthusiasm for physics. Presented with charm and wit, the questions span the gap between high-school and university-entrance standard material. Detailed answers are lightened with a fascinating and refreshing blend of scientific history, application and personal anecdote.

On this delightful and idiosyncratic romp through pre-university maths and physics, the author shows us that behind every single one of these questions lies a new way of thinking about subjects we thought we had understood. He argues that engaging with the unfamiliar is key to forming deeper insights and developing intellectual independence. *Professor Povey's Perplexing Problems* is a manifesto that science should be playful, and a celebration of the curious.



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Professor Povey's Perplexing Problems: Pre-university Physics and Maths Puzzles with Solutions By Thomas Povey Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #392538 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2015-09-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.20" w x 5.90" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Highly recommended Povey (engineering, Univ. of Oxford, UK) collects his favorite 'pre-university' problems in math and physics and presents them informally in a welcoming style. Povey writes that the problems are 'devised to encourage curiosity and playfulness.' (Yes, they do.) He asserts that working through the problems will better prepare precocious students for university study. (Yes, they will.) For Povey, the desired outcome is confidence in how to reason through problems. ...Much can be learned from Povey's comments, independent of the solutions. "

— **CHOICE Magazine, from the American Library Association**

"A real tour de force of scientific problems. Thomas Povey is clearly a master at this kind of conundrum ... Fascinating."

—**John Farndon, author of *Do You Think You're Clever?***

"Albert Einstein is rumoured to have said: 'Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.' Thomas Povey's lucid and imaginative *Professor Povey's Perplexing Problems* shows you how."

—**Andrew Robinson, Author of *Einstein: A Hundred Years of Relativity***

About the Author

Thomas Povey is Professor of Engineering Science at the University of Oxford, where he researches jet-engine and rocket technology. His science puzzles have appeared in the Guardian and been featured on BBC Radio 4.

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