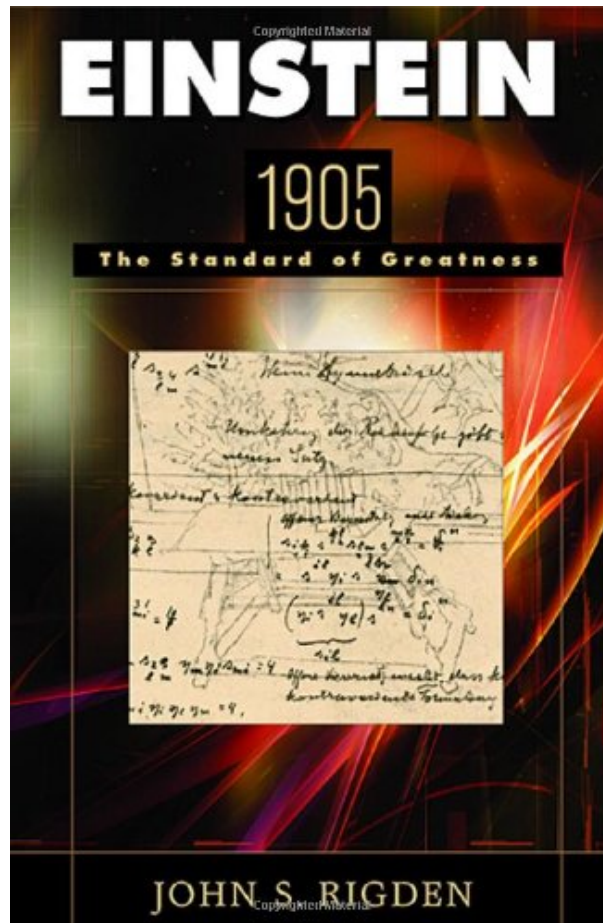
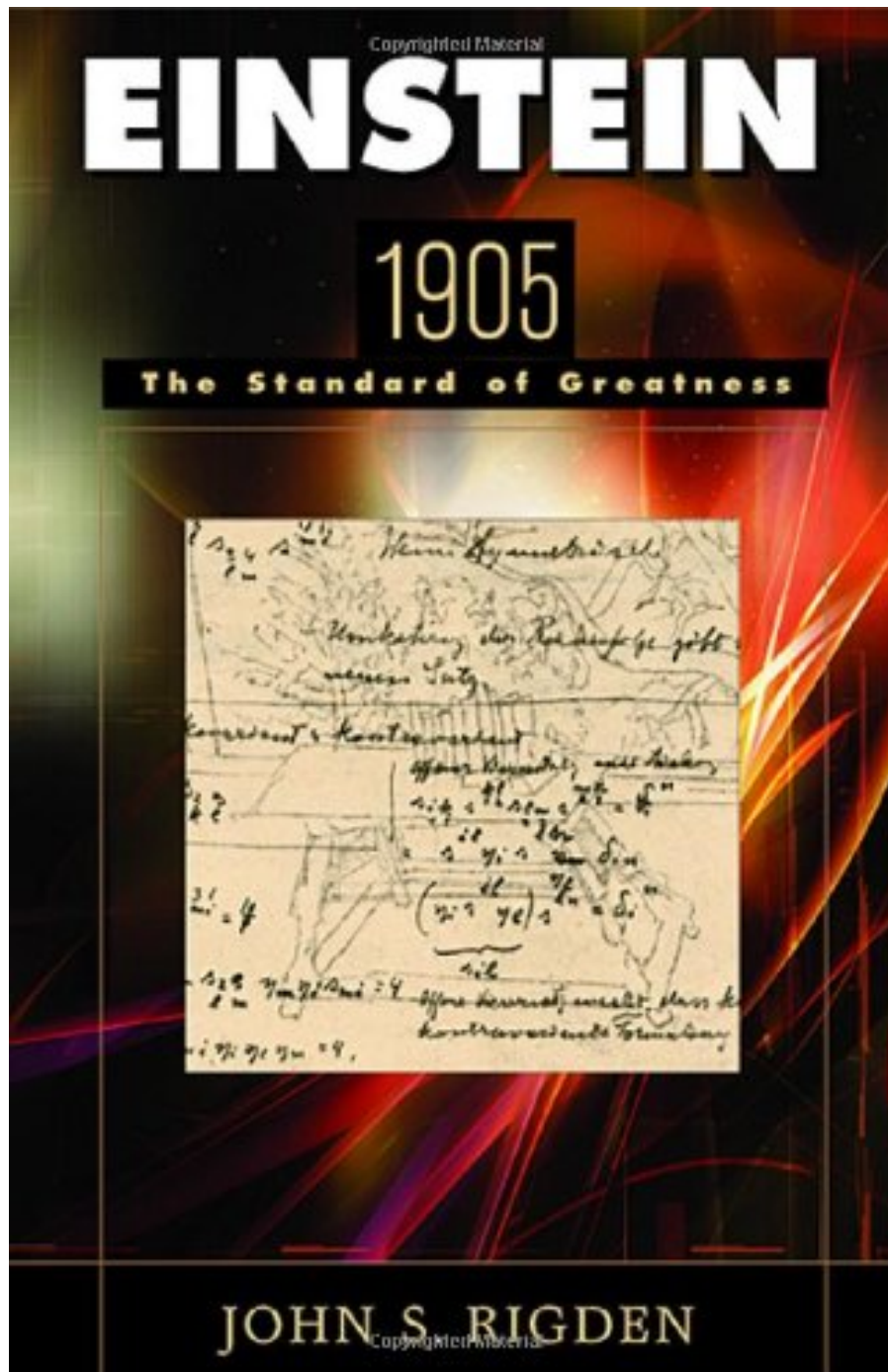


