

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Note. On page 2, Wald comments:

“The purpose of this book is to present the theory of general relativity. We will take a more modern, geometrical viewpoint than Einstein had... but the essential content of the theory is the one Einstein gave...”

Note. In 1905, Albert Einstein (March 14, 1879 to April 18, 1955) published (along with several other works) “On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies” (“Zur Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper”) in *Annalen der Physik*, **17**, 891–921 (1905). This is available online at:

[http://hermes.ffn.ub.es/luisnavarro/nuevo_maletin/
Einstein_1905_relativity.pdf](http://hermes.ffn.ub.es/luisnavarro/nuevo_maletin/Einstein_1905_relativity.pdf)

and

<https://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/einstein/specrel/www/>

(accessed 6/16/2018). In this paper, he introduces special relativity. Special relativity is, simply put (probably *over-simply*) the study of flat spacetime. It shows that measurements of lengths and time are dependent on the relative motion of inertial frames of reference (“inertial frame” are moving relative to each other at a constant velocity; acceleration is not allowed; this is explained briefly in Section 1.2). Since special relativity does not address acceleration, it cannot deal with gravity. Because of this, special relativity is the relativity of an empty (or mass-free) universe.

Note. In 1916, Einstein published “The Foundation of the General Theory of Relativity” (“Die Grundlage der allgemeinen Relativitätstheorie”) *Annalen der Physik*, **49**, 769–822 (1916). This is available online at:

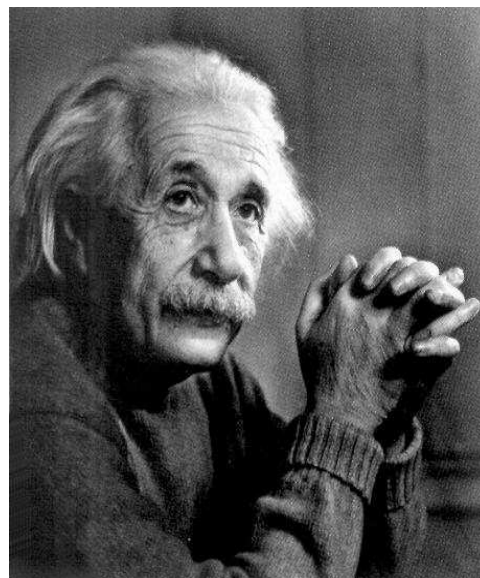
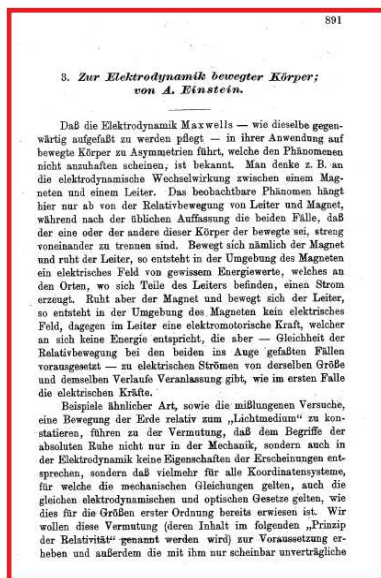
http://hermes.ffn.ub.es/luisnavarro/nuevo_maletin/

[Einstein_GRelativity_1916.pdf](#) and

<https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/>

[The_Foundation_of_the_Generalised_Theory_of_Relativity](#)

(accessed 6/16/2018). This is the work that overturns classical Newtonian mechanics. It addresses acceleration and the presence of mass. The force due to gravity is described as a curvature of spacetime. In the original paper, Einstein explains the observed precession of the perihelion of Mercury’s orbit (which Newton cannot explain), giving the work empirical support. He also predicted the bending of light in a strong gravitational field, which was measured in the famous 1919 eclipse expedition of Sir Arthur Eddington to Africa. This story is told in the BBC 2008 docu-drama *Einstein and Eddington*.

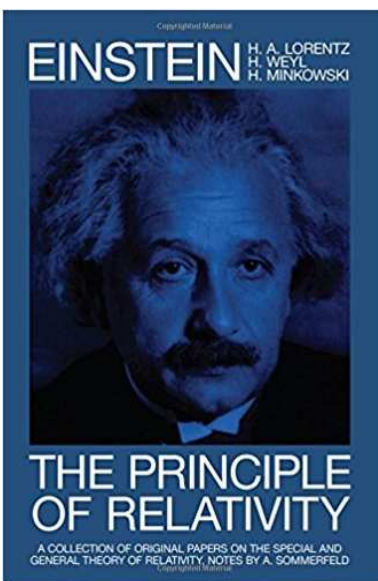


Special relativity paper

Albert Einstein

General relativity paper

Note. Dover Publications has several foundational relativity papers in print in *The Principle of Relativity: A Collection of Original Papers on the Special and General Theory of Relativity*. In addition to the 1905 special relativity paper and the 1916 general relativity paper of Einstein, it also includes several other of Einstein's papers (such as the " $E = mc^2$ " paper), H. A. Lorentz's paper on the Michelson-Morley experiment, and H. Minkowski's paper in which he translates Einstein's special relativity into a more rigorous mathematical expression of spacetime as a flat manifold. Einstein, in turn, uses Minkowski's work in his modeling of gravitation as a curvature of spacetime.



Revised: 6/16/2018