

Some ideas for further reading (suggested by Robert Barclay – thanks, Robert!)

Understanding Einstein's Theories of Relativity (Man's New Perspective on the Cosmos)

Stan Gibilisco Dover 1991 ISBN 0-486-26659-1

This starts with the basics, and gives a pretty clear explanation of special and general relativity, with lots of helpful diagrams and practically no maths.

Six Not-So-Easy Pieces

Richard Feynman Penguin 1999 ISBN 0-14-027667-X

Starts with a gentle introduction to vectors and symmetry, then explains special and general relativity, with a little more maths than Gibilisco, but not too much. (Of course it might be sensible to read "Six Easy Pieces" first {ISBN 0-14-027666-1}, as it's a great introduction to basic physics. I read them in the wrong order, but it's not fatal!)

In Search of Schrodinger's Cat (Quantum Physics and Reality)

John Gribbin Corgi 1990 ISBN 0-552-12555-5

Probably the clearest introduction to quantum physics I've read - no maths and not even many diagrams, but good clear explanations that leave you in no doubt about how weird things really are. A fair bit about the personalities and history too.

QED The Strange Theory of Light and Matter

Richard Feynman Penguin 1990 ISBN 0-14-012505-1

A good way to follow-up "Schrodinger's Cat", with little on personalities, history or philosophical implications, but a more detailed explanation of how photons and electrons explain the bulk of physical phenomena that we see day-to-day. Really good diagrams and no maths!

Quantum Physics: Illusion or Reality?

Alistair Rae Cambridge 1989 ISBN 0-521-27802-3

Goes deeper still than the other books into the meaning of quantum physics. Harder going, but worth the effort - for me, anyway. Explains better than any other account I've seen the substance of the debates about quantum physics between Einstein and Bohr.

There are several others, but I think that's probably enough to be going on with. I could also add some titles that I've found off-puttingly hard going - basically anything I've tried by Roger Penrose or Heinz Pagels - but maybe that says more about me than them...