

2.1

A BIG HISTORY OF EVERYTHING

0:00–1:20 Nearly 14 billion years ago, a moment that had only a split second to unfold precisely as it did, or the entire Universe might have ended shortly after it began. It is the quietest quiet there has ever been. And then suddenly, out of nothing, everything begins. It is Big History's first threshold — the Big Bang. In a fraction of a second, all the energy that will ever exist appears in an inconceivable flash.

NO TURNING BACK

Everything begins, as far as we know, at this moment. And from the moment it appears, physicists can offer a very coherent account of everything that happens since.

Before the first second has passed, the fundamental forces appear that will govern all existence forever. One is the gravity that holds us to the Earth... And that we will need to overcome in order to fly. Another, the electromagnetism that lets you make a cell phone call.

1:20–2:15

LAYING THE
GROUND RULES

The Big Bang is the creation event that lays the ground rules. It lays the ground rules of the fundamental forces: the strength of gravity, the speed of light, all of the things that will shape the rest of the history of the Universe.

And in these first few seconds, a lot could have gone wrong. If gravity had been just a tiny bit stronger, all of existence would have collapsed in on itself. A bit weaker...and stars would never be able to form. But the Big Bang occurred at just the right force to set our entire history in motion, which is why it's the first of eight thresholds. We will see that they are all mysteriously connected. Eight thresholds that explain everything. Eight portals that lead to us...including the next one...the moment when the immense heat, darkness, and chaos of the early Universe suddenly explodes into a trillion trillion points of light.

2:15–3:32

JUST RIGHT