



STEPHEN HAWKING



- **Full name:** Stephen William Hawking
- **Born:** 8th January 1942
- **Hometown:** Oxford, England
- **Occupation:** Theoretical Physicist and Cosmologist
- **Died:** 14th March 2018

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Stephen Hawking was born in 1942 in Oxford, England. His parents, Frank and Isobel, both attended the University of Oxford, where Frank read medicine and Isobel read Philosophy, Politics and Economics.

Hawking studied at the University of Oxford and earned a bachelor's degree from there in 1962. When Hawking was 21, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—a disease that weakens muscles and causes paralysis. Despite his diagnosis, he continued to work. He earned a doctorate from the University of Cambridge in 1966.

CAREER

As a cosmologist, Hawking studied the basic laws that govern the universe. One of his theories was that mini black holes were formed following the big bang. These mini black holes contain one billion tons of mass but occupy less than the space of an atom. Hawking's work inspired others to investigate the properties of black holes.

Hawking became a professor at Cambridge in 1977. Two years later he was appointed Lucasian professor of mathematics, a post once held by Isaac Newton. In 2009 he was named the Director of Research for the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at Cambridge.

HONOURS

Hawking earned many honours and awards, including many honorary degrees. He was elected to the Royal Society in 1974, as one of its youngest fellows. He was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1982. In 2006 Hawking received the Copley Medal from the Royal Society, and he was awarded the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.





PLANS FOR A TRIP TO SPACE

In late 2006, Hawking revealed in a BBC interview that one of his greatest unfulfilled desires was to travel to space; on hearing this, Richard Branson offered a free flight into space with Virgin Galactic, which Hawking immediately accepted. Besides personal ambition, he was motivated by the desire to increase public interest in spaceflight and to show the potential of people with disabilities. On 26 April 2007, Hawking flew aboard a specially-modified Boeing 727-200 jet operated by Zero-G Corp off the coast of Florida to experience weightlessness.



LEGACY

Stephen Hawking was one of the best-known scientists of his generation, who inspired people far beyond the field of his research. While delivering spectacular advances in the theory of gravity and cosmology, he also came to symbolise the triumph of hope over adversity.

“Stephen Hawking has done more to advance our understanding of gravitation than anyone since Einstein,” Carroll says. “He was a world-leading theoretical physicist, clearly the best in the world for his time among those working at the intersection of gravity and quantum mechanics, and he did it all in the face of a terrible disease. He is an inspirational figure, and history will certainly remember him that way.”

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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zd4dy9q/articles/zjpk8xs>

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. When and where was Stephen born?
2. Who offered Hawking a chance to go to space?
3. Which University to Stephen and his parents attend?
4. What was his occupation?
5. Which other famous scientist was appointed Lucasian professor of mathematics?