

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar Biography

Ways to use the biographies

Studying the lives and achievements of scientists is part of Sc1 (National Curriculum)-Ideas and evidence in Science - Scientific Enquiry - in the National Curriculum.

All children need to know that Minority Ethnic peoples have contributed to science in the past and present.

Read and discuss the biography of a person relevant to the area of science the children are studying. Many of the biographies have Race Equality issues in them, discuss these with the children and relate to their own experiences of Race Equality Issues.

Comprehension activities could be developed from these biographies.

Collaborative paired or group tasks and discussions could be

- What evidence did the scientists have to identify a problem?
- What did they do?
- How did it make a difference to people's lives?
- What do you think were the main difficulties that faced the scientist?

- To role play the life of the scientist.
- Produce a poster about the scientist and her/his discovery.
- Produce a story-board of their life.
- Write a list of questions they would like to ask the scientist if they could.
- How did this scientist achieve? Ask them to listen and discuss in groups the personal qualities of the person. E.g. persistence.
- Have they heard of this person before? If not, why not? Is there another scientist whom they associate with this discovery?
- Who are scientists? What do scientists do? What tools do they need?

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

1910 - 1995

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar (Chandra) was born in October 1910 in Lahore. At that time Lahore was in India, but it is now in Pakistan. In 1916, his family moved to Madras, India.

As a child he was very good at Maths and physics and he read a lot about science and astronomy. This is how he became interested in ***white dwarf stars***.



He studied at the University of Madras in India. In July 1930 he came to England to study at Cambridge University.

When he combined his knowledge of special relativity and white stars, he came up with a surprising theory. This theory is known as the Chandra theory.

In January 1935 he gave a talk in London about white stars and their size limits. But he was laughed at and his ideas were not taken seriously.

It took many years for his work to be accepted. Eventually his idea became the foundation for the theory about black holes.

In 1983, Chandra received the Nobel Prize for Science.



The Chandra X-ray observatory

In 1999 after his death, a satellite was named after him and sent into space. It is called the Chandra X-ray Observatory. Chandra is the world's most powerful X-ray telescope.