

Physical Science Readers:

Marie Curie: Pioneering Physicist

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Teacher Created Materials Publishing

5301 Oceanus Drive
Huntington Beach, CA 92649-1030
<http://www.tcmpub.com>

ISBN 978-0-7439-0570-1

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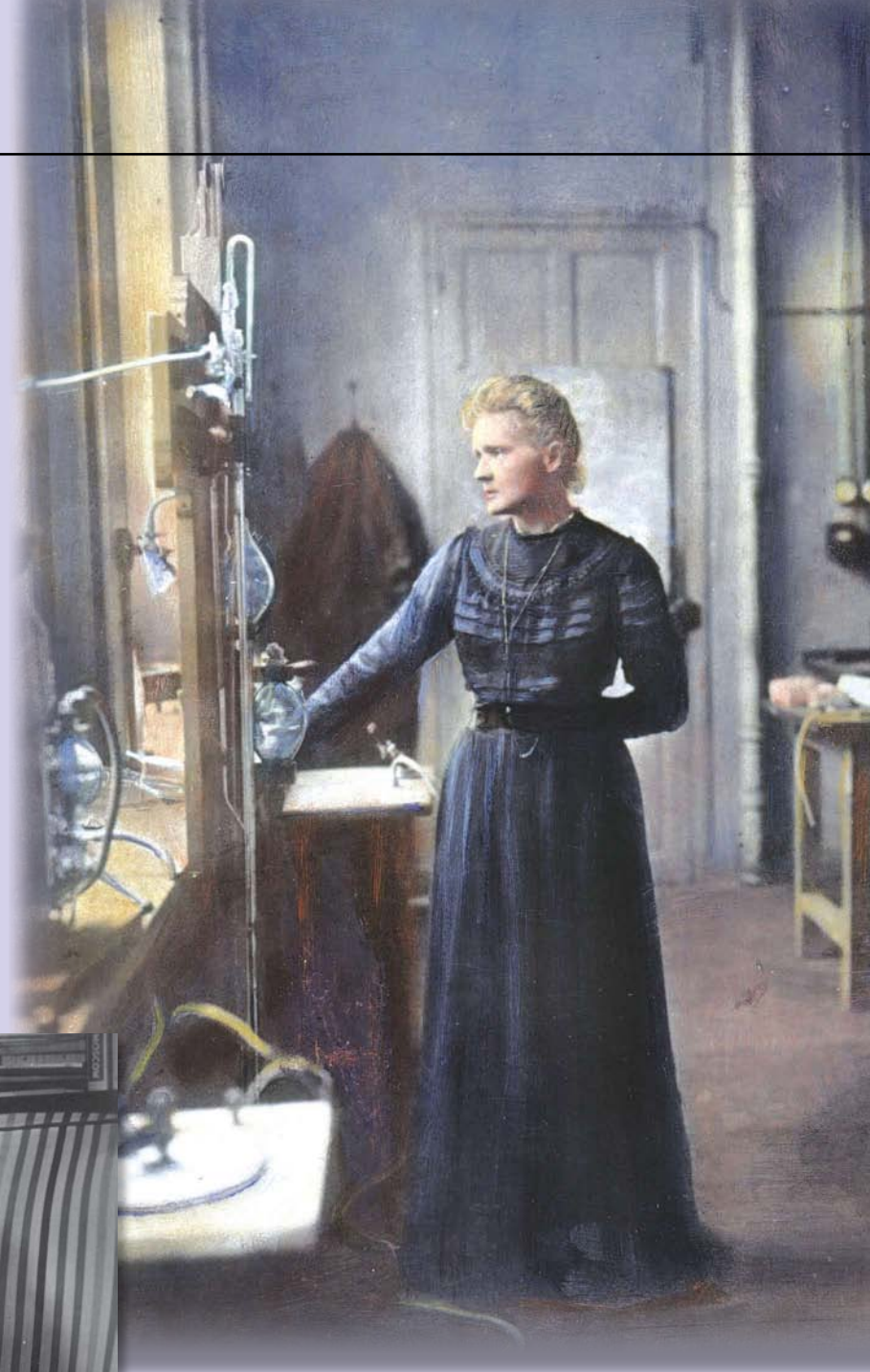
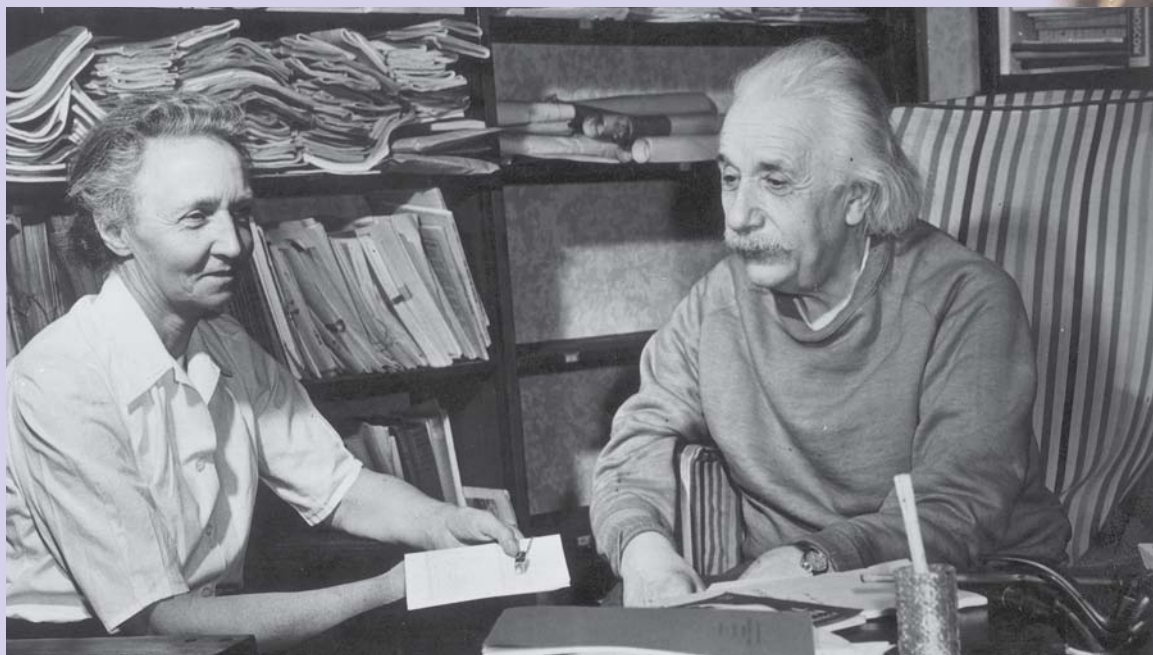
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An Important Scientist

