

“My goal is simple. It is a complete understanding of the universe, why it is as it is and why it exists at all.”

—Stephen Hawking



Who Was Stephen Hawking?

Stephen Hawking (born January 8, 1942) was a British scientist, professor and author who did groundbreaking work in physics and cosmology and whose books have helped to make science accessible to everyone.

Stephen Hawking's Books

Over the years, Stephen Hawking wrote or co-wrote a total of 15 books. A few of the most noteworthy include: *A Brief History of Time*, *The Universe in a Nutshell* and *A Briefer History of Time*.

Together these three books, along with Hawking's own research and papers, articulate the physicist's personal search to explain how the universe began. It's this kind of ambitious thinking that allowed Hawking, who claimed he could think in 11 dimensions, to lay out some big possibilities for humankind. He was convinced that time travel is possible, and that humans may indeed colonize other planets in the future.

What Disease Did Stephen Hawking Have?

At the age of 21, Stephen Hawking was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease). In a very simple sense, the nerves that controlled his muscles were shutting down. At the time, doctors gave him two and a half years to live.

As his career gained success his physical state worsened landing him in a wheelchair by 1969. He eventually lost control of his body and his voice. The predicament caught the attention of a California computer programmer, who had developed a speaking program that could be directed by head or eye movement. The invention allowed Hawking to select words on a computer screen that were then passed through a speech synthesizer. With virtually all control of his body gone, Hawking directed the program through a cheek muscle attached to a sensor.

Education and Cambridge University

Early in his academic life, Hawking, while recognized as bright, was not an exceptional student. During his first year at St. Albans School, he was third from the bottom of his class. But Hawking focused on pursuits outside of school; he loved board games, and he and a few close friends created new games of their own. During his teens, Hawking, along with several friends, constructed a computer out of recycled parts for solving rudimentary mathematical equations.

He was a world-renowned scientist who appeared on multiple television shows including *The Big Bang Theory*. In 2014 a movie was released which is based on his life, called *The Theory of Everything*.

Stephen Hawking

Comprehension Questions 1

- When was Stephen Hawking born?
- What are Stephen Hawking's three most notable professions?
- How many books has Stephen Hawking written?
- What does he want to explain?
- What is the name of the disease Stephen Hawking has?
- How does Stephen Hawking direct the computer program which helps him to communicate?
- What did Stephen Hawking like doing outside of school?
- What movie was released in 2014 based on his life?
- Do YOU think that humans could colonize other planets in the future? Why or why not?
- Sadly Stephen Hawking died. Can you find out the date he died?

Stephen Hawking

Answers Comprehension Questions

When was Stephen Hawking born?

January 8, 1942

What are Stephen Hawking's three most notable professions?

Scientist, professor, author

How many books has Stephen Hawking written?

15

What does he want to explain?

How the universe began.

What is the name of the disease Stephen Hawking has?

ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) or Lou Gehrig's Disease.

How does Stephen Hawking direct the computer program which helps him to communicate?

Through a cheek muscle attached to a sensor.

What did Stephen Hawking like doing outside of school?

Playing board games

What movie was released in 2014 based on his life?

The Theory of Everything

Do YOU think that humans could colonize other planets in the future? Why or why not?