

So you are considering A level Physics?

This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start A level in Physics in September. It is aimed to be used after you complete your GCSE throughout the remainder of the summer term and over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.

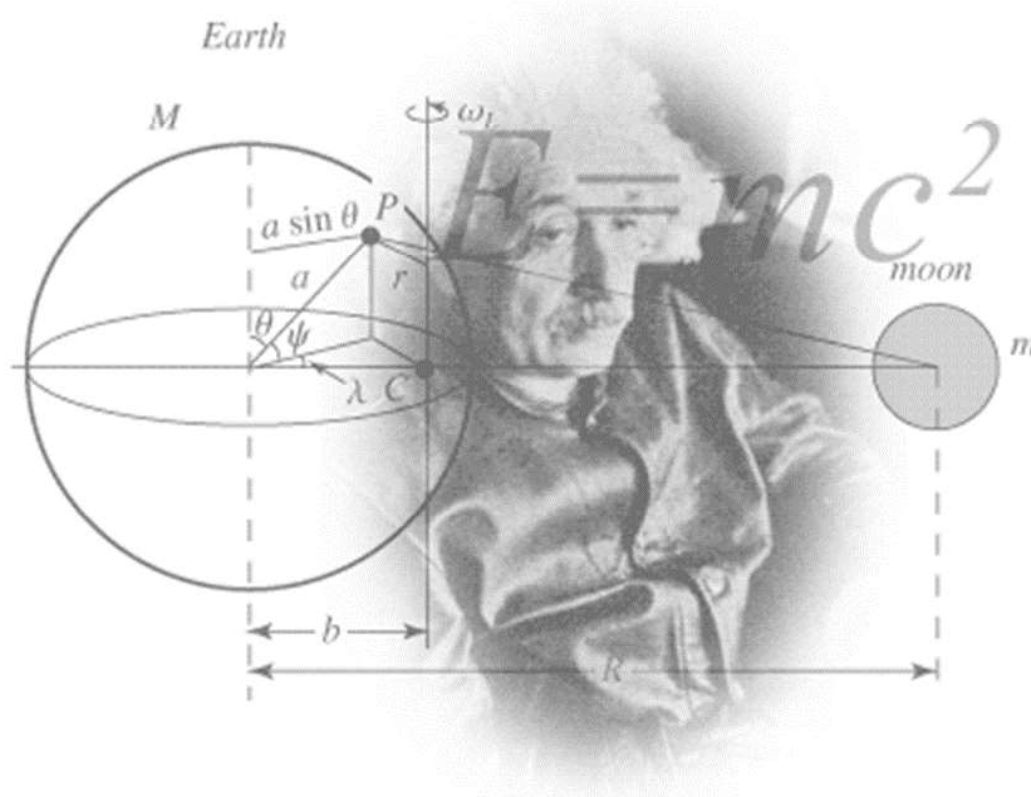
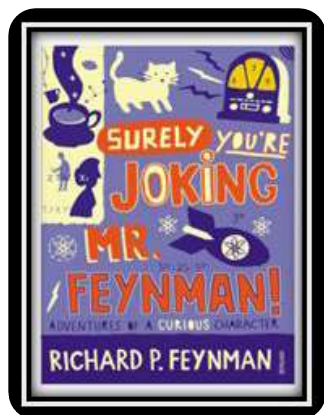


Figure 1 <http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/physics/images/main-physics.gif>

Book Recommendations

Below is a selection of books that should appeal to a physicist – someone with an enquiring mind who wants to understand the universe around us.

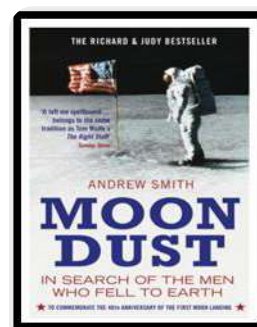


Surely You're Joking Mr Feynman: Adventures of a Curious Character

By reading this book you will get insight into his life's work including the creation of the first atomic bomb and his work in the field of particle physics.

