Marie Curie

Marie Curie was born as Maria Sklodowski in Warsaw, Poland on 7 November 1867. The youngest of five children, Marie came from a happy and loving family. Both her parents were teachers who passed their love for learning onto their children. In 1874 tragedy struck, with the death of Marie's eldest sister of typhus and then, two years later, her mother died from tuberculosis.

Marie studied very hard at school and in 1883 she was awarded with the gold medal for the most outstanding pupil in her school. Marie wanted to go onto university to study like her brother but at that time women in Poland were forbidden to go on to higher education. Marie's sister, Bronia, also wanted to go to university and had discovered that women were accepted at universities in France. Marie and Bronia decided to take action. Bronia would go to Paris and get her degree whilst Marie got a job as a governess to support Bronia. They would then change roles.

In November 1891, Marie's long wait finally came to an end and she immediately signed up at the Sorbonne University in Paris, to study mathematics and physics. Marie studied very hard for the two degrees and came top in both of them.

In 1894 Marie met Pierre Curie, a brilliant young scientist. He was quiet and serious and, like Marie, dedicated to scientific research. Marie and Pierre found they had much in common and in 1895 they got married. It was the start of what became the most famous partnership in scientific history.