



The Elements: A Very Short Introduction

Philip Ball

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This *Very Short Introduction* is an exciting and non-traditional approach to understanding the terminology, properties, and classification of chemical elements. It traces the history and cultural impact of the elements on humankind, and examines why people have long sought to identify the substances around them. The book includes chapters on particular elements such as gold, iron, and oxygen, showing how they shaped culture and technology. Looking beyond the Periodic Table, the author examines our relationship with matter, from the uncomplicated vision of the Greek philosophers, who believed there were four elements--earth, air, fire, and water--to the work of modern-day scientists in creating elements such as hassium and meitnerium. Packed with anecdotes, *The Elements* is a highly engaging and entertaining exploration of the fundamental question: what is the world made from?

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