

How to be a winner

An Australian spider that uses waves to hunt prey, *Dolomedes briangreenei*, was named in honour of Brian Greene (winner 2000, *The Elegant Universe*)...

196 books were entered into the 2017 Prize.

...however shortlisted author and judge Sir David Attenborough has at least 15 species named for him, including a 20 million-year-old pygmy grasshopper.

174 books have been shortlisted for the Prize since its inception.

- The lead character in Andrea Wulf's 2016 winning book – Alexander von Humboldt – has a number of namesakes, including:
- The Humboldt Current**, a cold ocean current that hugs South America
 - Mountain ranges** in China, New Zealand and South Africa
 - A breed of penguins** in South America
 - A river** in Brazil
 - A glacier** in Greenland
 - 13 towns** in North America
 - A predatory six-foot squid**
 - A basaltic plane on the Moon** called Humboldtianum

The longest winning book has **667 pages** (*A short history of nearly everything*, Bill Bryson)

and the shortest **216 pages** (*The Universe in a nutshell*, Stephen Hawking).

Arno Karlen, author of *Plague's Progress*, is also a published poet.

There have been 3 female winners...

- 1997** Pat Shipman: Co-authored the winning book *The Wisdom of Bones* with Alan Walker.
- 2015** Gaia Vince: The first solo female winner with *Adventures in the Anthropocene*.
- 2016** Andrea Wulf: Won for her biography of Alexander von Humboldt, *The Invention of Nature*.

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11,131 pages of winning writing have featured since 1988.

Jared Diamond has won the prize twice...

- The Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee* (1992)
- Guns, Germs and Steel* (1998)

Whilst numerous co-authors have been shortlisted, only one double act has won (husband and wife scientist team Alan Walker and Pat Shipman).

55% of our winners are scientists.
45% are writers and not practicing scientists.

3 winning authors have been depicted on the big screen.

- Bill Bryson
- Roger Penrose
- Stephen Hawking

One of our winners is not a named individual (the British Medical Association).

The most popular publication month for winning books is **June**, followed by **January**.

As well as taking us on a journey through the information age, James Gleick is the author of a Pulitzer Prize nominated biography of Sir Isaac Newton.

Books about **human origins** have fared best over the years.

History of science and physics books take **second place** with **14%**...

...followed by books which make the seemingly ordinary extraordinary making up **10% of the winners**.

The first Chair of judges was **Sir David Attenborough**, and the most recent is **Professor Richard Forley**.

The Royal Society's archive is home to one of the world's most influential science books – **the manuscript of Sir Isaac Newton's work, *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica***. It is the Royal Society's greatest treasure and a cornerstone of scientific thought.

144 judges have done the honours over the past 30 years.

4 prize winners have served as judges.

Winning books tackle a whole world of topics...

- Maths
- Technology
- Physics
- History of science
- Chemistry
- Biology, including genetics and neuroscience
- Oceans
- Anthropology
- Climate change
- Self improvement
- Making the ordinary extraordinary

The only maths book on the winning list is a biography of the famous mathematician Paul Erdős (*The Man Who Loved Only Numbers*, Paul Hoffman)

The prize was founded in 1988, the same year that Stephen Hawking published *A Brief History of Time*.

Hawking's iconic book didn't win the award when it was shortlisted in 1989, but he won in 2002 for *The Universe in a Nutshell*.

Chris McManus, author of *Right Hand, Left Hand* is right-handed.