

- Never say you can't -

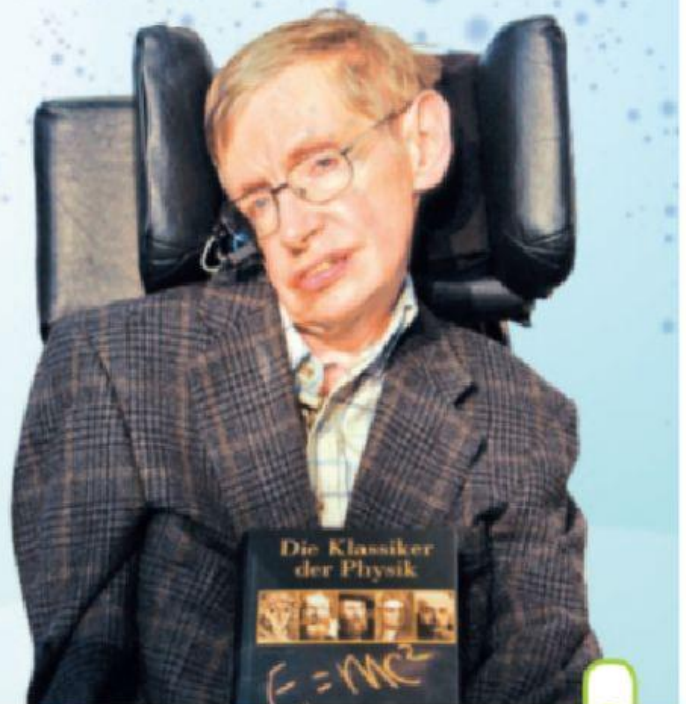
He appeared on TV programs, such as *The Simpsons* and *Star Trek*. He wrote *A Brief History of Time* and other best-selling scientific books. He was one of the greatest scientific thinkers of all time. He needed 24-hour nursing care, could only move the muscles in his face and spoke with the help of a computer and a voice synthesiser. Who was he? The amazing Stephen Hawking!

Stephen was born in Oxford, England, in 1942, exactly 300 years after Galileo's death. Like Galileo, he was a scientific genius. When he was a child, Stephen liked building models and seeing how things worked. He was always asking questions! Although he didn't get the highest grades at school, his classmates called him Einstein.

At university, Stephen got a degree in physics. In his autobiography, he said he didn't do much work! Stephen was only 21 years old and was studying cosmology at Cambridge University when he discovered he had an incurable motor neuron disease. Doctors told him he would die in a few years. However, Stephen had the courage and determination to go on with his life. Since then, Stephen became a famous scientist. He said, 'My goal is simple. It is complete understanding of the universe, why it is as it is and why it exists at all.' He said one reason for his fame was that 'people are fascinated by the contrast between my very limited physical powers and the vast nature of the universe I deal with.' Of course, another reason was that he was a brilliant scientist and communicator!

In 2007, Stephen was able to escape from his wheelchair when he took a special two-hour flight over the Atlantic. During that trip, he experienced zero gravity and floated in the air. This took him one step closer to his dream of one day travelling into outer space!

Stephen had three children and was also a grandfather. With his daughter, Lucy, he wrote a children's book called *George's Secret Key to the Universe*. In this book, George and his friends explore the whole universe! Stephen had a great sense of humour, too. He said there was only one problem with his voice synthesiser; it gave him an American accent!



1. How did the young Stephen show he had a scientific mind?
2. How did his illness affect Stephen's life?
3. Why do you think the flight across the Atlantic was important to him?
4. Find an example of his sense of humor?

5. Order the pictures:



6. Match the pictures with the sentences:

- a. He experienced zero gravity on a flight over the Atlantic.
- b. He wrote a children's book with his daughter Lucy.
- c. Doctors told him he had a motor neuron disease.
- d. He got a degree in physics.
- e. He was born in Oxford in 1942.
- f. His classmates gave him the nickname 'Einstein'.
- g. He enjoyed building models when he was little.
- h. Stephen became a world-famous scientist.