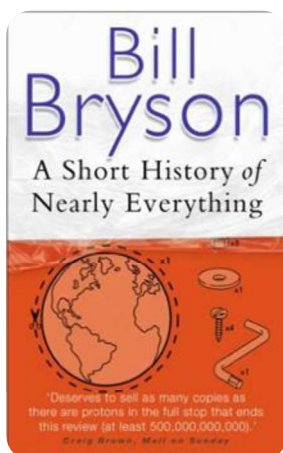
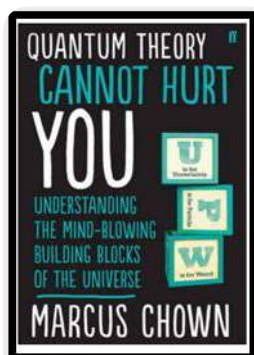
Moondust: In Search of the Men Who Fell to Earth

This book uses the personal accounts of 9 astronauts and many others involved in the space program, looking at the whole space-race era.



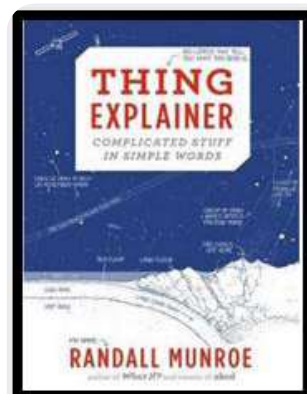
Quantum Theory Cannot Hurt You: Understanding the Mind-Blowing Building Blocks of the Universe

Any physics book by Marcus Chown is an excellent insight into some of the more exotic areas of physics that require no prior knowledge.



A Short History of Nearly Everything

A whistle-stop tour through many aspects of history from the Big Bang to now. This is a really accessible read that will re-familiarise you with common concepts and introduce you to some of the more colourful characters from the history of science.



Thing Explainer: Complicated Stuff in Simple Words

Written by the creator of online comic XTCD (a great source of science humour) is a book of blueprints from everyday objects such as a biro to the Saturn V rocket and an atom bomb.

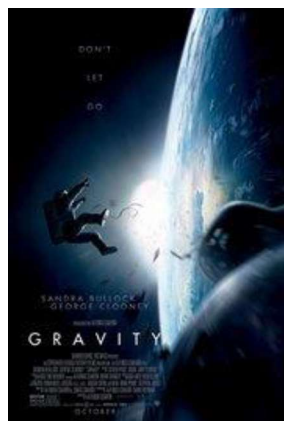
Movie Recommendations

Everyone loves a good story and everyone loves some great science. Here are some picks of the best films based on real life scientists and discoveries. You won't find Jurassic Park on this list! We've looked back over the last 30 years to give you our top 5 films you might not have seen before. Great watching for a rainy day.



Moon (2009)

With only three weeks left in his three year contract, Sam Bell is getting anxious to finally return to Earth. He is the only occupant of a Moon-based manufacturing facility along with his computer and assistant, GERTY. When he has an accident however, he awakens to find that he is not alone.

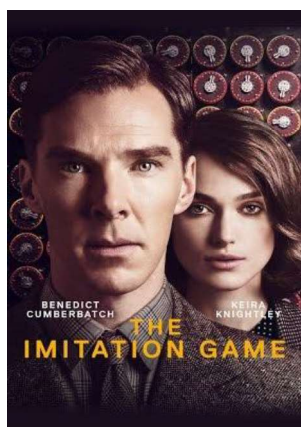


Gravity (2013)

Two astronauts work together to survive after an accident which leaves them stranded in space.

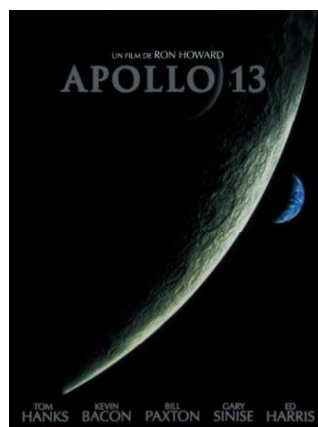
Interstellar (2014)

A team of explorers travel through a wormhole in space in an attempt to ensure humanity's survival.



