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Stephen Hawking: The Life of the World's Most Famous Scientist

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures *Includes Hawking's own quotes about his life and work *Includes footnotes, online resources and a bibliography for further reading *Includes a table of contents “My goal is simple. It is a complete understanding of the universe, why it is as it is and why it exists at all.” – Stephen Hawking “I am just a child who has never grown up. I still keep asking these 'how' and 'why' questions. Occasionally, I find an answer.” – Stephen Hawking In the pantheon of great theoretical physicists that includes the names of such historical luminaries as Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, it is, perhaps, supremely ironic that the successor to the leading scientific minds of their generations has produced such “groundbreaking work in physics and cosmology” , while at the same time battling one of the world’s most insidious and relentless diseases. Dr. Stephen William Hawking, British mathematician, theoretical physicist, and cosmologist, is the face of twenty-first century physics, and yet cannot speak directly to his audience. For verbal communication, he relies on the use of an electronically activated vocal synthesizer. The scientist who has most notably carried the ideas of Einstein and his colleagues forward from the early-to-mid 20th century, whether in terms of explanation, rejection, or confirmation of any given question, is no longer able to move his limbs due to the incapacitating effects of ALS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. The affliction is better known in the United States as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease,” named after the great American baseball player. Since 2009, in fact, Hawking can no longer operate his wheelchair. With a failing body but a world-leading mind that has remained active and keen through the years, Dr. Hawking continues to fight for any means of communication that he or his scientific environment can devise, presently placing much of his attention on systems with which to “translate his brain patterns into switch activations.” This desperate struggle to stay connected comes at a time in which the amassing of Hawking’s theories, developed over the past half-century, seems poised to discover and affirm new solutions to the mysteries of the universe. Occupying a unique place in the history of physics, Hawking, more than Newton or Einstein, lives in the perfect era from which to stand at the threshold of new possibilities for balancing and synchronizing the theories of General Relativity, put forth by his great predecessors, and the newer field of the quantum world, hinted at in the mid-twentieth century but only more recently brought forward by leading proponents. He has devoted the lion’s share of his adult life to “probing the space-time described by general relativity and the singularities where it breaks down,” and is, in advancing years, more driven than ever by the urge to uncover all he can about the nature of the larger universe. Stephen Hawking: The Life of the World’s Most Famous Scientist examines the life and career of the English physicist. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Stephen Hawking like never before, in no time at all.

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