Agriculture: A Very Short Introduction
Paul Brassley and Richard Soffe

Agriculture: A Very Short Introduction explains what farmers do and why they do it. Beginning with the most basic resource, the soil, it shows why it is important, and how farmers can increase its productivity, before turning to the plants and animals that grow on it, and tracing the connections between their biology and the various ways in which farmers work with them. It concludes by looking at some of the controversial issues facing contemporary agriculture: its sustainability; its impact on wildlife and landscape; issues of animal welfare; and the effect of climate change and the development of genetically modified organisms on farmers.

Civil Engineering: A Very Short Introduction
David Muir Wood

Civil Engineering: A Very Short Introduction examines the nature and importance of civil engineering in the history of civilization and urbanization. This VSI sets out the problems that civil engineers need to solve and the science and technology that has enabled engineers to build bridges, tunnels, houses and buildings for all aspects of life. It also looks at the social and environmental considerations and the challenges facing civil engineers of the future — managing water and energy and a growing sensitivity to buildings and the environment — as well highlighting the lives of some major civil engineers of the past.

Engineering: A Very Short Introduction
David Blockley

Engineering is part of almost everything we do — from the water we drink and the food we eat, to the buildings we live in and the roads and railways we travel on. Engineering:
A Very Short Introduction explores the nature and practice of engineering, its history, its scope, and its relationship with art, craft, science, and technology. It considers the role of engineering in the modern world, demonstrating its need to provide both practical and socially acceptable solutions, and explores how engineers use natural phenomena to embrace human needs.

**Nuclear Power: A Very Short Introduction**

Maxwell Irvine

Print Publication Year: 2011 Published Online: Sep 2013  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199584970.001.0001

‘Nuclear Power: A Very Short Introduction’ explains the development of nuclear physics up to the emergence of the nuclear power industry. What part can nuclear power play in meeting global energy demand without destroying the environment? What is the extent of public concern and confusion about the use of nuclear power and its safety? The nature of nuclear power and its risks, looking specifically at safety records and major incidents such as the Chernobyl disaster is discussed. The cost of its development and waste disposal is also considered.

**Structural Engineering: A Very Short Introduction**

David Blockley

Print Publication Year: 2014 Published Online: Sep 2014  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199671939.001.0001

Every object has structure. Structure is the difference between a random pile of components and a fully functional object. Through structure the parts connect to make the whole. Natural structures vary from the very smallest part of an atom to the entire cosmology of the universe. Man-made structures include buildings, bridges, dams, ships, aeroplanes, rockets, trains, cars, and even large artistic sculptures. Different industries in which structural engineers work include construction, transport, manufacturing, and aerospace. Structural Engineering: A Very Short Introduction explores what structural engineering is all about, including examples ranging from the Shard in London and the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco to jumbo jets and the Queen Elizabeth cruise liner.

**Telescopes: A Very Short Introduction**

Geoff Cottrell

Print Publication Year: 2016 Published Online: Dec 2016  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780198745860.001.0001

Telescopes have made dramatic revelations about the Universe and our place in it. Galileo’s observations of the Moon’s cratered surface and discovery of Jupiter’s four big
satellites profoundly altered the perception of the heavens. Over the past century, the rapid development of computer technology and sophisticated materials has allowed enormous strides in telescope construction. Modern telescopes range from large Earth-based optical telescopes and radio arrays linking up across continents, to space-based telescopes capturing the Universe in infrared, ultraviolet, X-rays, and gamma rays. Telescopes: A Very Short Introduction describes the basic physics of telescopes, the challenges of overcoming turbulence and distortion from the Earth’s atmosphere, the special techniques used in space telescopes, and looks towards the new generation of telescopes.