In 1776, Adam Smith (1723–90) wrote The Wealth of Nations, the foundational book that led to him being called the ‘father of economics’. However, Adam Smith was far more than an economist. Adam Smith is introduced through an overview of his writings and moral philosophy. Adam Smith: A Very Short Introduction offers a balanced and nuanced view of this seminal thinker, embedding his fierce defence of free trade, competition, and assault on special interests in contemporary European history, politics, and philosophy. It outlines Smith’s central ideas and how his intellectual and social environment influenced his thinking. It also discusses Smith’s influence on subsequent generations, and the ways in which he has been interpreted.

Banks are of central importance for economic growth, the allocation of capital, competitiveness, and financial stability. Propelled by technological advances in financial analysis and financial deregulation, the banking industry’s investment played a key role in enhancing national economic growth in the early 21st century. Banking: A Very Short Introduction explores the world of banking, describing the role of central banks in national and global economies, and analysing the increasing supervision and regulation imposed on the banking industry in light of the recent global financial crisis. Looking to the future, it considers proposals for reform of the banking industry, and the prospects of a resolution of the closely-related banking and sovereign debt crises.
Behavioural Economics: A Very Short Introduction introduces the field of behavioural economics, analysing the motivations behind economic decisions and showing the relevance of behavioural economics to our own lives and everyday economic and financial problems. It explores the reasons why we make irrational decisions; how we decide quickly; why we make mistakes in risky situations; our tendency to procrastination and short-termism; and how we are affected by social influences, personality, mood, and emotions. The implications of understanding the rationale for our own financial behaviour are huge. Behavioural economics could help policy-makers to understand the people behind their policies, enabling them to design more effective policies, while also improving their marketing.

Choice Theory: A Very Short Introduction
Michael Allingham

We make choices all the time — about trivial matters, about how to spend our money, about how to spend our time, about what to do with our lives. Choice Theory: A Very Short Introduction introduces ideas from economics, philosophy, and other areas, showing how the theory applies to everyday decisions, and to particular situations such as gambling and resource allocation. But what kind of criteria are we applying when we say that a choice is rational? What guides our own choices? What strategies should be applied in making decisions that affect a lot of people? This VSI explores what it means to be rational in all these contexts.

Development: A Very Short Introduction
Ian Goldin

What do we mean by development? How can citizens, governments, and the international community foster development? The process by which nations escape poverty and achieve economic and social progress has been the subject of extensive examination for hundreds of years. The notion of development itself has evolved from an original preoccupation with incomes and economic growth to a much broader understanding of development. Development: A Very Short Introduction considers the contributions that education, health, gender, equity, and other dimensions of human well-being make to development, and discusses why it is also necessary to include the role of institutions and the rule of law as well as sustainability and environmental concerns.
Economics: A Very Short Introduction
Partha Dasgupta

Economics: A Very Short Introduction describes the lives of two children who live very different lives in different parts of the world: in the Mid-West USA and in Ethiopia. It compares the obstacles facing them, and the processes that shape their lives, their families, and their futures. This VSI shows how economics uncovers these processes, finds explanations for them, and how it forms policies and solutions, along the way providing an intelligent and accessible introduction to key economic factors and concepts such as: individual choices, national policies, efficiency, equity, development, sustainability, dynamic equilibrium, property rights, markets, and public goods.

Environmental Economics: A Very Short Introduction
Stephen Smith

Environmental economics looks at how economic activity and policy affect the environment in which we live. Environmental Economics: A Very Short Introduction discusses environmental issues including pollution control, reducing environmental damage, and global climate change policies. If environmental protection is costly, how much should we spend on pollution control? Is it worth reducing pollution to zero, or should we accept some level of pollution because of the economic benefits associated with it? How can we assess the benefits that people get from a less-polluted atmosphere? Using many illustrative case studies and examples, answers to these questions are considered.

Game Theory: A Very Short Introduction
Ken Binmore

Game Theory: A Very Short Introduction provides insights into the games that are all around us. Game theory is about how to play such games in a rational way. Game theory has seen spectacular successes in evolutionary biology and economics, and is beginning to revolutionize other disciplines from psychology to political science. This Very Short Introduction introduces the fascinating world of game theory, showing how it can be understood without mathematical equations, and revealing that everything from how to play poker optimally to the sex ratio among bees can be understood by anyone willing to think seriously about the problem.
Global Economic History: A Very Short Introduction
Robert C. Allen

Global Economic History: A Very Short Introduction considers the wealth and economic history of countries worldwide. Why are some countries rich and others poor? The various factors that influence economic growth, including culture, globalization, institutions, technology, the natural environment, income distribution, and the standard of living are discussed. From the industrial revolution in Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries, the range of processes and developments that have led to economic growth in Western Europe, North America, China, India, South America, and Africa are considered. Historical examples to show the strengths and weaknesses of state intervention in the economy are also used.

