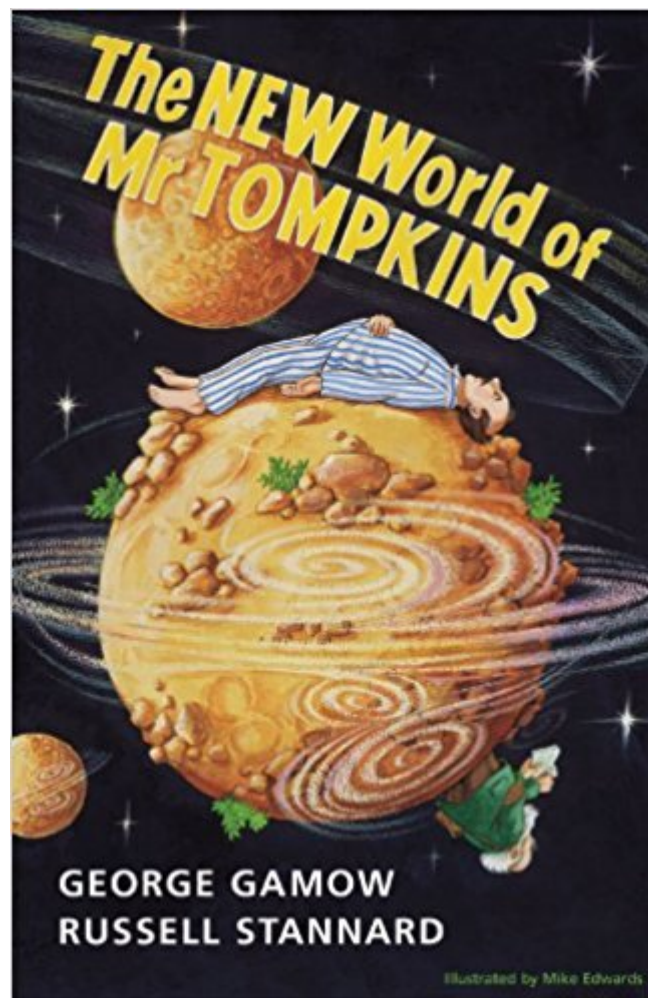




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# The New World Of Mr Tompkins: George Gamow's Classic Mr Tompkins In Paperback



## Synopsis

Mr. Tompkins is back! The mild-mannered bank clerk with the short attention span and vivid imagination has inspired, charmed, and informed young and old alike since the publication of the hugely successful *Mr Tompkins in Paperback* (by George Gamow) in 1965. Now, this highly affable character returns to embark on a set of adventures that explore the extreme edges of the universe--the smallest, the largest, the fastest, and the farthest. Just by following the experiences and dreams of Mr. Tompkins, readers discover and come to know the merry dance of cosmic mysteries, including: Einstein's theory of relativity, bizarre effects near light-speed, the birth and death of the universe, black holes, quarks, space warps and antimatter, the fuzzy world of the quantum, and that ultimate cosmic mystery--love. The story of Mr. Tompkins' journey to the frontiers of modern physics will delight and inform all readers. Russell Stannard is a best-selling popular science writer and the author of the critically acclaimed *Uncle Albert* series of science books for children.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Some 60 years ago physicist Gamow conceived the notion of presenting scientific ideas to the layperson through the medium of a fictional character, C.G.H. Tompkins, "a bank clerk interested in modern science." (Tompkins's initials derive from three fundamental physical constants:  $c$ , the velocity of light;  $G$ , the gravitational constant; and  $h$ , the quantum constant.) Gamow produced two popular books featuring Tompkins and then combined them in *Mr. Tompkins in Paperback*. Now science writer Stannard presents a considerably revised version of that book. Tompkins is still a

