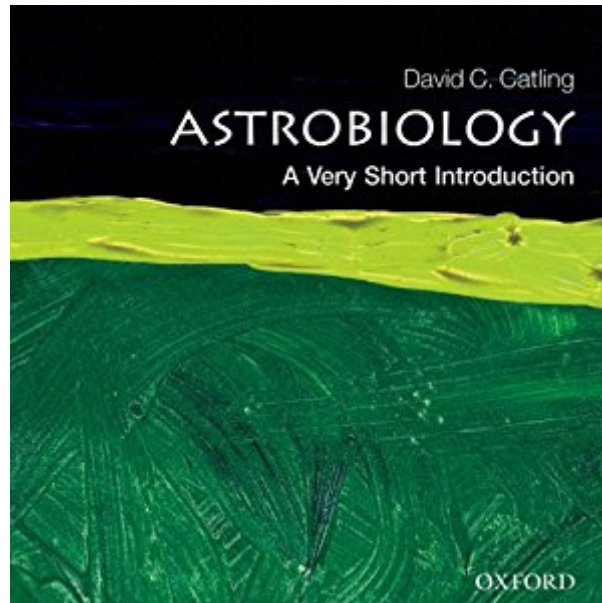


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# Astrobiology: A Very Short Introduction



## Synopsis

Astrobiology is the study of the origin and development of life on this and other planets. What fascinates people about astrobiology is that it seeks answers to long-standing unsolved questions: How quickly did life evolve on Earth and why did life persist here? Is there life elsewhere in the Solar System or beyond? The research of astrobiology has become more crucial than ever in recent decades, as biologists have discovered microbes that live in ever more extreme settings, such as bubbling hot springs, in acid, or deep within rocks. Rooted in strong and rigorous research, astrobiology incorporates the work of microbiologists, geologists, and astronomers. In this Very Short Introduction, David C. Catling introduces the origins of astrobiology and demonstrates its impact on current astronomical research and potential future discoveries.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 4 hours and 51 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: February 11, 2014

Language: English

ASIN: B00IDO22WY

Best Sellers Rank: #44 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science > Astronomy #180 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science > Physics #860 in Books > Science & Math > Astronomy & Space Science > Astrophysics & Space Science

## Customer Reviews

The author writes well and has the rare quality of being able to explain complex concepts in a simplified manner without being patronizing. This alone earns my respects. I would have slightly changed the order of the chapters because they jump from astronomy to chemistry to life (both known and as "we don't know it") and back again throughout the book. I was able to follow the book nonetheless, but only by being really focused. Even though by far the information is accurate, you know the nitpicks are coming, don't you? (-) I read it in ebook form, so I cannot give you the page numbers as I usually do, but it is easy to use the "search" function to find the referenced passages so you should have no problem looking for them. I will put the phrase/sentence between "quotes" followed by my remarks. Here we go!\*\*\*In Darwin's natural selection mechanism, the genetic

variation in populations of individuals means that some are better adapted for greater reproductive success than others"Close, but no cigar. There is a key component in this scheme that is indispensable to really understand it. The genetic variability of a population determines who lives and therefore who gets to reproduce as a function of the environment. In other words the "fittest" change as the environment changes.\*\*"Carbon can also build three-dimensional complexity by forming hexagonal rings that join together"Yes, the benzene ring is usually associated with the chemistry of carbon, but there are all kinds of rings, not only hexagonal ones.\*\*" ...

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