

Name: _____

Biographies: Marie Curie



Years ago, there was a very famous couple who were almost like rock stars, but in science: Marie and Pierre Curie. They worked together in a laboratory searching for chemical elements and their radioactivity. Radioactivity is the ability of certain atoms to break down and release radiation. Marie and Pierre Curie discovered two elements, polonium and radium, which are now in the periodic table.

Marie Curie was born in Poland in 1867. At that time, it was not common for women to study past high school. Usually, they devoted themselves to look after the house. For this reason, Marie Curie was forced to continue her studies in a university that would hold classes in secret. Eventually, she was able to save enough money to go to Paris, France and study at Sorbonne University. Although in France, women were able to attend the universities, they were still not allowed to study in the field of chemistry.

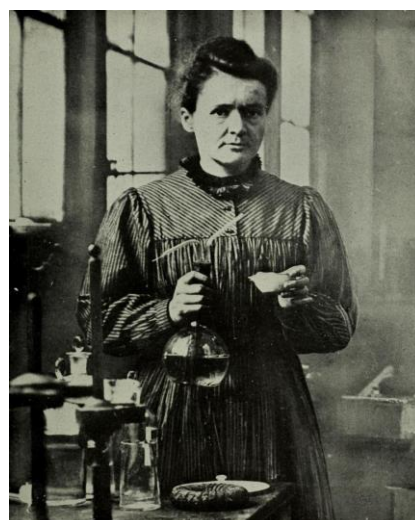
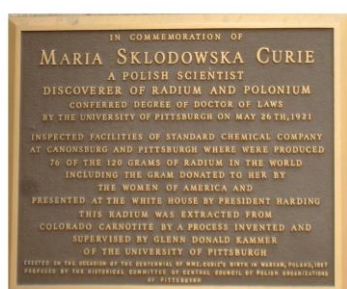
Marie was not to be stopped. She followed her passion and devoted herself to the studies of physics and chemistry. After finishing her master's degree, Marie met Pierre Curie, a French physicist, whom she married in 1895. They were both dedicated scientists working in the field of chemistry and physics. Marie would go on to become the first person to win the Nobel Prize twice: once in 1903, in Physics and again in 1911, in the field of Chemistry.



Marie and Pierre Curie were deeply committed to each other. They had two daughters, Irene and Eve. Eve would become a great writer and musician; Irene followed in the footsteps of her parents and dedicated her life to working in the field of chemistry. Irene would marry her mother's lab assistant, Frederic Joliot. Irene and Frederic themselves were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1935.

As mentioned before, Marie and Pierre Curie were considered rock stars of science. Albert Einstein and many other famous people admired Marie Curie and her intelligence. Einstein went to visit Marie while she lived in Paris. But, many people were opposed to Marie Curie's work. Some were jealous, and others believed that a woman should be dedicated to the home and not science. During his visit, Albert Einstein told Marie Curie, "If the gossips continue to write about you, don't worry about it and don't read that junk; it is best left to the people for whom it was written."

Marie Curie died from leukemia, a disease that was very common among people who studied radioactivity. It wasn't until years later that it was realized that radiation was harmful to health. Marie Curie is remembered for her many contributions to science and her courage, refusing to accept the role of staying at home. Marie was a **pioneer in science**. Marie was inspirational and encouraged many other women to study.



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ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

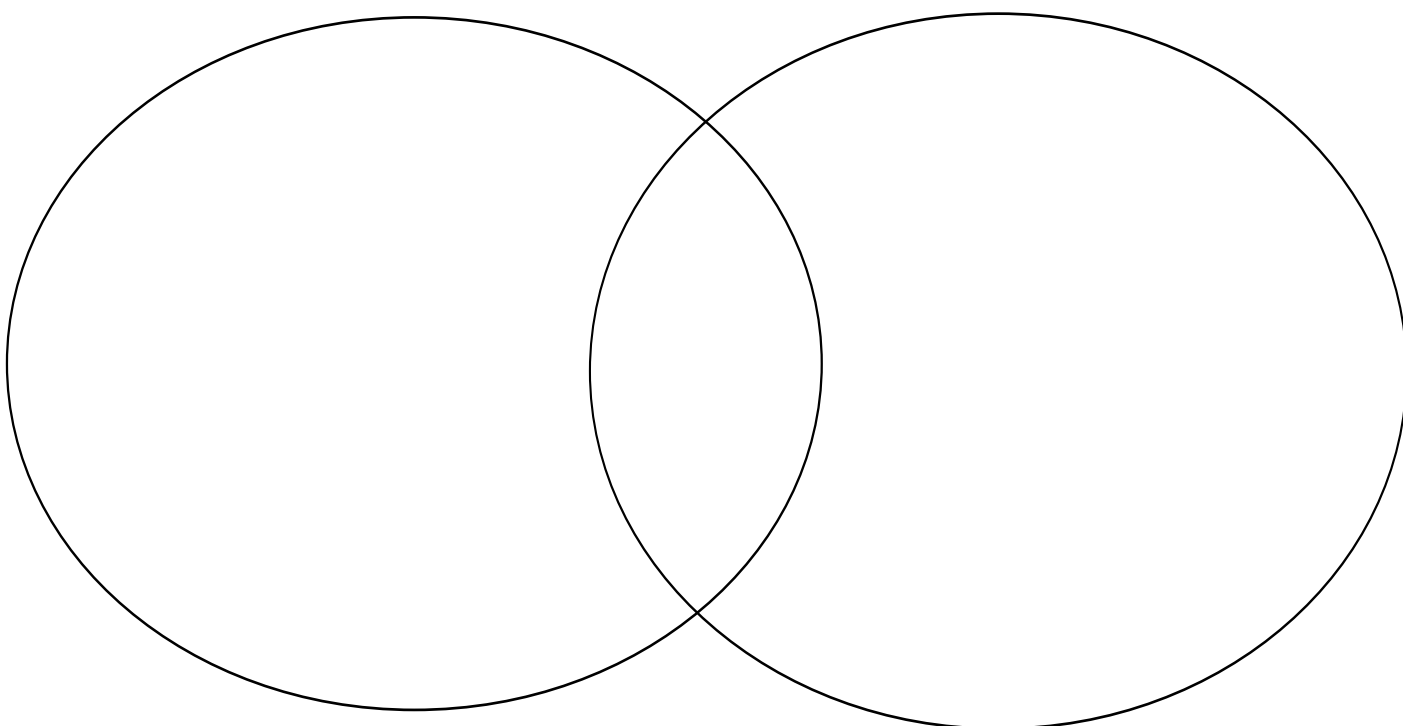
1. What does the word pioneer mean in the story?

- A. A person who takes the first steps in any human activity.
- B. The best person in an activity or discipline.
- C. A person who is engaged in a task that does not belong.
- D. A person who is late for a fashion or trend.

2. Marie Curie couldn't study in a university because she was a woman, so _____

- A. she married and dedicated herself to housework.
- B. she decided to leave home and not come back until they let her study.
- C. she went to a secret college to study the topics she liked.
- D. she went to a library and school laboratories.

3. After reading the text, compare and contrast the daughters of Marie Curie.



4. Do you think Maria was proud of her daughters? Why or why not?

5. Marie had many followers, including Albert Einstein; there were also people who spoke ill of her. What advice would you give to Marie Curie about people who say bad things?

6. From the text, which of the following would be a synonym for the word *harmful*?

- A. Positive
- B. Damaging
- C. Healthy
- D. Sick

7. Marie said, "Life is not easy for any of us. But, so what! We must persevere, and above all, have confidence in yourself." Write about why Marie said this.
