

**Kepler: His Life and Work**  
**A Resource Guide to Materials in English for Beginners**  
**by Andrew Fraknoi (Foothill College & ASP)**

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**Kepler Books for Adults-**

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- Casper, Max *Kepler*. 1959, Collier; available in a Dover reprint edition. This biography by a respected historian is the classic story of Kepler's life.
- Connor, James *Kepler's Witch: An Astronomer's Discovery of Cosmic Order Amid Religious War, Political Intrigue, and the Heresy Trial of His Mother*. 2004, HaperOne. A popular-level introduction that places Kepler in the context of the religious and political conflicts of his time.
- Ferguson, Kitty *Tycho and Kepler: The Unlikely Partnership That Forever Changed Our Understanding of the Heavens*. 2002, Walker & Co. Biography and chronicle of the two men's interaction, by a prolific science writer.
- Gingerich, Owen *The Eye of Heaven: Ptolemy, Copernicus and Kepler*. 1993, American Institute of Physics Press. A somewhat more technical introduction by a foremost astronomical historian.
- Koestler, Arthur *The Watershed*. 1960, Doubleday. A novelist's take on the revolutionary ideas of Kepler and others. (See Koestler's *The Sleepwalkers*, 1959, Macmillan, for his full history of the astronomical renaissance. *The Watershed* is one section of this longer book.)

Most books on the history of astronomy feature a section on the work of Kepler. Two that have nice sections on his contributions are:

- Ferris, Timothy *Coming of Age in the Milky Way*. 1988, Morrow. Chapter 4 focuses on Kepler.
- Kolb, Rocky *Blind Watchers of the Sky*. 1996, Helix/Addison-Wesley. Kepler is one of the key scientists discussed.

**Kepler Books for Children**

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- Boerst, William *Johannes Kepler: Discovering the Laws of Celestial Motion*. 2003, Morgan Reynolds. For students in grades 6 - 9.
- Voelkel, James *Johannes Kepler and the New Astronomy*. 1999, Oxford U. Press. Good beginner's introduction to his work and life; part of the "Oxford Portraits in Science" series. For middle and high school students.

**Kepler Articles**

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- Gee, B. "400 Years: Johannes Kepler" in *Physics Teacher*, vol. 9, p. 510 (1971).

Gingerich, O. "Johannes Kepler and the Rudolphine Tables" in *Sky & Telescope*, Dec. 1971, p. 328. (6-page article on Kepler's work, reprinted in Gingerich's *The Great Copernicus Chase*. 1992, Sky Publishing.)

Wilson, C. "How Did Kepler Discover His First Two Laws" in *Scientific American*, Mar. 1972, p. 92.

### **Some Kepler Web Sites**

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Biography at the Galileo Project Site: <http://galileo.rice.edu/sci/kepler.html>

Kepler Mission's Johannes Kepler Page (with brief bio): <http://kepler.nasa.gov/johannes/>

MacTutor Kepler Biography:

<http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Biographies/Kepler.html>

Michael Fowler's Notes from a Course at the University of Virginia:

<http://galileoandstein.physics.virginia.edu/1995/lectures/kepler.html> and

<http://galileoandstein.physics.virginia.edu/1995/lectures/morekepl.html>

### **Kepler in Fiction**

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Banville, John *Kepler: A Novel*. 1981, Godine. Novelization of Kepler's life.

Hindemith, Paul *The Harmony of the World*. An opera written in the 1950's based on Kepler's life and philosophical beliefs. A CD of the full opera is available, performed by the Berlin Rundfunk Symphony, conducted by Janowski (Wergo CD)