

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

### 16: The Early Universe

Chapter 16 travels back in time to the earliest moments of the Universe. The chapter starts with the formation of the lightest chemical elements, and continues back to the extreme temperatures and densities at which the first subatomic particles formed. The last sections of the chapter discuss cosmic inflation and the limits of our knowledge at the very start of the Universe's existence.

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Thumbnail: Artist's interpretation of the Big Bang, with representations of the early universe and its expansion. (Public Domain; NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center/CI Lab)

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