Marie Curie is one of the most important scientists of all time. She spent her life studying energy called **radiation** (ray-dee-AY-shuhn). In fact, she invented the word **radioactive** (ray-dee-oh-AK-tiv) to describe this energy. Her work helped other scientists understand how **atoms** work. Curie also learned many things that led to new ways to treat **cancer**.

Marie Curie was the first woman to win the world's highest award for science, the **Nobel Prize**. Her work was so successful that she won a second Nobel Prize. Her daughter Irène grew up to be a famous scientist, too. She also won this award.

Curie was known as a hard worker and a brilliant scientist. She would not stop working until she found answers to her questions. Her work with radiation was also dangerous. She died from cancer of the blood. It was caused by working with radioactive materials.



↑ Curie in her lab

← Marie Curie's daughter, Irène Joliot-Curie, followed in her mother's footsteps as a research scientist. Joliot-Curie is shown here with fellow scientist Albert Einstein.



The Nobel Prize

The Nobel Prize is an award that started in 1901. It is given to men and women for their work in science, writing books, medicine, and helping to bring peace to the world. The award includes a medal, a diploma, and money to continue the work.

Radioactivity

Whenever something gives off energy, it produces radiation. For example, the sun radiates heat and light. Marie Curie did not think that radiation was the right word to describe the energy coming from the substances she studied. She named this energy radioactivity. Today, we know that radioactive substances give off energy when the nuclei of their atoms break down.