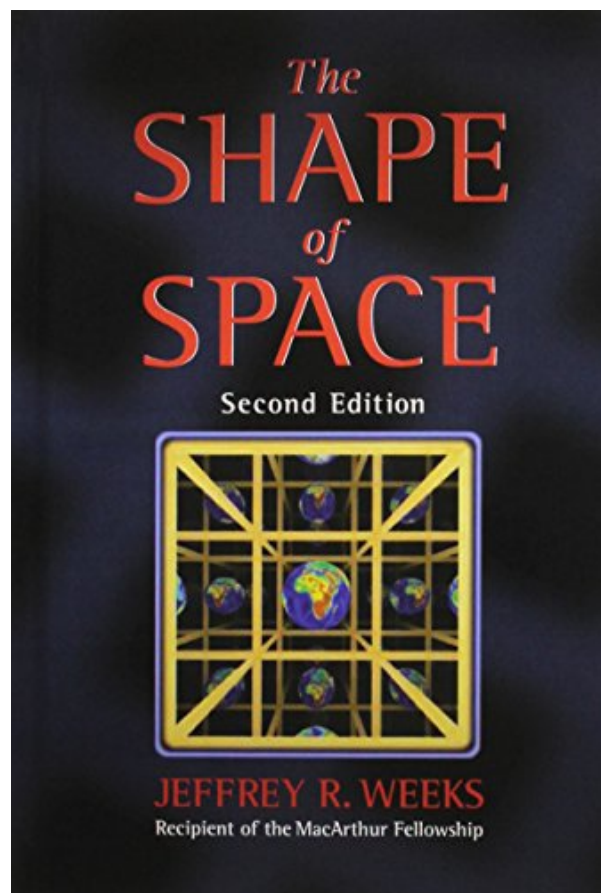
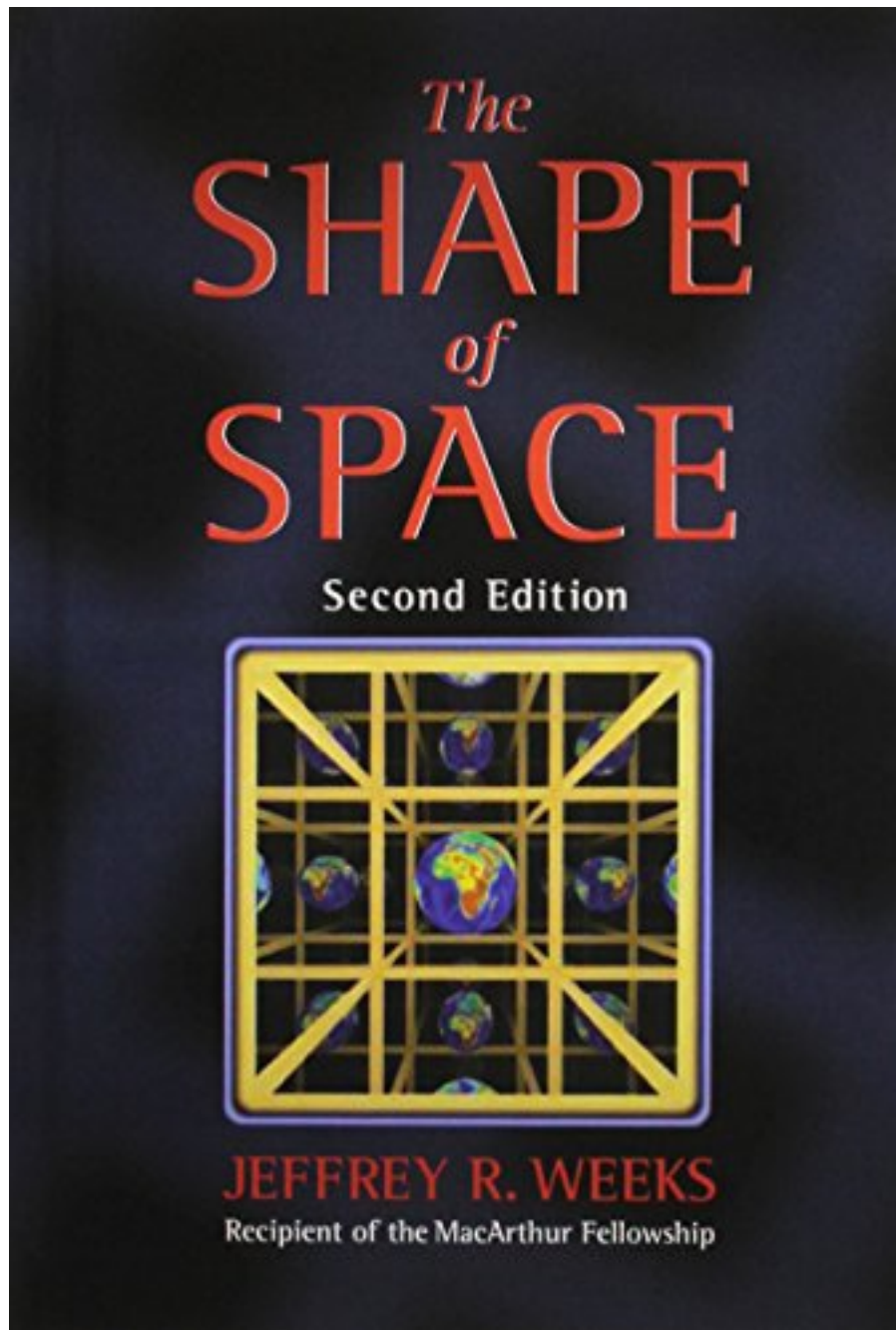


