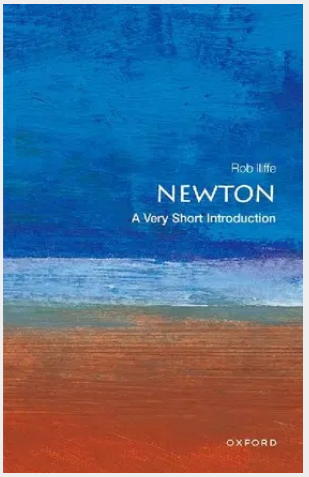
Iliffe

Newton

A Very Short Introduction



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This Very Short Introduction uses Newton's own unpublished writings to provide fascinating insight into the man who kept the Royal Society under his thumb, was Head of the Mint, and whose contributions to our understanding of the heavens and the earth are considered by many to be unparalleled. The author begins with the legends surrounding Newton before next exploring the forces that shaped his life, introducing, along the way, many of the key thinkers and politicians of the time. Although Newton's science was largely revered (his reputation reached near-immortal status with the publication of the Principia), theologically, his beliefs were very controversial. He was a fanatical Protestant, and claimed that tribes like the Goths, Vandals, and Huns had tried to save the planet from the corruption of the Catholics. He was also convinced that he was specially chosen by God to protect the original, pure form of Christianity, and viewed any criticisms directed at him as a form of persecution. Resisting the urge to show how Newton's views on alchemy, mathematics, physics, and religion complemented one another, the author instead emphasises that these were the very different obsessions of an extremely complex man whose beliefs at the time dominated England's political, religious, and intellectual landscape. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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