

Stephen Hawking, cosmology's brightest star, dies aged 76

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

There aren't very many scientists who achieved rock-star status, but Stephen Hawking was definitely a contender. The legendary theoretical physicist passed away at home on Wednesday, March 14, according to his family.

Hawking was probably the best-known scientist in the world. His early work on black holes transformed how scientists think about the nature of the universe. Before him, physicists thought nothing could escape from a black hole because of the immense gravity, but Hawking showed that, theoretically, some kind of particle could.

But his fame wasn't just a result of his research. Hawking, who suffered from a debilitating neurological disease that made it impossible for him to move his limbs or speak, was also a popular public figure and best-selling author. Additionally, Hawking's sense of humor, along with his fame, allowed him to land some pretty unusual gigs for a physicist. He appeared on The Simpsons several times, as well as Star Trek and The Big Bang Theory.

In one episode of The Simpsons, Hawking showed a willingness to poke fun at himself — and, in a way, the entire culture of science.

"Your theory of a donut-shaped universe is intriguing, Homer," Hawking tells Homer Simpson. "I may have to steal it."

Summary: