

★ Marie Curie Fact Sheet

Marie's Life

Marie Curie was born in 1867 in Poland. She lived with her mother, father and four brothers and sisters. Marie's parents were both teachers, and her father taught her about science at a young age. She went to the local schools and was a good student who did well in her studies.

After she finished school, Marie worked as a private tutor for children in Poland. She wanted to make some money so she could study science at the University of Paris. Women were not allowed to go to university in Poland, so at the age of 23 or 24, Marie moved to Paris and attended lessons at the university there. She achieved degrees in both Physics and Maths.

In 1895, Marie married a Physics professor called Pierre Curie. She lived with him in Paris. The Curies were poor but they were still able to work on their research. Marie had heard about the work of Henri Becquerel, who had been finding out about x-rays and a material called uranium. She did her own research in this area, and this is when she discovered the two brand new elements. She named the first of these materials 'polonium' after Poland, where she was born.

In 1906, Pierre was killed in a road accident. Marie carried on working on her research for many years. In 1934, Marie died of a blood disorder. This was caused by all the radiation she had been exposed to in her life.



Achievements

Marie Curie is one of the most famous women in modern science. She achieved many amazing things in her life.

She was the first person to win two Nobel prizes, and is still the only person to win Nobel prizes for both Physics and Chemistry.

Marie Curie was the first female professor at the University of Paris, at a time when women found it hard to be accepted as scientists.

Her discoveries and investigations helped our understanding of radioactivity and radiation, or invisible rays that are given off by some materials.

She worked together with her husband to discover two brand new radioactive elements - radium and polonium.

X-rays

Marie Curie founded the Radium Institute in Paris after her husband's death. Here, she investigated all forms of radiation and radioactivity, including x-rays. X-rays had been discovered in 1895 by Wilhelm Röntgen, and Marie developed the use of x-rays for medical purposes. In 1914, World War One broke out, and Marie created and transported over 200 x-ray machines to field hospitals. It is estimated that over 1 million injured soldiers were photographed by her x-ray machines. Albert Einstein said, 'She helped humanity greatly by her work'.



Did You Know?

Marie Curie's work books and papers are still so radioactive that it is dangerous to handle them. They are stored in lead lined boxes, and anyone who wants to read them must wear a protective suit.



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Marie's Life

Marie Curie was born Maria Skłodowska in 1867 in Warsaw, a city in Poland. She lived with her mother, father and four brothers and sisters. Marie's parents were both teachers, and her father taught her the basics of science at a young age. She went to the local schools with her friends, brothers and sisters, and was a good student who excelled in her studies.

After she finished school, Marie worked as a private tutor for children in Poland. She wanted to make some money so she could travel to Paris and study science at the University there. At that time, women were not allowed to go to University in Poland, so Marie knew she had to leave Poland if she wanted to continue her scientific work. At the age of 23 or 24, Marie moved to Paris and attended lessons at the University there. She achieved degrees in both Physics and Maths.

In 1895, Marie married Pierre Curie, a Physics professor. She decided to stay in Paris and live with him. Even though the Curies were poor, they were still able to carry out investigations and scientific research. Marie had heard about the work of Henri Becquerel, who had been finding out about x-rays and uranium. She was inspired to do her own research in this area, and this is when she discovered the two brand new elements. She named the first of these materials 'polonium' after her home country of Poland.

In 1906, Marie was devastated when Pierre was killed in a road accident. She continued working, but she herself died in 1934 as a result of a blood disorder caused by a lifetime of exposure to dangerous radiation.

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