The Imitation Game (2014)

Based on a true story. During World War II, the English mathematical genius Alan Turing tries to crack the German Enigma code with help from fellow mathematicians.



Apollo 13 (1995)

Based on a true story. NASA must devise a strategy to return Apollo 13 to Earth safely after the spacecraft undergoes massive internal damage putting the lives of the three astronauts on board in jeopardy.

There are some great TV series and box sets available too! You might want to check out: Blue Planet, Planet Earth, Wonders of the Universe, Wonders of the Solar System, NASA TV and Shock & Awe – The Story of Electricity.

Movie Recommendations

If you have 30 minutes to spare, here are some great presentations (and free!) from world leading scientists and researchers on a variety of topics. They provide some interesting answers and ask some thought-provoking questions. Use the link or scan the QR code to view:

From mach-20 glider to hummingbird drone

Available at:

https://www.ted.com/talks/regina_dugan_from_mach_20_glider_to_humming_bird_drone/up-next?language=en

"What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?" asks Regina Dugan, then director of DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. In this talk, she describes some of the extraordinary projects that her agency has created.



Is our universe the only universe?

Available at:

https://www.ted.com/talks/brian_greene_why_is_our_universe_fine_tuned_for_life?language=en

Brian Greene shows how the unanswered questions of physics (starting with a big one: What caused the Big Bang?) have led to the theory that our own universe is just one of many in the "multiverse."

The fascinating physics of everyday life

Available at :

https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_czerski_fun_home_experiments_that_teach_you_physics?language=en

Physicist Helen Czerski presents various concepts in physics you can become familiar with using everyday things found in your kitchen.



We need nuclear power to solve climate change

Available at :

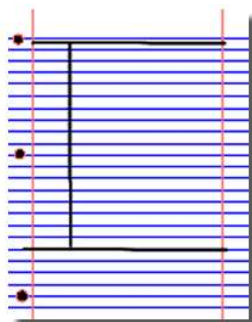
https://www.ted.com/talks/joe_lassiter_we_need_nuclear_power_to_solve_climate_change?language=en

Joe Lassiter is focused on developing clean, secure and carbon-neutral supplies of reliable, low-cost energy. His analysis of the world's energy realities puts a powerful lens on the touchy issue of nuclear power.

Research Activities

Research, reading and note making are essential skills for A level Physics study. For the following task you are going to produce 'Cornell Notes' to summarise your reading.

1. Divide your page into three sections like this



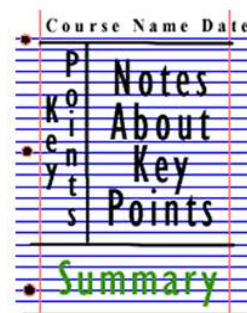
2. Write the name, date and topic at the top of the page



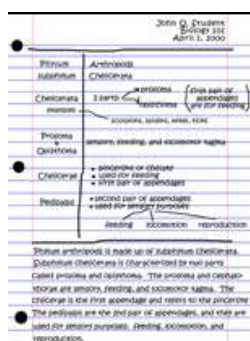
3. Use the large box to make notes. Leave a space between separate idea. Abbreviate where possible.



4. Review and identify the key points in the left hand box



5. Write a summary of the main ideas in the bottom space



Images taken from <http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>

Research Activities

Physics provides daily online-only news and commentary about a selection of papers from the APS journal collection. The website is aimed at the reader who wants to keep up with highlights of physics research with explanations that don't rely on jargon and technical detail.

For each of the following topics, you are going to use the resources to produce one page of Cornell style notes.

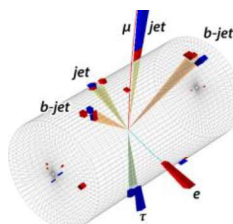
Use the links or scan the QR code to take you to the resources.



