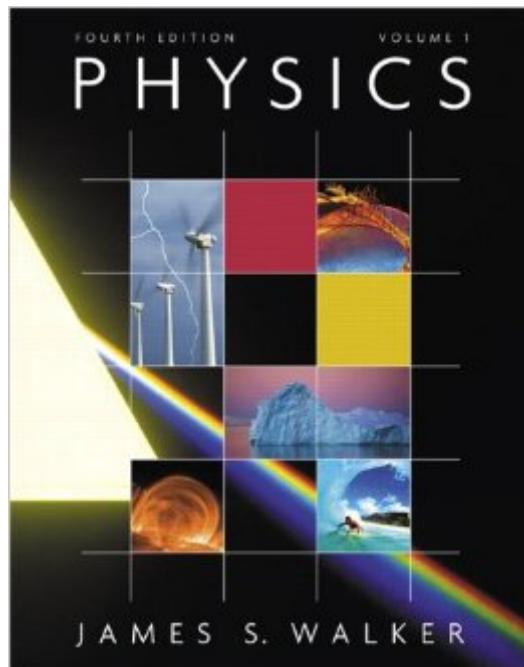


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Physics Vol. 1, Fourth Edition



Synopsis

Book by Walker, James S.

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Customer Reviews

I was a physics major in college and am now a high school physics teacher. I have taught conceptual, algebra-based high school physics through AP physics. I have read over 10 physics texts cover-to-cover directed at the same level as this one, and this is the best of them, by far! After much research, this is the book I chose to write my advanced high school curriculum around. This text is for someone with a solid understanding of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. It is not calculus-based. It can be for the more advanced high school student or for the more basic college student. It is VERY well aligned with the AP Physics B curriculum for advanced high school students. In comparison with other physics texts at the same mathematical level, the reasons I prefer this text over the others are:- Organization. The topics are laid out in the most straight-forward fashion. There are no surprises or references to material later in the book. It can be taught or learned linearly or out-of-order. It is especially well aligned with the AP Physics B curriculum.- Explanations. The explanations are clear and use lots of real-life examples to illustrate the topics. As I read this text, I was rarely left wondering what the author was talking about. The writing is not too dense or difficult to understand. It is easy enough to follow for someone learning the topic without getting lost in too much scientific vocabulary.- Pictures and diagrams. This might not seem like a big deal, but there are more color photographs than most mathematically-based text books. The diagrams are easy to read and explain the concepts discussed in the book. For anyone who is

a visual learner, this is very important.- Practice problems.

I used this book for my first class in college physics. The book is a decent text for learning physics, but I think that several improvements could be made. This book is Volume 1 of a two volume set. It includes topics about kinematics, Newton's Laws, Energy, Waves and Sound, Fluids, and Thermodynamics, among other topics. To tell the truth, I don't really see the point of splitting the book up into two volumes since most people will take both classes anyway. First, the good aspects of the book. This text is intended for an algebra-based (no calculus) college physics course. I do do a good job of limiting the mathematical details and instead presenting the underlying physical concept that is to be understood. There are also numerous illustrated examples and practice problems that are very helpful. Next, the bad aspects of the book. If you are like me and go to a large state university, then it is quite likely that your professor will be a physicist that may be more interested in his or her research than your class. Since real physics majors do not take this class, your professor may not enjoy teaching it. But even if you have the best professor in the world, it is likely that many of the problems in this book are a bit more simplistic than ones that your professor will give on an exam. The book does include simple problems, but does not illustrate how to work out more difficult ones. If you are considering buying the study guide/answer book, don't. It is terrible. It only shows how to do about ten out of the fifty+ questions per chapter. I've had biology answer key books that included more problems. Basically, this book is not bad for the basic principles but not very good for more advanced ones. How well the course goes depends on the instructor.

I first had physics in college twenty years ago. I was studying (at that time) astronomy and mathematics, so the first college-level physics class I took fully incorporated calculus and advanced mathematics. It was not until recently, as I took a position as tutor at a local community college, that I discovered a rigorous introductory physics text that did not involve calculus (only one semester of calculus is offered at the college, and usually taken concurrently with or after physics). Walker's text, second edition, is the text we currently use. We offer one semester of physics, so we only get half-way through the text, which seems designed for a two-semester sequence. As the main focus of the college is technical, so the sections on mechanics, thermal physics and electromagnetism are the most essential sections for our degree programmes. While this text does not assume calculus, it does assume basic trigonometry and analytic geometry. Dealing with angles and graphing are important skills to know here; dealing with vectors is introduced very early in the text, and continues

to be very important throughout. The book is well organised, with chapter summaries, problem-solving techniques summarised at the end of chapter, high concept questions, drawings, photographs, and real-world applications that relate the theory back to actual experience. From the light refraction in raindrops to the workings of the Global Positioning System, students will learn more about the interactions of the world from this text. The examples follow a format that shows not only the worked solutions, but also the strategies employed to get to the solutions.

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