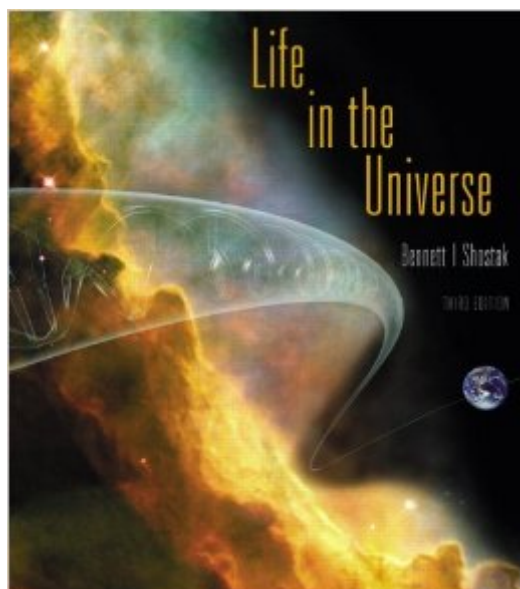


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Life In The Universe (3rd Edition) (Bennett Science & Math Titles)



Synopsis

Life in the Universe takes non-science majors on a journey through the solar system and beyond, using a rigorous yet accessible introduction to astronomy, biology, and geology to explain natural phenomena and to explore profound scientific questions about astrobiology. The Third Edition has been thoroughly revised to include updated scientific discoveries, new Cosmic Context two-page spreads, and an updated Companion Website. Â Designed for astrobiology courses but also suitable for introductory astronomy courses, Life in the Universe captures your imagination by exploring fundamental pan-scientific questions: What is life? How did life begin on Earth? What are the most extreme forms of life currently known? Is it reasonable to imagine life beyond Earth? Â The text motivates you to develop basic reasoning skills and an understanding of the process of science through skillful writing and a wealth of pedagogical features, such as Learning Goals that keep you focused on key concepts. Sidebars provide optional mathematical material for courses that fulfill quantitative requirements.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book seems to have two goals. One is to teach the reader something about astrobiology. The other is to be a text for a science course for college undergraduates (in most cases, underclassmen majoring in something other than science). The book begins by discussing how stars and planets are formed. And then comes a major point: biology may be common in the universe given evidence that

organic molecules form fairly easily, life appears to have originated early in the Earth's history, and there's evidence that Earth life can survive under a wide range of conditions. Next, there's a section on the nature of science and the scientific method. And then some material on the definition and nature of life. From there we go to the Earth's geological record. And there's a useful discussion of greenhouse gases, possible high surface temperatures on Earth when life first developed, and a possible "Snowball Earth" much later. Now comes a key chapter: how did life get started? And when. The text shows that it was not all that long after the Earth emerged from forming and being heavily bombarded. And that hyperthermophiles may well have been the common ancestor of life on Earth today. The book speculates that the process was: synthesis of organic precursor molecules, development of replicators (RNA), development of protocells (enclosing membranes), primitive cells (the RNA world), and then DNA-based cells. It also addresses the question of whether life could have migrated to Earth from Mars or elsewhere. There's a discussion of the rise of oxygen in the atmosphere. And how primitive life evolved into the intelligent life that now exists. These are certainly the right topics to start with.

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