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Maintaining the standard of excellence set by the previous edition, this textbook covers the basic geometry of two- and three-dimensional spaces. Written by a master expositor, leading researcher in the field, and MacArthur Fellow, it includes experiments to determine the true shape of the universe and contains illustrated examples and engaging exercises that teach mind-expanding ideas in an intuitive and informal way. Bridging the gap from geometry to the latest work in observational cosmology, the book illustrates the connection between geometry and the behavior of the physical universe and explains how radiation remaining from the big bang may reveal the actual shape of the universe.

- Sales Rank: #557711 in Books
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- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.22" h x .94" w x 6.24" l, 1.49 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 408 pages

Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Orientability in Manifolds

By Roger Bagula

I can't give him five stars as good as Jeffery Weeks is, because the book doesn't even mention Bianchi's manifold types. I also missed a discussion of his own manifold classification scheme and his program Snap Pea.

I bought the book so I could understand his low volume M003[3,-1] Weeks space. It, too, isn't mentioned. He did give some coverage to the dodecahedron type of hyperbolic manifold.

He probably should have left cosmology out as he seems to have very little idea of particle formation during the early universe?

There is no doubt that Jeffery Weeks is a brilliant geometer, he just seems to have limited his background not to include fractal/ scaling theory, gravitational physics or Lie algebras?

What makes this book so good is his coverage of orientability in Manifolds. The only real physical evidence that nature may have orientability incorporated is the parity of the electron, some asymmetry in mesons and time's arrow in thermodynamics. His ideas and the dialog in the text about the expansion of space and what there was before the big bang is sophistry (that is the bad teaching before philosophy)

and not science or mathematics. That he presents it is a shame on his thesis adviser who was supposed to have made sure he knew what meta-mathematics and metaphysics were?

I think it is a well written book and should be read by those wishing to understand modern manifold theory, it just isn't complete and he just assumes he knows much more than is actually known.

62 of 62 people found the following review helpful.

Straight talk about curved space

By Royce E. Buehler

What is the universe as a whole shaped like? Does it curve back on itself? Does it meet itself at the other side without curving? Is its Flatland analogy a plane, or a sphere, or a doughnut, or a Klein bottle? What other, stranger geometries become possible with the added dimension? And if the universe has one of these exotic shapes, how could astronomers ever know for sure?

Jeffrey Weeks, a MacArthur ("genius grant") fellow and a consultant to NASA on cosmological observations, believes that there's no reason why a liberal arts student or a high schooler shouldn't be able to have a solid understanding of the answers to these questions, even though some of them are at the edge of research in cosmology and three-manifolds, and others have traditionally not been part of the math curriculum before graduate school.

The math is presented at an elementary level, but it is genuine mathematics. Readers in the intended audience must be prepared to roll up their sleeves; there are exercises, and there are formulas, and their minds will be stretched. But there are no prerequisites other than a little first-year algebra, and the discussion stays at a vividly concrete level, with a plethora of diagrams to aid the swelling imagination. High schoolers will benefit from some guidance getting through it; it's appropriate for undergraduate self-study.

More mathematically sophisticated readers, even those who've taken a course in algebraic topology or differentiable manifolds, will find the book a lively read, but will still probably learn a thing or two. I, for one, was startled to be shown a Moebius strip that was two-sided! (The trick is to embed it in a non-orientable three-space.)

The payoff is in the final two chapters, which detail programs of astronomical observation that could well tell us the precise topology and geometry of the universe, and explain just how they would do it. One chapter is devoted to a technique based on correlating distances between galactic clusters, and the other to a statistical search for correlated arcs of great circles in the cosmic microwave background. Both observations will probably be completed within the next decade. It's an exciting prospect.

Buyers note: I believe the Amazon characterization of this as a paperback is in error. I bought the second edition in hardcover at the same list price. In its (successful) attempt to avoid intimidation, it uses a large typeface, so it would fill out some 200 pages in a more typical math format.

46 of 46 people found the following review helpful.

Loads of fun

By Chan-Ho Suh

But this book can also be quite serious, although it may take someone with an extensive math background to see this. The book seems aimed primarily at high-schoolers, but graduate students in topology can definitely benefit from reading it.

Weeks starts out by explaining surfaces and the quotient space descriptions of the torus and Klein bottle. Later chapters describe 3-manifolds, fibre bundles(!), and the 8 geometries relevant to Thurston's geometrization conjecture. The focus of the book is on applying these concepts to investigating the shape of our spatial universe. This is a particularly apt goal, given that many times in the book the reader is asked to imagine living in various kinds of spaces.

He has a very good set of exercises designed to increase one's visualization powers. For example, in the chapter on 3-manifolds, he has the reader color various covering space pictures of 3-manifolds like the 3-torus, according to some specifications; this really helps one understand how covering maps work.

As someone who was familiar with topology before reading the book, I can say that the book has definitely increased my understanding of 3-manifolds, which is more than I can say for most topology books. In particular, I found the material on fibre bundles very enlightening.

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