



Getting Started in Electronics

Forrest M. Mims III

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"A complete electronics course in 128 pages"--Cover.

Getting Started in Electronics Details

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Tom says

This was, and continues to be a great book. I read it thoroughly when I was about 8, and it made sense then. I obviously didn't fully understand everything in it, but the book made it easy to pretend I did. This led to my hobby as a 9-10 year old being electronics, whether soldering components together, or building a power supply for future projects.

I'd strongly recommend this book to anyone that is interested in electronics, or wants to know more about it. It is a bit dated now, but it is still one of the best resources I know of for basic electronics. It is handwritten by Mims, and he has a way of integrating humor into his pages.

Jonatron says

I think this book mislead me more than it taught me. I remember as a kid being frustrated by my inability to make circuits work, and I think this book's simplistic descriptions are partially to blame.

The book emphasizes electron current instead of conventional current, as if this is somehow more instructive or more correct. In fact, depending on the materials the component is made out of, current can be carried by electrons (metal), ions (batteries, electrolytic capacitors, neon lamps), holes (semiconductors), or even free protons (fuel cells). Conventional current abstracts away this distinction between charge carriers so you can focus on the big picture. Teaching everything backwards — as if only electron current matters — just confuses things, for no benefit.

The drawings show little electron cartoons jumping out of wires, getting "stuck" inside resistors, being blocked by the field of an FET, or stuck on one side of a thyristor with none being able to get to the other side, etc. This is *not* how circuits work. A resistor slows down all the current in the entire circuit, not just the electrons on one side of it. Electrons don't all move in unison with each other, they bounce around randomly, and only the net drift of billions of particles matters. It should be thought of as a fluid, not as individual particles. Maybe it would be more fair to say that the book was a little over my head as a kid. But the pictures *are* misleading, and those are what I focused on at the time.

There are problems with the descriptions, too. Although they make sense to someone already familiar with electronics, the book is aimed at people who aren't. "Ground", for instance, is described as "the point in a circuit at zero voltage, whether or not it's connected to ground". I struggled with these descriptions for years. Only when I got to college did I finally start to learn this stuff, rather than poke in the dark and hope that things worked. (You can pick *any* point in a circuit and call it ground. It's just a reference point for making voltage measurements, and there are common conventions for which point you should choose. It's as simple as that.)

I think William Beaty's Electricity Misconceptions pages are much better at explaining electricity in an intuitive, but accurate way.

Jeanne Boyarsky says

"Getting Started in Electronics" is only 128 pages but covers an incredible amount. It goes over the major parts in electronics. I like the emphasis on how things work - yes a little physics. There are wiring diagrams, pictures of components and a great reference on the covers.

It's the kind of book you have to read many times to get everything out of it. First read was great though.

The only thing I don't like is that it is handwritten font on graph paper like in a real engineering notebook. I loved the O'Reilly series which was also on graph paper. The difference is that a typed font was used for the main text and only the notes in the margin looked handwritten. By contrast, having everything look handwritten made it hard to skim. I used a highlighter to solve that problem on subsequent reads.

And I used the highlighter a lot which means there was lots of information. I bought this book directly from <http://www.forrestmims.com/>. It came in less than 5 days which was quite impressive.

Nadine Rafiq says

This book wasn't very helpful to me. Most of its content is a mixture of basic information and well-known facts. Even though it's simple, short and entertaining.

Jan says

Classic

Isaac says

I thought this was a decent book. It gives a pretty good outline of electronic components and how to use them, but it really isn't a complete electronics course like it says on the cover. That is to be expected though, it is only about 130 pages long.

Nima says

This book is 90% well written and the other 10% is very vague to understand.

It does cover a wide range of topics starting with describing lithium atom and ohm's laws then explains different electrical components.

To be honest, it's descriptions are oversimplified and that is why I skip a star in my rating of this book.

Of course there were some crucial information that the book left behind because of abstraction and it also managed to represent some new topics without referencing it beforehand so you are forced to study a lot the

materials from the internet.

Overall, I really like the way this book introduces one to the world of electronics and as a designer and computer science engineer, I recommend reading this book to anyone who wants to understand the basic of electronics.

Hazel says

A good book for beginners. It covers most of the basic components and principles in a straight forward fashion, but also goes into enough depth that you get a good working knowledge of them. Even after reading the previous sections the section on IC's can be a bit difficult. I think with some work on the projects this would quickly clear up.

Carl says

If you are interested in getting the solid basis in electronics this is where you start. Forrest M. Mims, III is the closest thing to god (who is the closest thing to Bre Pettis) where electronics are concerned.

Julian Patton says

Its good for a beginner...like me, but I don't like the lack of help on the actual Circuits section of the book. Even after reading all the referential material I still feel a little intimidated about building a circuit from scratch strictly from the circuit section, and a barely understood a lot of the material in the book anyway.

Jared Corgan says

Forrest Mims is undoubtedly an influence in why my life took the direction towards science and electronics.

Faseeh says

It had some great knowledge for someone who is just getting started with electronics but maybe it's because the nature of the subject that you require one to one interaction with a teacher or the circuit itself to fully understand the concept. The book is great. But the subject needs a teacher I think.

Jaco says

This is a pretty basic book when it comes Electronic circuits and the theory behind it. There are plenty of other books that go far more indepth. However, this book is cheap, short, and written in a way that someone

(like myself) who doesn't have a strong background in Electronic Engineering can have a pretty solid foundation to work off of as they start building circuits.

Now, I have to warn everyone that this is not the most current book out there. The first print was in 1983. However, basic circuitry and the things Forrest Mims talks about haven't changed much since then and are still very much relevant to basic circuit design today. I would recommend this to anyone who is on a tight budget, doesn't want a 567 page textbook, and really doesn't have much to go on as far as knowledge on electronic theory.

Darrough says

Very lightweight and high level. You will not be able to build anything after reading this book. If you want a gentle primer it would be especially good for that. Just understand that you will not know how to pick a transistor for a circuit. You will have a conceptual understanding of what a transistor does, but as far as "which transistor could I use to fix this old radio" you will be lost.

Soheil says

A very practical book for those interested in cracking the surface of electronics and to gain a basic knowledge into the field.