willing if rather dim learner in his associations with a physicist identified only as "the professor." Gamow and Stannard, through the professor and his daughter, Maud (who marries Tompkins in chapter 10), deal with such concepts as relativity, quantum theory and the structure of the atom. The reader will get both entertainment and plenty of information about modern physics and astrophysics. EDITORS OF SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"[Mr. Tompkins's] adventures and mishaps illuminate in startling fashion the oddities of relativity and quantum theory. Much loved by physics students a generation ago, Mr. Tompkins now embarks on some new escapades, courtesy of coauthor Stannard, who updated the original tales and added illustrations in Gamow's appealingly simple style." *Science News*"This revision makes Mr Tompkins not only more accessible to the present generation of both scientists and nonscientists, but more in tune with current science and sensibilities." *Science Books and Films*"The best just got better....It is absolutely the best place to get a feel for the most important scientific ideas of the 20th century. It is also a perfect way to get to visual grips with relativity theory and quantum mechanics." *The Independent*"The real measure of Stannard is that the new material is covered comprehensibly and in a style that matches the original." *The Times Higher Education Supplement*"The best just got better...It is absolutely the best place to get a feel for the most important scientific ideas of the 20th century. It is also a perfect way to get to visual grips with relativity theory and quantum mechanics." *The Independent*"The reader will get both entertainment and plenty of information about modern physics." *Scientific American*"...a lovely book which I am sure everyone interested in modern physics, from the age of eleven upwards, will enjoy enormously." *Nature*"If newcomers who have not seen the original read the book, they will find a charming, whimsical introduction to modern physics...The New World...is a unique book." *Physics Today*

THE NEW WORLD OF MR. TOMPKINS by George Gamow, and revised by Russell Stannard, is 258 pages long and is printed on off-white paper. There is a ten page glossary defining words such as "momentum" and "quark." There are 45 ink drawings, many of which feature Mr. Tompkins, his fiancée Maud, and Maud's father a physics professor. For example, one of the drawings teaches relativity by disclosing a bicycle rider cycling near the speed of light, and flattened because of this high speed (in a town where the speed of light is about 25 miles per hour). Another drawing shows a small closed universe (and a smaller planet), where you can toss a book into outer space, and where the book will return from the other side of the planet after a few hours. Generally, the layout takes the following form. One chapter will contain a lecture by the professor. While the next chapter

will contain Mr. Tompkin's dream, where he is in a fantastic land where the theory from the lecture is demonstrated. For example, in an early chapter, we find Mr. Tompkins in a land where the speed of light is only 25 miles per hour, and where bicycle riders appear to be flattened, when viewed by bystanders on the sidewalk. In another chapter, we find Maud and the professor inside a glass of a beverage, watching molecules of water whiz by, bumping into microscopic chunks of barley, and admiring the orderly array of water molecules in a nearby ice cube. This particular chapter illustrates Maxwell's Demon, and teaches the second law of thermodynamics. Maxwell's Demon can best be explained, or supplemented, by a Maxwell's Demon computer game that is easily accessed for free on the internet. It consists of fast-moving red dots and slow-moving blue dots, distributed evenly inside a rectangular box. The operator (your child) can operate a gate that separates the two halves of the box, eventually resulting in all the fast dots being located in one side, and the slow dots in the other side. The book is best read to children by an adult who has taken college physics and is able to explain the stories. Now, if only there could be another Mr. Tompkins storybook that illustrates Newtonian physics. FIVE STARS.

The original version of this book (actually written by George Gamow) was recommended by my college astronomy professor. This book is the revised version, as there have been many, many changes to our knowledge of astronomy and physics since the 1960's. The book is interesting, fun to read, and closely follows Gamow's style. While you may not fully understand a certain concept from the chapter where it is introduced (like time/space relativity), you get more information and examples in later chapters that help to get the big picture. It is recommended for 11 year-olds and up, but most adults interested in physics would benefit from reading this. There are some math equations, of course, but they are there mostly for the person who needs to know why and how scientists make their deductions, and do not necessarily take away from the concepts if you don't understand them.

I really loved this book, and keep finding stuff in it every time I re-read it. If you're a Physics major (like me), or just a physics enthusiast, this book is a must read, as it has de fundamental concepts of physics explained "for dummies", as well as a deeper, really enjoyable knowledge of physics.

one of my favorite authors.

wonderful book, after all these years, one of the most creative explanations of Modern Physics

This book is intended for the general people. Prof. Gamow gives beautiful descriptions about quantum phenomena that occur in the atom, the nucleus as well as in solids. Really beautiful. Highly recommended.

I was a freshman the first time I read about Mr Tompkins. Ten years later, I decided to buy it. It is a funny and enjoyable way to explain modern physics.

A physics professor turned me onto the book and it's been helpful in learning to understand physics. I'm enjoying it.

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