Topic 1: **Sizing up the top quarks interaction with the Higgs**

Available at: <https://physics.aps.org/articles/v11/56>

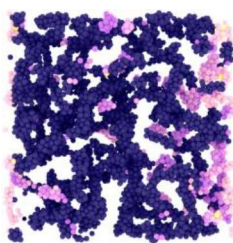
A proton collision experiment at CERN provides a new handle on the Higgs boson's interaction with the heaviest of the quarks.



Topic 2: **Why soft solids get softer**

Available at: <https://physics.aps.org/articles/v11/50>

Soft materials like gels and creams exhibit fatigue resulting from the stretching of their constituent fibres, according to experiments and simulations.



Topic 3: **Listening for the cosmic hum of black holes**

Available at: <https://physics.aps.org/articles/v11/36>

A new analysis technique would allow the gravitational-wave "background" from distant black hole mergers to be detected in days instead of years.



Pre-Knowledge Topics

A level Physics will use your knowledge from GCSE and build on this to help you understand new and more demanding ideas. Complete the following tasks to make sure your knowledge is up to date and you are ready to start studying:

Symbols and Prefixes

Prefix	Symbol	Power of ten
Nano	n	$\times 10^{-9}$
Micro	μ	$\times 10^{-6}$
Milli	m	$\times 10^{-3}$
Centi	c	$\times 10^{-2}$
Kilo	k	$\times 10^3$
Mega	M	$\times 10^6$
Giga	G	$\times 10^9$

At A level, unlike GCSE, you need to remember all symbols, units and prefixes. Below is a list of quantities you may have already come across and will be using during your A level course.

Quantity	Symbol	Unit
Velocity	v	ms^{-1}
Acceleration	a	ms^{-2}
Time	t	s
Force	F	N
Resistance	R	Ω
Potential difference	V	V
Current	I	A
Energy	E or W	J
Pressure	P	Pa
Momentum	p	kgms^{-1}
Power	P	W
Density	ρ	kgm^{-3}
Charge	Q	C

Task: Solve the following:

1. How many metres in 2.4 km?
2. How many joules in 8.1 MJ?
3. Convert 326 GW into W.

4. Convert 54 600 mm into m.
5. How many grams in 240 kg?
6. Convert 0.18 nm into m.
7. Convert 632 nm into m. Express in standard form.
8. Convert 1002 mV into V. Express in standard form.
9. How many eV in 0.511 MeV? Express in standard form.
10. How many m in 11 km? Express in standard form.

Standard Form

At A level, quantities will be written in standard form and it is expected that your answers will be too.

0.00000000567g

Conversion to Standard Form

0.00000000**567**g

9 digits from the original decimal point to the new one.

=

5.67×10^{-9}

Distance: Earth > Moon

=

384 400 000 meters

Conversion to Standard Form

384 400 000

8 digits to where the decimal point will go.

=

3.844×10^8

<http://www.ultimatemaths.com/standard-form-conversion.htm>

This means answers should be written asx 10ⁿ. E.g. for an answer of 1200kg we would write 1.2 x 10³kg. For more information visit: www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zc2hsbk/revision

Task: Complete the following problems;

1. Write 2530 in standard form.
2. Write 280 in standard form.
3. Write 0.77 in standard form.
4. Write 0.0091 in standard form.
5. Write 1 872 000 in standard form.
6. Write 12.2 in standard form.
7. Write 2.4×10^{-2} as a normal number.
8. Write 3.505×10^{-1} as a normal number.
9. Write 8.31×10^{-6} as a normal number.
10. Write 6.002×10^{-2} as a normal number.
11. Write 1.5×10^{-4} as a normal number.
12. Write 4.3×10^3 as a normal number.

