

# Marie Curie

## Her Life



Where and when was she born?

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What was she like at school?

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Why did she go to Paris?

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Who was Pierre Curie?

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When did she die?

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## Her Work



Which new elements did she discover?

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What did she use x-ray machines for?

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## Her Achievements



Which prizes did she win?

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What was she the first to do?

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# Marie Curie

## 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.



## X-Rays

Marie Curie started the Radium Institute in Paris after her husband's death. She worked there to find out more about radiation and radioactivity, including x-rays. X-rays had been discovered in 1895 by Wilhelm Röntgen, and Marie worked on the use of x-rays for medical purposes. In 1914, the First World War broke out and Marie developed over 200 x-ray machines for war hospitals. People think that over 1 million injured soldiers were treated with the help of her x-ray machines. Albert Einstein said, 'She helped humanity greatly by her work'.

## 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.



Did you know...  
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Marie Curie's workbooks and papers are still so radioactive that it is dangerous to handle them. They are stored in boxes lined with lead and anyone who wants to read them has to wear a protective suit.