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Adult/High School—An accessible, even page-turning, account of Einstein's new insights and the turmoil that they created. Five research papers published in 1905 by an unknown physicist working in the patent office in Bern, Switzerland, revolutionized physics and provided knowledge that would transform the world. Readers will be particularly intrigued by the details of how the young man challenged, and then generally overcame, the scientific establishment, and how his ideas have themselves been challenged by others. Rigden shows that scientists have personal dimensions that are rarely mentioned in more formal textbooks. Significant insight is provided into the critical need for conflict in science, where advances are made when theories are tested by experiments that lead to new theories, and so on. Rich sources of information are given on Einstein's thoughts and those of his contemporaries on the nature of light, how atoms can be visualized in relatively simple experiments, the role of time as a fourth dimension, and, above all, how matter and energy are interrelated. Simple diagrams and reproductions of the front pages of the papers inform key aspects of the text. This book is strongly recommended for those wishing to understand the nature of the physical world, the creation of the universe, the origin of current scientific theories, and how simple experiments and

concepts can successfully challenge long-held ideas.-Alexander Woodcock, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

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EINSTEIN 1905: THE STANDARD OF GREATNESS BY JOHN S. RIGDEN PDF

For Albert Einstein, 1905 was a remarkable year. It was also a miraculous year for the history and future of science. In six short months, from March through September of that year, Einstein published five papers that would transform our understanding of nature. This unparalleled period is the subject of John Rigden's book, which deftly explains what distinguishes 1905 from all other years in the annals of science, and elevates Einstein above all other scientists of the twentieth century.

Rigden chronicles the momentous theories that Einstein put forth beginning in March 1905: his particle theory of light, rejected for decades but now a staple of physics; his overlooked dissertation on molecular dimensions; his theory of Brownian motion; his theory of special relativity; and the work in which his famous equation, $E = mc^2$, first appeared. Through his lucid exposition of these ideas, the context in which they were presented, and the impact they had--and still have--on society, Rigden makes the circumstances of Einstein's greatness thoroughly and captivatingly clear. To help readers understand how these ideas continued to develop, he briefly describes Einstein's post-1905 contributions, including the general theory of relativity.

One hundred years after Einstein's prodigious accomplishment, this book invites us to learn about ideas that have influenced our lives in almost inconceivable ways, and to appreciate their author's status as the standard of greatness in twentieth-century science.

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Very well written story of perhaps never to be exceeded success in one year in a very difficult field by a genius..

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Anno Mirabilis

By Timothy Haugh

This year is the hundredth anniversary of "Einstein's Miracle Year" of 1905. In 1905, Albert Einstein published five scientific papers, all of which were important and three of which are still considered groundbreaking. Many scientists would consider themselves lucky to publish five important papers in a lifetime, which is one of the many reasons why Einstein's achievement is considered such a triumph. And yet, it is rare, even among the well-educated, to find people who really know what Einstein did. Words like "relativity" and " $E = mc^2$ " are tossed around without any real comprehension of their meaning. That is why it is good and not at all surprising to find a book like Mr. Rigden's on the shelf now.

In Einstein 1905, Mr. Rigden takes us through each of Einstein's papers of 1905--the quantum paper of March (often referred to as the "photoelectric effect" paper), the molecular dimensions paper of April, the "Brownian motion" paper of May, the relativity paper of June and the energy-mass paper (with that famous equation) in September. He does his best to explain exactly what it is that each paper said and, simultaneously, what Einstein was trying to achieve. (Not always the same thing.) He is even better at explaining the impact each paper had on the development of physics often far into the future and in ways Einstein both did and did not see. He also describes how many people still misunderstand what the impact of these papers is.

This is by no means a book for the faint of heart. Mr. Rigden throws physics terminology around a little to easily for that. However, it is also not a book that requires a serious education in math and physics. It is very readable with hardly an equation in sight. A reader with a good general education and a desire to understand the impact that Einstein had on the world will get a lot from this book because, in the final analysis, the physics is only the means to an end here.

Ultimately, Mr. Rigden is trying to get a handle on the nature of genius in his analysis of some of Einstein's greatest triumphs. Apart from Newton's flurry of brilliance in the early 1660's, there is probably not another period of time in history where so much has been achieved over such a brief period. Einstein's name has become synonymous with genius and everyone would like to know what it was that made Einstein who he was.

Still, in the end, the nature of genius remains elusive. Mr. Rigden has written a great history here but is basically remains on the surface as it must in an investigation like this. One can describe how Einstein was confidently stubborn and how he worked from contradictions to "generalize it and then be guided by its implications until a resolution was found, frequently in the form of profound new insights." True as this may be (and I found his recurring discussion of the continuity/discontinuity problem in physics to be one of the most insightful things I've read recently), this doesn't always lead to genius--as can be seen from Einstein's own later years.

The fact remains that Einstein's work was an achievement almost without equal and that Mr. Rigden has written an excellent account of it. Einstein's work should be better understood beyond being able to mouth a single equation and the term "relativity." Here, in a slim volume, we have a respect for the totality of Einstein's triumphs of 1905 and should be read by anyone who claims to be educated.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Concise and Easy to Understand

By Sam

Although I do have a science background from long ago, I have been out of touch for ages. I found the brief descriptions of Einstein's famous papers of 1905 easy to follow and they filled in gaps in my understanding of fundamental principles and the history of their development.

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