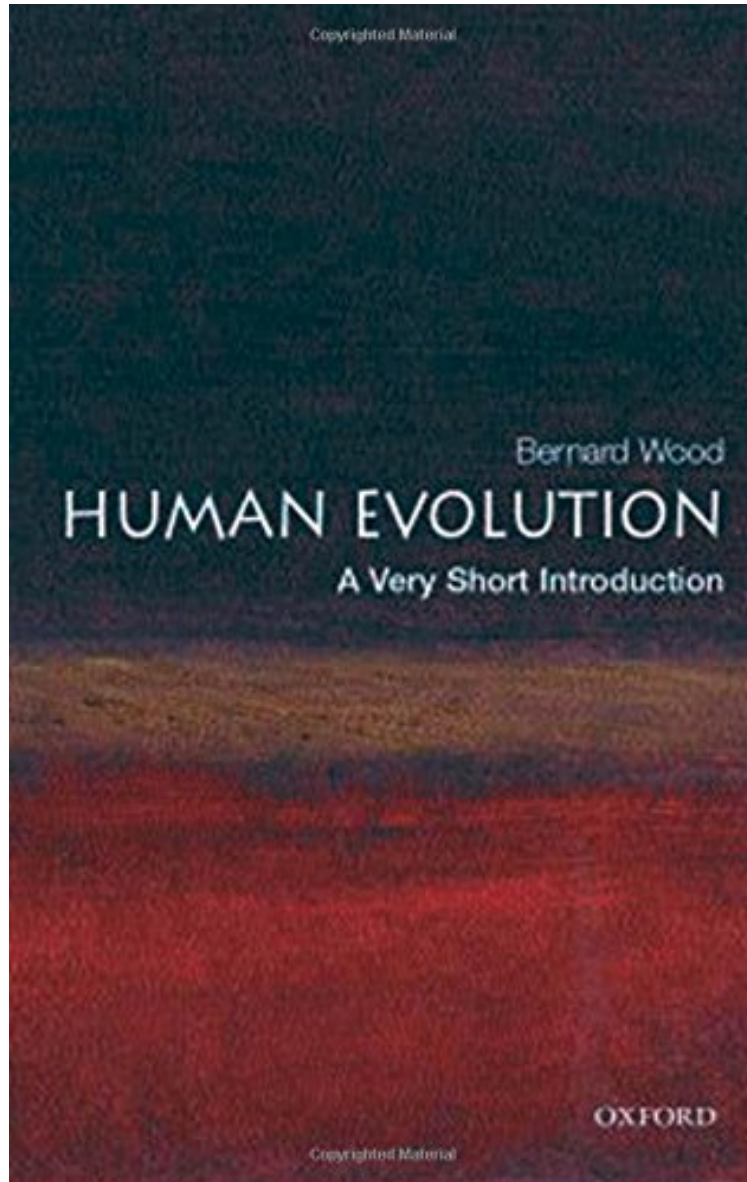


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Human Evolution: A Very Short Introduction

Bernard Wood

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Bernard Wood : Human Evolution: A Very Short Introduction before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Human Evolution: A Very Short Introduction:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. No-frills paleoanthropology By HH The "Very Short Introduction" series from Oxford University Press has gained a good reputation for putting across information in a way that is concise, but readable, and this entry in the series by Bernard Wood keeps up the good work. Although he's not shy to

use (after explanation) technical terms like clade and hominin that sit oddly on the non-specialist eye, Wood does a good job of introducing each element along the way. He gives a quick historical background of the development of our ideas on human evolution before plunging into the detail of what we now know from the fossil record (with admirable thoroughness, he explains what fossils are and how they are formed, and spends a moment on the way dendrochronology has transformed carbon dating.)The book is modern enough to include Homo Floresiensis -- the so-called hobbit (though not in any great detail), and gives a balanced view on issues that still remain contentious, like the exact mode (be it "out of Africa" or multi-regional) of humanity's spread across the planet.Perhaps the only real negative in the writing is a certain dryness, though it is never less than readable. Of course there are limitations from the format. The book's convenient size makes it less than ideal for actually reading, and the print size might prove challenging to those who haven't quite admitted to needing reading glasses yet. And the compact form doesn't make for the ideal popular science book, because there isn't really room to talk around the subject and add the fascinating context that makes for a great popular science read. These are the main reasons for my three-star rating.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good introductionBy BrianGThis is a good brief overview of what science has revealed about human evolution, albeit a little dated now in light of the recent rapid growth of genetic research in this area.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book. Complemented really well the OLLI courseBy Edward K.Great book. Complemented really well the OLLI course, The Emergence of Man, taught by Prof. Geoffrey Thomas that we took at FSU. An easy read and enjoyable.

The recent discovery of the diminutive Homo floresiensis (nicknamed "the Hobbit") in Indonesia has sparked new interest in the study of human evolution. In this Very Short Introduction, renowned evolutionary scholar Bernard Wood traces the history of paleoanthropology from its beginnings in the eighteenth century to today's latest fossil finds. Along the way we are introduced to the lively cast of characters, past and present, involved in evolutionary research. Although concentrating on the fossil evidence for human evolution, the book also covers the latest genetic evidence about regional variations in the modern human genome that relate to our evolutionary history. Wood draws on over thirty years of experience to provide an insiders view of the field, and demonstrates that our understanding of human evolution is critically dependent on advances in related sciences such as paleoclimatology, geochronology, systematics, genetics, and developmental biology. This is an ideal introduction for anyone interested in the origins and development of humankind.

About the AuthorBernard Wood is Henry R. Luce Professor of Human Origins at George Washington University and the Smithsonian Institution.