Rearranging Formulae

This is something you will have done at GCSE and it is crucial you master it for success at A level. For a recap of GCSE watch the following links:

www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra/one-variable-linear-equations/old-school-equations/v/solving-for-a-variable

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WWgc3ABSj4

Task: Rearrange the following:

1. $E = m \times g \times h$ to find h
2. $Q = I \times t$ to find I
3. $E = \frac{1}{2} m v^2$ to find m
4. $E = \frac{1}{2} m v^2$ to find v
5. $v = u + at$ to find u
6. $v = u + at$ to find a
7. $v^2 = u^2 + 2as$ to find s
8. $v^2 = u^2 + 2as$ to find u

Significant Figures

At A level you will be expected to use an appropriate number of significant figures in your answers. The number of significant figures you should use is the same as the number of significant figures in the data you are given. You can never be more precise than the data you are given so if that is given to 3 significant your answer should be too. E.g. Distance = 8.24m, time = 1.23s therefore speed = 6.75m/s

The website below summarises the rules and how to round correctly.

<http://www.purplemath.com/modules/rounding2.htm>

Task: Give the following to 3 significant figures:

1. 3.4527
2. 40.691
3. 0.838991
4. 1.0247

Calculate the following to a suitable number of significant figures:

1. $63.2 \div 78.1 =$
2. $39 + 78 + 120 =$
3. $(3.4 + 3.7 + 3.2) \div 3 =$
4. $0.0256 \times 0.129 =$

Atomic Structure

You will study nuclear decay in more detail at A level covering the topics of radioactivity and particle physics. In order to explain what happens you need to have a good understanding of the model of the atom. You need to know what the atom is made up of, relative charges and masses and how sub atomic particles are arranged.

The following video explains how the current model was discovered www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzALbzTdnc8

Task: Describe the model used for the structure of an atom including details of the individual particles that make up an atom and the relative charges and masses of these particles. You may wish to include a diagram and explain how this model was discovered by Rutherford.

Recording Data

Whilst carrying out a practical activity you need to write all your raw results into a table. Don't wait until the end, discard anomalies and then write it up in neat.

Tables should have column heading and units in this format quantity/unit e.g. length /mm

All results in a column should have the same precision and if you have repeated the experiment you should calculate a mean to the same precision as the data.

Below are link to practical handbooks so you can familiarise yourself with expectations.

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/physics/AQA-7407-7408-PHBK.PDF>

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/295483-practical-skills-handbook.pdf>

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/295483-practical-skills-handbook.pdf>

Below is a table of results from an experiment where a ball was rolled down a ramp of different lengths. A ruler and stop clock were used.

Task: Identify the errors the student has made.

Length/cm	Time			
	Trial 1	Trial 2	Trial 3	Mean
10	1.45	1.48	1.46	1.463
22	2.78	2.72	2.74	2.747
30	4.05	4.01	4.03	4.03
41	5.46	5.47	5.46	5.463
51	7.02	6.96	6.98	6.98
65	8.24	9.68	8.24	8.72
70	9.01	9.02	9.0	9.01

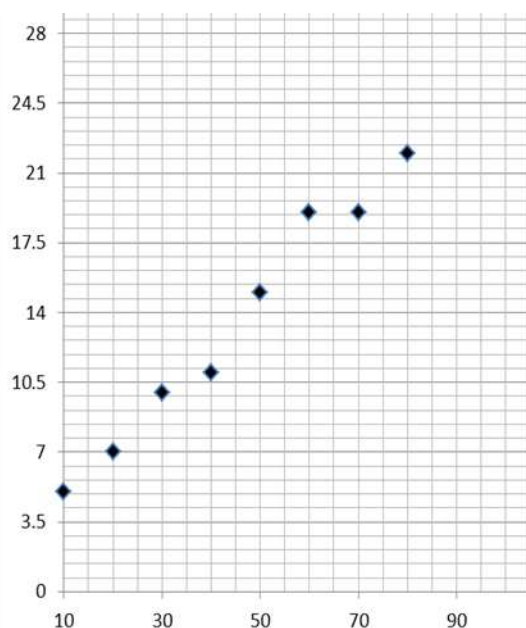
Graphs

After a practical activity the next step is to draw a graph that will be useful to you. Drawing a graph is a skill you should be familiar with already but you need to be extremely vigilant at A level. Before you draw your graph to need to identify a suitable scale to draw taking the following into consideration:

