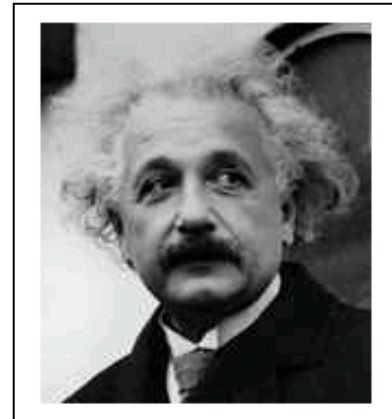


Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

German-born American physicist and Nobel Laureate. The father of 'Theory of Relativity', which altered mankind's fundamental concepts of space and time, and for his bold hypothesis concerning the particle nature of light.



Einstein was born in Ulm. His family owned a small shop. His father's business demanded moving frequently which resulted in irregular education for his son. When his father's business failed, they moved to Milan, Italy, Einstein quit school, without earning a diploma. To bolster the family's meager finances, he took the examination for entrance to the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, which did not require a high school diploma. Because he was unprepared, he failed.

He did not speak until he was four year old and didn't read until he was seven. His teacher described him as 'mentally slow, unsociable and adrift forever in his foolish dreams'. At the age of 12 he taught himself Euclidean geometry. In Munich, he read philosophy, mathematics, and popular science on his own. He was expelled and was refused admission to Zurich Polytechnic School.

Einstein was a quiet, withdrawn child who was attracted to mathematics but otherwise disliked school because of its rote teaching and army like discipline. He often cut classes and used the time to study physics on his own or to play his beloved violin. He passed his examinations and graduated in 1900 by studying the notes of a classmate. His professors did not think highly of him and would not recommend him for a university position.

He was unable to get the post of a school teacher. He found employment in the Patents Office in Berne as a junior clerk and he devoted most of his spare time to research. For two years Einstein worked as a tutor and substitute teacher.

His General Theory of Relativity created a raging controversy among scientists since it challenged Newtonian Physics. Also he proposed Quantum theory. Virtually no one accepted Einstein's proposal. Einstein's efforts in behalf of social causes have sometimes been viewed as unrealistic. Most of Einstein's colleagues felt that these efforts were misguided.

Being a shy man, the glare of publicity embarrassed him. In 1933, while Einstein was on a lecture tour abroad, the Germans confiscated his property and took away his citizenship. Einstein died in Princeton on April 18, 1955.