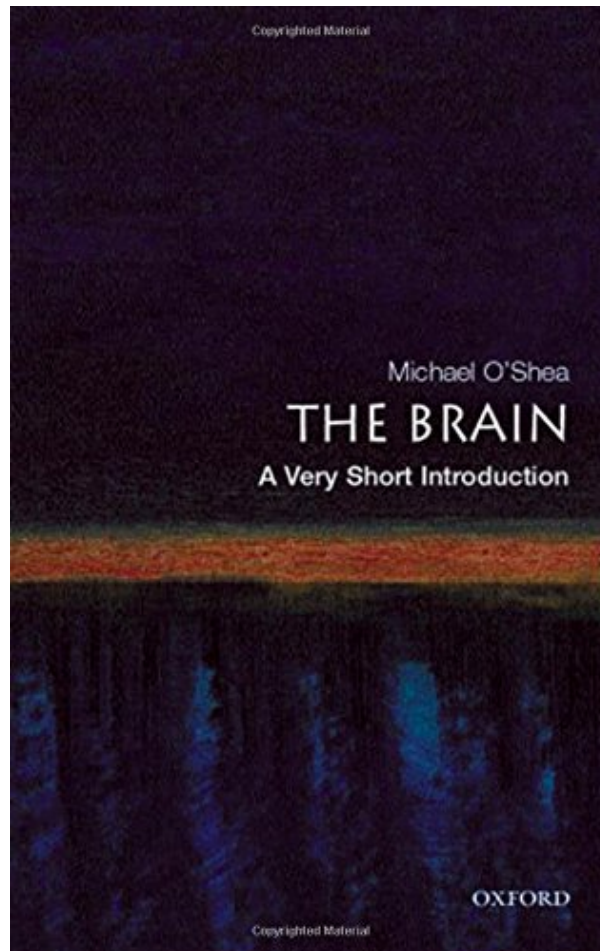


THE BRAIN: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION BY MICHAEL O'SHEA



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Review

'O'Shea writes with real enthusiasm.' The Guardian

About the Author

Michael O'Shea is Director of the Sussex Center for Neuroscience.

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The Brain: A Very Short Introduction provides a non-technical introduction to the main issues and findings in current brain research and gives a sense of how neuroscience addresses questions about the relationship between the brain and the mind. Short, clear discussions on the mechanical workings of the brain are offered and the details of brain science are covered in an accessible style. Explanations of the more familiar implications of the brain's actions, such as memories, perceptions, and motor control are integrated throughout the book. It has chapters on brain processes and the causes of "altered mental states," as well as a final chapter that discusses possible future developments in neuroscience, touching on artificial intelligence, gene therapy, the importance of the Human Genome Project, drugs by design, and transplants. Up-to-date coverage of the newest developments in brain research and suggestions for future research on the brain are also included.

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'O'Shea writes with real enthusiasm.' The Guardian

About the Author

Michael O'Shea is Director of the Sussex Center for Neuroscience.

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34 of 34 people found the following review helpful.

A brainy introduction, but not picture perfect

By Peter Reeve

O'Shea's book provides a very broad overview of the structure and function of the most complex object known to Man. The biochemical and physical interactions of neurons, the formation of memory, brain-machine interaction, and a range of other topics, are all touched upon in a readable and informative manner, pitched at the level of an intelligent beginner, and requiring just an elementary grasp of physics and chemistry. The book has one significant shortcoming: Most of the illustrations are copied from other

publications, and are a poor match with the text. For example, on page 45 there is a diagram illustrating avoidance behavior in unicellular animals, a simple concept not requiring a diagram, let alone one that occupies almost an entire page and contains labels that are not referenced in the text. Yet when we come to the discussion of the large-scale structure of the human brain, in Chapter 4, which cries out for a detailed diagram, there is none. I was reduced to finding one online, to refer to as I read the text. I agonized long and hard about whether to deduct a star from the rating, because I do recommend this book, but in the end I decided I had to. I hope OUP reissue it with more relevant illustrations.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Brainy

By HH

O'Shea starts by describing the work of Galen and the suggested impact of the humors on the body – a model which endured until the 17th century before moving onto later models developed. He also looks at some of the landmark events such as the discovery of electrical conduction in the nervous system as well as the structure of the neurons. O'Shea then looks briefly at the evolution of the nervous system explaining some of the consequences of symmetrical body plans on the evolution of the nervous system. He also covers embryological development very briefly and then neuro-anatomical structures with a description of the known functions of these structures. The author then goes onto discuss cellular physiology and the influence of axonal diameter on conduction velocity and the leakage of current in a salty fluid. He also discusses the work of some of the scientists involved in neurophysiology. O'Shea then discusses the evolution of the hominid brain examining the changes in brain size that have occurred in the transition across species, and considers the role that neural prosthetics could play, reviewing some of the research in this area.

To introduce the brain in the relatively short space of 124 pages is a difficult feat and O'Shea does a nice job, taking the reader through some of the principles of neurophysiology, neuro-anatomy and evolutionary development while drawing attention to some of the prominent figures in neuroscience research and their works. He also highlights some points with a description of the relevant studies. This introduction to the brain is an engaging look at robust conclusions about the brain and its functions and some of the research that has led to these conclusions.

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very helpful crash course to help me brush up on ...

By Amazon Customer

very helpful crash course to help me brush up on the small piece of neuro I had taught myself.

Background: I studied for neurop in highschool for no credit, no AP credits, no benefit.

3 years later it all floods back and moere within a week

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