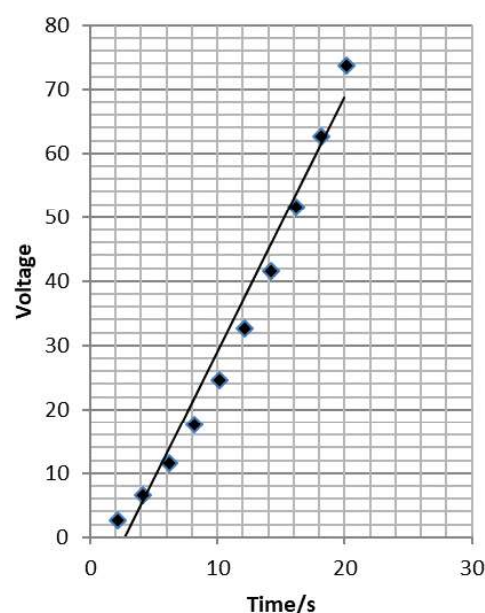
- the maximum and minimum values of each variable
- whether 0.0 should be included as a data point; graphs don't need to show the origin, a false origin can be used if your data doesn't start near zero.
- the plots should cover at least half of the grid supplied for the graph.
- the axes should use a sensible scale e.g. multiples of 1,2, 5 etc)

Identify how the following graphs could be improved

Graph 1



Graph 2



Forces and Motion

At GCSE you studied forces and motion and at A level you will explore this topic in more detail so it is essential you have a good understanding of the content covered at GCSE. You will be expected to describe, explain and carry calculations concerning the motion of objects. The websites below cover Newton's laws of motion and have links to these in action.

<http://www.physicsclassroom.com/Physics-Tutorial/Newton-s-Laws>

<http://www.sciencechannel.com/games-and-interactives/newtons-laws-of-motion-interactive/>

Task: On graph paper sketch a velocity-time graph showing the journey of a skydiver after leaving the plane to reaching the ground. Mark on terminal velocity.

Electricity

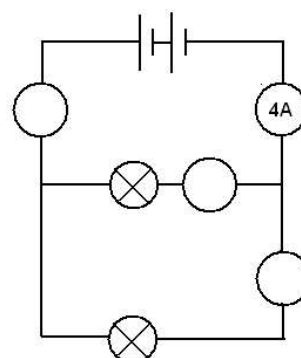
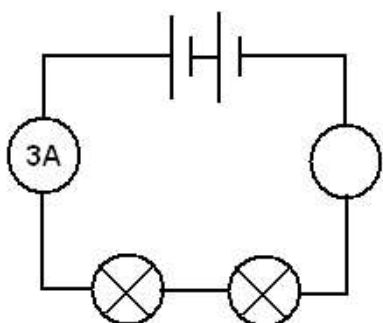
At A level you will learn more about how current and voltage behave in different circuits containing different components. You should be familiar with current and voltage rules in a series and parallel circuit as well as calculating the resistance of a device.

<http://www.allaboutcircuits.com/textbook/direct-current/chpt-1/electric-circuits/>

<http://www.physicsclassroom.com/class/circuits>

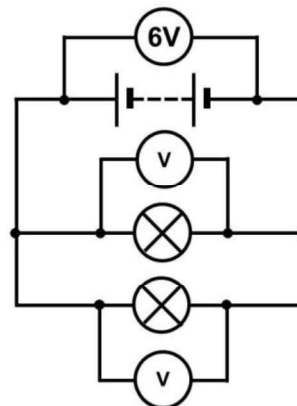
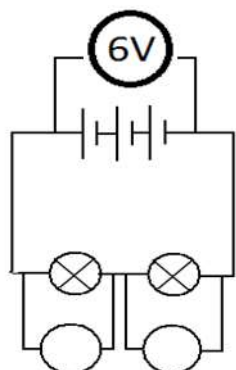
Task:

1a) Add the missing ammeter readings on the circuits below.



b) Explain why the second circuit has more current flowing than the first.

