**Nikola Tesla** ([/ˈnɪkələˈtɛslə/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English" \o "Help:IPA/English);[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikola_Tesla" \l "cite_note-Webster's-1) [Serbian Cyrillic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Cyrillic_alphabet" \o "Serbian Cyrillic alphabet): Никола Тесла, [[nǐkola têsla]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Serbo-Croatian" \o "Help:IPA/Serbo-Croatian); 10 July 1856 – 7 January 1943) was a Serbian-American[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikola_Tesla" \l "cite_note-FOOTNOTEBurgan20099-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikola_Tesla" \l "cite_note-3) engineer, [futurist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurist" \o "Futurist), and inventor. He is known for his contributions to the design of the modern [alternating current](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternating_current" \o "Alternating current) (AC) [electricity supply](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electricity_supply" \o "Electricity supply) system.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikola_Tesla" \l "cite_note-4)

Born and raised in the [Austrian Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austrian_Empire" \o "Austrian Empire), Tesla first studied engineering and physics in the 1870s without receiving a degree. He then gained practical experience in the early 1880s working in [telephony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephony" \o "Telephony) and at [Continental Edison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_Edison" \o "Continental Edison) in the new [electric power industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_power_industry" \o "Electric power industry). In 1884 he immigrated to the United States, where he became a [naturalized citizen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalized_citizen" \o "Naturalized citizen). He worked for a short time at the [Edison Machine Works](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edison_Machine_Works" \o "Edison Machine Works) in New York City before he struck out on his own. With the help of partners to finance and market his ideas, Tesla set up laboratories and companies in New York to develop a range of electrical and mechanical devices. His AC [induction motor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Induction_motor" \o "Induction motor) and related [polyphase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphase_system" \o "Polyphase system) AC patents, licensed by [Westinghouse Electric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westinghouse_Electric_Corporation" \o "Westinghouse Electric Corporation) in 1888, earned him a considerable amount of money and became the cornerstone of the [polyphase system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphase_system" \o "Polyphase system) which that company eventually marketed.

Attempting to develop inventions he could patent and market, Tesla conducted a range of experiments with mechanical [oscillators](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscillation" \o "Oscillation)/generators, [electrical discharge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_discharge" \o "Electric discharge) tubes, and early [X-ray imaging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X-Ray_imaging" \o "X-Ray imaging). He also built a [wirelessly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wireless" \o "Wireless) controlled boat, one of the first ever exhibited. Tesla became well known as an inventor and demonstrated his achievements to celebrities and wealthy patrons at his lab, and was noted for his showmanship at public lectures. Throughout the 1890s, Tesla pursued his ideas for wireless lighting and worldwide wireless electric power distribution in his high-voltage, high-frequency power experiments in New York and [Colorado Springs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado_Springs,_Colorado" \o "Colorado Springs, Colorado). In 1893, he made pronouncements on the possibility of [wireless communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wireless_communication" \o "Wireless communication) with his devices. Tesla tried to put these ideas to practical use in his unfinished [Wardenclyffe Tower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wardenclyffe_Tower" \o "Wardenclyffe Tower) project, an intercontinental wireless communication and power transmitter, but ran out of funding before he could complete it.

After Wardenclyffe, Tesla experimented with a series of inventions in the 1910s and 1920s with varying degrees of success. Having spent most of his money, Tesla lived in a series of New York hotels, leaving behind unpaid bills. He died in New York City in January 1943.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikola_Tesla" \l "cite_note-5) Tesla's work fell into relative obscurity following his death, until 1960, when the [General Conference on Weights and Measures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Conference_on_Weights_and_Measures" \o "General Conference on Weights and Measures) named the [International System of Units](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_System_of_Units" \o "International System of Units) (SI) measurement of [magnetic flux density](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnetic_flux_density" \o "Magnetic flux density) the [tesla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tesla_(unit)" \o "Tesla (unit)) in his honor. There has been a resurgence in popular interest in Tesla since the 1990s.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikola_Tesla" \l "cite_note-6)