Stephen Hawking

Theoretical Physicist — Black Holes & Cosmology



Born:
January 8, 1942
Oxford, England

Name: _____

Date: _____

BIOGRAPHY

Stephen Hawking was one of the most brilliant theoretical physicists of the modern era. Born on January 8, 1942 — exactly 300 years after the death of Galileo — he seemed destined for scientific greatness. He studied at Oxford and Cambridge universities, where he quickly gained a reputation as an exceptional thinker.

At age 21, Hawking was diagnosed with a rare motor neurone disease called ALS, which gradually paralyzed his body. Doctors gave him just two years to live. But Hawking defied all predictions, living for another 55 years and continuing to produce groundbreaking science throughout his life.

Hawking made major contributions to our understanding of black holes — regions of space with gravity so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape. He proposed that black holes actually emit a faint radiation, now called Hawking Radiation, which was a revolutionary idea that connected physics, thermodynamics, and gravity.

He also worked on the Big Bang theory, helping explain how the universe began. His book A Brief History of Time, published in 1988, explained complex ideas about the universe in a way ordinary people could understand. It sold over 10 million copies worldwide.

Hawking communicated through a speech-generating device, moving only his cheek muscles. He showed the world that the human mind can achieve extraordinary things even when the body cannot. He passed away in 2018, leaving behind a legacy of courage and scientific brilliance.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. **What is a black hole, and what is Hawking Radiation?**

2. **How did Stephen Hawking continue his work despite his physical condition?**

3. **Why is A Brief History of Time considered an important book? What did it achieve?**

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