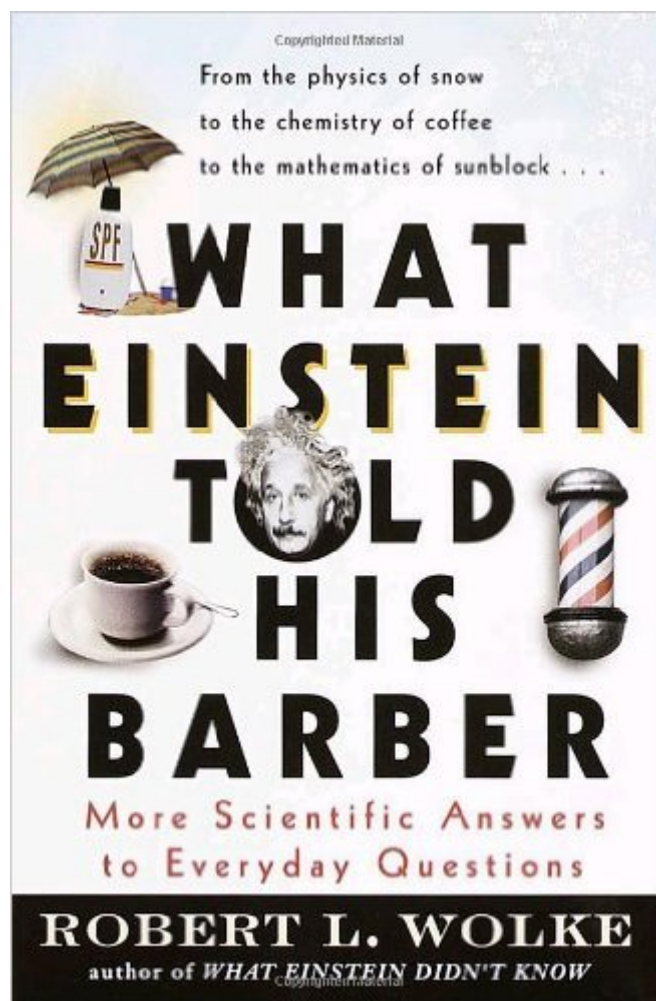


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# What Einstein Told His Barber: More Scientific Answers To Everyday Questions



## Synopsis

What makes ice cubes cloudy? How do shark attacks make airplanes safer? Can a person traveling in a car at the speed of sound still hear the radio? Moreover, would they want to...? Do you often find yourself pondering life's little conundrums? Have you ever wondered why the ocean is blue? Or why birds don't get electrocuted when perching on high-voltage power lines? Robert L. Wolke, professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh and acclaimed author of *What Einstein Didn't Know*, understands the need to...well, understand. Now he provides more amusing explanations of such everyday phenomena as gravity (If you're in a falling elevator, will jumping at the last instant save your life?) and acoustics (Why does a whip make such a loud cracking noise?), along with amazing facts, belly-up-to-the-bar bets, and mind-blowing reality bites all with his trademark wit and wisdom. If you shoot a bullet into the air, can it kill somebody when it comes down? You can find out about all this and more in an astonishing compendium of the proverbial mind-boggling mysteries of the physical world we inhabit. Arranged in a question-and-answer format and grouped by subject for browsing ease, *WHAT EINSTEIN TOLD HIS BARBER* is for anyone who ever pondered such things as why colors fade in sunlight, what happens to the rubber from worn-out tires, what makes red-hot objects glow red, and other scientific curiosities. Perfect for fans of *Newton's Apple*, *Jeopardy!*, and The Discovery Channel, *WHAT EINSTEIN TOLD HIS BARBER* also includes a glossary of important scientific buzz words and a comprehensive index. -->

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## Customer Reviews

*What Einstein Told His Barber* by Robert L. Wolke This book is imaginative and entertaining. It

explains in simple terms the hows and whys of many things we observe often but really don't understand. His editor has done a fine job with spelling and punctuation, but he needs someone to check his math: p13 "In one experiment, out of 500 .30-caliber machine-gun bullets fired straight upward, only four landed within 10 square feet (3 square meters) of the gun". While 10 feet is about 3 meters, 10 square feet is about 1 square meter and would lie within 22 inches of the gun - not a very safe place to wait. p26-27 "There is a certain speed called the ESCAPE VELOCITY, 25000 mph, that an object must achieve to circle the Earth in stable orbit and not fall down." Actually the speed needed for circular orbit is less by a factor of the square root of two, about 18000 mph. On p.121 the author has astronauts orbiting at the proper speed. Escape velocity launches an object into a parabolic trajectory which escapes (imagine that) the earth's gravity and never returns. p33 (and p.64) Speed of light 186,000 miles per second (3 million kilometers per second) Oops! That should be 300,000 kilometers per second. p81 Author computes 621 degrees Fahrenheit to be twice the absolute temperature of 80F. This should be 519.7F; but it is only because of sloppy conversion from Fahrenheit to Celsius and back. p103 (and p120) "Earth is sailing around the Sun at more than 10,000 mph (10600 mph on p120) It is actually about 66,675 mph - higher by a factor of 2 Pi (6.28...).

Robert Wolke has come up with a hugely entertaining book in *What Einstein Told His Barber*. Now, obviously, there's no shortage of "science oddity" books ... which set out to explain the basics of science by taking a lighthearted approach and using the everyday questions we all have (Why is the sky blue? How cold is it in space?) to demonstrate the basics of everything from biology to physics. What sets Wolke's book aside is partially his tone. He approaches the subject with a perfect blend of fact and fancy, filled with funny asides and even a few practical applications for what he's teaching (ranging from "try this at home" experiments to scientific bar bets you can use to win free beers). He's at his best when he's approaching questions that seem blindingly simple (What would the temperature be if it were twice as hot in the room? How much more UV light does an SPF 30 sunscreen block than an SPF 15?) and then explaining why the simple answer just isn't true. Without ever really descending into hand-waving, he explains a wide variety of phenomena in a really enjoyable way. Even though a lot of the questions are ones I knew the answers to (why does a whip crack? If you jump in a falling elevator just before it hits the ground, will you survive?) they were still entertaining and educational. Wolke manages to dig up intriguing little anecdotes and bits of information that I've never encountered in other, similar books. Wolke is a professor emeritus of chemistry, and I suppose all those years of teaching first-year chemistry courses are what give him

such an accessible style. And refreshingly, Wolke isn't afraid to say when he doesn't know an answer ... like the never-ending debate over why your shower curtain is pulled in when you turn on the water.

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