Elon Reeve Musk (/ˈiːlɒn/ *EE-lon*; born June 28, 1971) is a businessman and investor. He is the founder, chairman, CEO, and CTO of [SpaceX](); [angel investor](), CEO, product architect, and former chairman of [Tesla, Inc.](); owner, executive chairman, and CTO of [X Corp.](); founder of [the Boring Company]() and [xAI](); co-founder of [Neuralink]() and [OpenAI](); and president of the [Musk Foundation](). He is one of the wealthiest people in the world, with an estimated net worth of US$190 billion as of March 2024, according to the *Bloomberg Billionaires Index*, and $195 billion according to *Forbes*, primarily from his ownership stakes in Tesla and SpaceX.[5][6]

A member of the wealthy South African [Musk family](), Elon was born in [Pretoria]() and briefly attended the [University of Pretoria]() before immigrating to Canada at age 18, acquiring citizenship through his Canadian-born mother. Two years later, he [matriculated]() at [Queen's University at Kingston]() in Canada. Musk later transferred to the [University of Pennsylvania](), and received bachelor's degrees in economics and physics. He moved to California in 1995 to attend [Stanford University](), but dropped out after two days and, with his brother [Kimbal](), co-founded online [city guide]() software company [Zip2](). The startup was acquired by [Compaq]() for $307 million in 1999, and that same year Musk co-founded [X.com](), a [direct bank](). X.com merged with [Confinity]() in 2000 to form [PayPal]().

In October 2002, [eBay]() acquired PayPal for $1.5 billion, and that same year, with $100 million of the money he made, Musk founded SpaceX, a [spaceflight]() services company. In 2004, he became an early investor in [electric vehicle]() manufacturer Tesla Motors, Inc. (now Tesla, Inc.). He became its chairman and product architect, assuming the position of CEO in 2008. In 2006, Musk helped create [SolarCity](), a solar-energy company that was acquired by Tesla in 2016 and became [Tesla Energy](). In 2013, he proposed a [hyperloop]() high-speed [vactrain]() transportation system. In 2015, he co-founded OpenAI, a nonprofit [artificial intelligence]() research company. The following year, Musk co-founded Neuralink—a [neurotechnology]() company developing [brain–computer interfaces]()—and the Boring Company, a tunnel construction company. In 2022, he [acquired Twitter]() for $44 billion. He subsequently merged the company into newly created X Corp. and rebranded the service as X the following year. In March 2023, he founded xAI, an artificial intelligence company.

[Musk has expressed views]() that have made him a polarizing figure.[7] He has been criticized for making unscientific and misleading statements, including [COVID-19 misinformation]() and [antisemitic conspiracy theories]().[7][8][9][10] His [ownership of Twitter]() has been similarly controversial, being marked by the laying off of a large number of employees, an [increase in hate speech]() and [misinformation and disinformation]() on the website, as well as changes to [Twitter Blue verification](). In 2018, the [U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission]() (SEC) sued him, alleging that he had falsely announced that he had secured funding for a private takeover of Tesla. To settle the case, Musk stepped down as the chairman of Tesla and paid a $20 million fine.

Early life and education

Childhood and family

Further information: [Musk family]()

Elon Reeve Musk was born on June 28, 1971, in [Pretoria](), South Africa's administrative capital.[11][12] He is of British and [Pennsylvania Dutch]() ancestry.[13][14] His mother, [Maye Musk]() ([née]() Haldeman), is a model and dietitian born in [Saskatchewan](), Canada, and raised in South Africa.[15][16][17] His father, [Errol Musk](), is a South African electromechanical engineer, pilot, sailor, consultant, emerald dealer, and property developer, who partly owned a rental lodge at the [Timbavati Private Nature Reserve]().[18][19][20][21] Elon has a younger brother, [Kimbal](), and a younger sister, [Tosca]().[17][22]

The family was wealthy during Elon's youth.[21] Despite both Musk and Errol previously stating that Errol was a part owner of a Zambian [emerald]() mine,[21] in 2023, Errol recounted that the deal he made was to receive "a portion of the emeralds produced at three small mines."[23][24] Errol was elected to the Pretoria City Council as a representative of the anti-apartheid [Progressive Party]() and has said that his children shared their father's dislike of [apartheid]().[11]

Elon's maternal grandfather, Joshua N. Haldeman, was an American-born Canadian who took his family on record-breaking journeys to Africa and Australia in a single-engine Bellanca airplane.[25][26][27][28]

After his parents divorced in 1980, Elon chose to live primarily with his father.[13][18] Elon later regretted his decision and became estranged from his father.[29] In one incident, after having called a boy whose father had committed suicide "stupid", Elon was thrown down concrete steps and beaten severely by the boy and his friends, leading to him being hospitalized for his injuries.[30][31] Elon has four paternal half-siblings.[32][25][33]

Elon was an enthusiastic reader of books, later attributing his success in part to having read *The Lord of the Rings*, the *Foundation* series, and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.[20][34] At age ten, he developed an interest in computing and video games, teaching himself how to program from the VIC-20 user manual.[35] At age twelve, Elon sold his BASIC-based game *Blastar* to *PC and Office Technology* magazine for approximately $500.[36][37]

Education

Musk graduated from Pretoria Boys High School in South Africa

Musk attended Waterkloof House Preparatory School, Bryanston High School, and then Pretoria Boys High School, where he graduated.[38] Musk was a good but not exceptional student, earning a 61 in Afrikaans and a B on his senior math certification.[39] Musk applied for a Canadian passport through his Canadian-born mother,[40][41] knowing that it would be easier to immigrate to the United States this way.[42] While waiting for his application to be processed, he attended the University of Pretoria for five months.[43]

Musk arrived in Canada in June 1989, connected with a second cousin in Saskatchewan,[44] and worked odd jobs including at a farm and a lumber mill.[45] In 1990, he entered Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.[46][47]

Two years later, he transferred to the University of Pennsylvania, an Ivy League university in Philadelphia, where he earned two degrees, a Bachelor of Arts in physics, and a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from the university's Wharton School.[48][49][50][51] Although Musk has said that he earned the degrees in 1995, the University of Pennsylvania did not award them until 1997.[52][49][53] He reportedly hosted large, ticketed house parties to help pay for tuition, and wrote a business plan for an electronic book-scanning service similar to Google Books.[54]

In 1994, Musk held two internships in Silicon Valley: one at energy storage startup Pinnacle Research Institute, which investigated electrolytic ultracapacitors for energy storage, and another at Palo Alto–based startup Rocket Science Games.[55][56] In 1995, he was accepted to a PhD program in materials science at Stanford University.[49][53][57] However, Musk decided to join the Internet boom, dropping out two days after being accepted and applied for a job at Netscape, to which he reportedly never received a response.[58][40]