Globalization: A Very Short Introduction
Manfred B. Steger

Globalization: A Very Short Introduction looks at the interconnected and accelerated processes changing how we see and experience the world. Is globalization really a new phenomenon? Is increased connection between people and nations inevitable, or are we witnessing the beginning of an era of ‘deglobalization’ or ‘anti-globalization’? Updated with new developments including advancing climate change, the Trump presidency, and the Mexico–USA border, this VSI explores the history and impact of globalization. Chapters on the cultural, economic, political, and ecological dimensions of globalization investigate the impact of new technologies, economic deregulation, and mass migration on our world and consider what we might expect from the future of globalization.

Keynes: A Very Short Introduction
Robert Skidelsky

Keynes: A Very Short Introduction provides an insight into his life and works, and explores Keynes's ethical and practical philosophy, and his monetary thought. John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) was a central thinker of the twentieth century, not just an economic theorist and statesman, but also in economics, philosophy, politics, and culture. Keynes's fundamental insight was that we do not know, and cannot calculate, what the future will bring. In the recent financial crisis, Keynes's theories have become more relevant than ever, and remain at the centre of political and economic discussion. What did Keynes contribute
to twentieth-century economic thought? What can we say about his legacy for today’s economy and society?

Microeconomics: A Very Short Introduction

Avinash Dixit


Item type: book

Microeconomics — individuals' choices of where to live and work, how much to save, what to buy, and firms' decisions about location, hiring, firing, and investment — involves issues that concern us on a daily basis. But when people think about economics, they tend to place importance on the bigger picture — macroeconomics — including issues such as unemployment, inflation, and the competitiveness of nations. Microeconomics: A Very Short Introduction argues that the microeconomy has a large impact on the economic world. Using real-life examples from around the world, this VSI provides insights into economics from psychology and sociology to explain economic behaviour and rational choice.

Poverty: A Very Short Introduction

Philip N. Jefferson


Item type: book

Millions of people worldwide live in poverty. Why is that? What has been done about it in the past? And what is being done about it now? Poverty: A Very Short Introduction explores how the answers to these questions lie in the social, political, economic, educational, and technological processes that impact all of us throughout our lives—from the circumstances of birth and gender to access to clean water and whether it is wartime or peacetime. The degree of vulnerability is all that differentiates us. This VSI looks at the history of poverty, the practical and analytical efforts made to eradicate it, and the prospects for further poverty alleviation in the future.

The Russian Economy: A Very Short Introduction

Richard Connolly


Item type: book

The Russian Economy: A Very Short Introduction looks at the historical roots of an economy dominated by the state and shaped by a need for security. The Soviet Union’s centrally planned economic system enabled industrialization, urbanization, and military success, but at what human cost? The transition to a market-based system in the late 20th century was difficult, and only partially successful. From the millennium onwards, Vladimir
Putin’s economic policy emerged as a hybrid of state- and market-controlled approaches. Russia has been criticized for overdependence on natural resources and armaments. However, if some world powers can combine state control and a profile in the global markets, why not Russia?

Taxation: A Very Short Introduction
Stephen Smith

Taxation is crucial to the functioning of the modern state. Tax revenues pay for public services—roads, the courts, defence, welfare assistance, and in many countries much of health care and education too. More than one third of national income in the industrialized (OECD) countries is, on average, taken in taxation. Taxes affect individuals in many ways. Taxation: A Very Short Introduction explains the role that taxes play in a modern economy and describes some of the main taxes used by most developed and developing countries. It considers the key issues: the question of where the burden of taxation really lies, how taxation affects the economy, and the effects of tax evasion and tax avoidance.

David Garland

The programmes that make up the welfare state vary from nation to nation and from time to time, and the balance between markets and government, and free enterprise and social protection, is perennially in question. In contemporary political debate the welfare state seems mostly to be viewed as a problem rather than a solution, and welfare programmes appear constantly on the defensive. The Welfare State: A Very Short Introduction describes the modern welfare state, explaining its historical and contemporary significance and arguing that far from being ‘a failure’ or ‘a problem’, welfare states are an essential element of contemporary capitalism, and a vital concomitant of democratic government.

The World Trade Organization: A Very Short Introduction
Amrita Narlikar

The World Trade Organization: A Very Short Introduction explanation of what the WTO is, what it does, and how it goes about executing its tasks. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is scarcely ten years old, but even in these early years of its existence it has
generated debate, controversy and even outrage. The deep and far-ranging impact of
the WTO on peoples' everyday lives means that it is not just an institution of interest
to economists, but to everyone. A clear understanding of the mandate, structure and
functioning of the WTO is essential to appreciate the controversy behind the organization,
and whether it deserves the reputation that it has acquired.