

The Timetables of Science: A Chronology of the Most Important People and Events in the History of Science (Paperback)
by Alexander Hellemans (Author), Bryan Bunch (Author)

The most detailed English-language chronology, January 5, 2003
By Frank T. Manheim "telemann" (Fairfax VA) - See all my reviews

This 656 p. compendium is the most comprehensive English-language chronology I have found in an intensive search over the past several years. Focused on science and technology, it has more than twice as many scientific events than the Grun "Timetables of History" compilation (which deals with many more fields). It divides its subject by General, anthropology/archaeology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, math, medicine, physics, and technology, each presented in separate columns, using the same style as the Grun chronology. Unfortunately, the last publication was around 1991, and we badly need an update. Though the expansion of science may complicate things, the tremendous advance in electronic communications means that editors could upgrade this volume in a fraction of the time required for the existing editors - at least from an operational point of view. So come on, publishers, take up this attractive challenge. One should mention that there is another formidable challenger in the field - the massive German Chronik der Technik. But it too is out of print.

Good stuff, November 5, 2000
Reviewer: A reader

I would really recommend this for classroom use, or perhaps to add to your school library. It begins with a few pages, organized in a separate row for each division of (first) a few hundreds of thousands of years, in the Stone Age; then every few hundred years, during the age of Sumer and Egypt; every few years, as you leaf through the days of Greece, Rome, the Dark Ages, the Renaissance, and eventually it works up to having multiple entries in each category for every single year that goes by. I should note that this not nearly as eurocentric as my last few sentences might suggest -- there's plenty of material about developments in China, the empires of Songhay, Mali, etc. in Africa, the Islamic world, the Incas and Aztecs, and so on.

The headings include Anthropology/Archaeology, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Mathematics, Medicine, Physics, and Technology. The book is subdivided into several sections --

- 1.) Science before there were scientists: 2,400,000-599 B.C.
- 2.) Greek and Hellenistic science: 600 B.C. -- 529 A.D.
- 3.) Science in many lands and medieval science: 530 -- 1452
- 4.) The Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution: 1453 -- 1659
- 5.) The Newtonian Epoch: 1660 -- 1734
- 6.) The Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution: 1735 -- 1819

7.) Nineteenth century science: 1820 -- 1984

8.) Science in the twentieth century through World War II: 1895 -- 1945

9.) Science after World War II: 1946 -- 1988

10.) The coming era: 1989 -- 2000 (Yes, 1988 is the last year that this book covers. I don't know why they haven't updated it. This is a flaw, of course, but I stand by my five star ranking, because anything that recent can be looked up on the internet, etc.)

Each section is prefaced by a helpful essay, to place matters in context. Also, there are many small "boxes" interspersed throughout the text, to give more complete information on particular figures.

I don't think this book has quite as much material as Bernard Grun's "Timetables of History", but it's layout is better, and more helpful. I think this book is worth having.

No surprises but solid content. Recommended for classrooms, February 9, 2000

By Mike Noga (Cicero, IL United States) - See all my reviews

What you see is what you get with this book, and that's plenty. It's a great aid to teaching science, because it helps students more easily and quickly visualize when and where and to a small degree, how various scientific discoveries were made. What I like most about it is that the book doesn't make the assumption that science existed only in the West. Discoveries in the East, Middle East and even the Americas are mapped in "Timetables". To be honest I wouldn't have bought this one for private use but it's invaluable in a classroom setting.