2) Add the missing potential differences to the following circuits



Waves

You have studied different types of waves and used the wave equation to calculate speed, frequency and wavelength. You will also have studied reflection and refraction.

Use the following links to review this topic.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zb7gkqt>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/physics/mechanical-waves-and-sound/mechanical-waves/v/introduction-to-waves>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/physics/mechanical-waves-and-sound/mechanical-waves/v/introduction-to-waves>

1) Draw a diagram showing the refraction of a wave through a rectangular glass block. Explain why the ray of light takes this path.

2) Describe the difference between longitudinal and transverse waves and give an example of each.

3) Draw a wave and label the wavelength and amplitude.

Science on Social Media

Science communication is essential in the modern world and all the big scientific companies, researchers and institutions have their own social media accounts. Here are some of our top tips to keep up to date with developing news or interesting stories:

Follow on Twitter:

Commander Chris Hadfield – former resident aboard the International Space Station
@cmdrhadfield

NASA's Voyager 2 – a satellite launched nearly 40 years ago that is now travelling beyond our solar system
@NSFVoyager2

Neil deGrasse Tyson – Director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York
@neiltyson

The SETI Institute – The Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence, be the first to know what they find!
@setiinstitute

Phil Plait – tweets about astronomy and bad science
@badastronomer

Institute of Physics – The leading scientific membership society for physics
@PhysicsNews

Scientific America – Journal sharing discoveries and insights into science that develops the world
@sciam

SN Students – Science news for students
@SNStudents



Find on Facebook:

National Geographic - since 1888, National Geographic has travelled the Earth, sharing its amazing stories in pictures and words.

Science News Magazine - Science covers important and emerging research in all fields of science.

BBC Science News - The latest BBC Science and Environment News: breaking news, analysis and debate on science and nature around the world.

Institute of Physics - The Institute of Physics is a leading scientific membership society working to advance physics for the benefit of all.

Chandra X-ray Observatory - NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory is a telescope specially designed to detect X-ray emission from very hot regions of the Universe such as exploded stars, clusters of galaxies, and matter around black holes.

Interesting Engineering - Interesting Engineering is a cutting edge, leading community designed for all lovers of engineering, technology and science.



Science websites

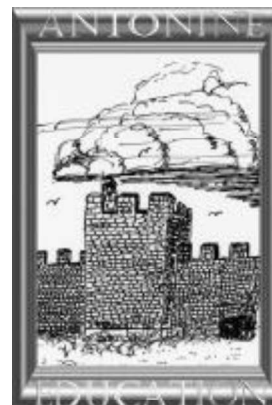
These websites all offer an amazing collection of resources that you should use again and again throughout your course.



At CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, physicists and engineers are probing the fundamental structure of the universe. They use the world's largest and most complex scientific instruments to study the basic constituents of matter – the fundamental particles.
<https://home.cern/>



physics.org is brought to you by the Physics in Society team at the Institute of Physics. Their aim is to inspire people of all ages about physics. Let them be your guide and show you the best physics places on the web.
<http://www.physics.org/aboutus.asp>

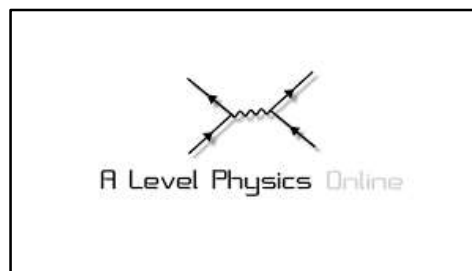


A website written by James Irvine, a retired teacher from Sheffield. Although the website is primarily written to support AQA, the material is also easily transferable to other exam boards.
<http://www.antonine-education.co.uk/>



A website written by a practicing physics and maths tutor in London.
@physicsandmathstutor is an Oxford physics graduate with a PGCE from Kings College London.

<http://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/>



Ok, so not a website, but a YouTube channel you definitely want to watch. Y12 or AS Physics content is free to view, you will find hundreds of videos made to help you in your A Level physics studies.
<https://www.youtube.com/c/AlevelPhysicsOnline>