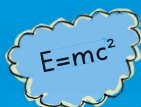


Discover the
incredible story of
Albert Einstein, one
of the most brilliant
scientists the world
has ever known.

Did you know that Albert played the violin
and loved classical music?

Or that he didn't like wearing socks?

Packed with facts, photographs, illustrations,
and more, **DK Life Stories** take you beyond the
basics to find out all about history's most
amazing people.


$$E=mc^2$$



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Smart FROM THE start

Albert Einstein is considered one of the most brilliant people in history, and there were signs of his genius from the earliest days of his life.

Albert was born into a family that already had its fair share of smart people. His father, Hermann, had been an excellent student with a particular gift for mathematics. Only his parents' money problems kept him from going on to higher education, or college. In early adulthood, Hermann and a cousin became owners of a company that made beds. After that, Hermann and his brother, Jakob, started a business that provided gas and electrical supplies.

Albert's mother, Pauline, came from a very successful family. Her father made a fortune selling grain. Pauline went to good schools and

was a model student. She was well-educated, which was fairly unusual for a woman at that time. She also had a great sense of humor and loved the arts, particularly music.

Albert, Hermann and Pauline's first child, was born on March 14, 1879, in the southern German town of Ulm. Right from the start, there was something very different about him. He rarely spoke for the first few years of his life, whereas most children begin to talk by about the age of two.



Albert's parents, Hermann and Pauline Einstein. Hermann was excellent at math, while Pauline had a gift for the arts.

When Albert finally began to talk, he had a strange habit of speaking his sentences very softly, over and over, to himself. It was as if he was trying them out before he let anyone else hear them. This habit troubled some of the people around him. The woman that the Einsteins hired as a maid even called him the “Dopey One.” However, she and many others would soon discover that little Albert was about as far from dopey as anyone could be.

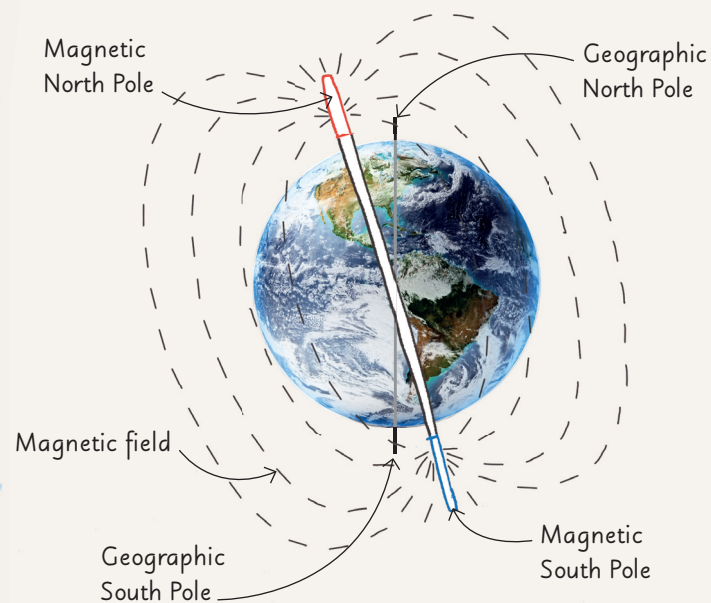
One of the most important moments in Albert’s childhood happened when he was about five. He became ill and had to stay in bed for a time. While there, his father gave him a compass as a gift.

Young Albert was utterly fascinated by this. He was enthralled by the fact that the compass’s needle was reacting to an invisible force rather than some other object touching or moving it. And it wasn’t enough that he

was fascinated by it—he wanted to know *how* it happened, and *why* it happened.

HOW A COMPASS WORKS

A compass is a very simple device—a magnet shaped like a needle, spinning freely, with one end that always points toward the Earth’s magnetic North Pole. This happens because the Earth has a magnetic field, and the northern side of it draws one end of all magnets in its direction.



Many years later, he would say of the incident that this “. . . experience made a deep and lasting impression,” and concluded that, “Something deeply hidden had to be behind things.” In fact, it was this very attitude that guided him toward a career in the sciences. Whereas most people simply accepted things like magnetism and gravity and other invisible forces, Albert sought to understand what made them work.

One of the challenges Albert faced because of his unusual way of thinking was that it made him different from others his age. While most boys would spend a sunny afternoon outside playing ball, Albert would sit and wonder about all sorts of things. He would try to carry out scientific experiments in his head, seeing them clearly as images rather than in terms



of words or ideas. For example, he thought about how gravity's effect on him would change if he was standing inside an elevator that was rapidly falling. He would wonder, “Would I still be affected by gravity and would I still be standing on the elevator floor? What would be holding me there?”



What is gravity?

A force that makes objects fall toward the Earth rather than away from it. It is gravity that gives weight to all matter.

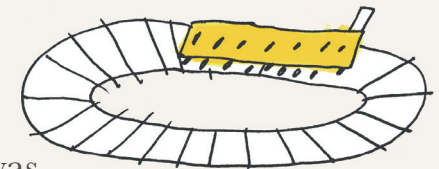
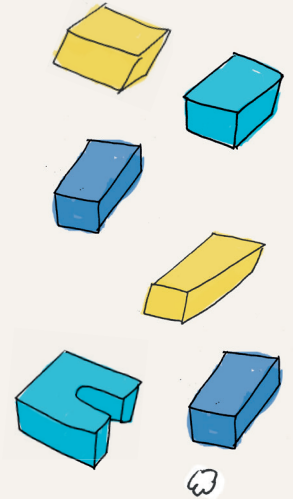


“I have no
special talent.
I am only
passionately
curious.”

Albert Einstein,
*The Saturday Evening
Post*, 1929

Albert also spent hours by himself playing with his favorite toys. One was a set of building blocks, from which he would make complex and unusual structures. He also had a small engine powered by steam that he received from an uncle. He would watch the engine work and then try to figure out the scientific principles behind it. It was all part of a powerful curiosity he had about the world and how it worked. This would be the driving force throughout his life.

By the time Albert was ready to start school, he and his family had moved to the German city of Munich. Most of the people in Munich were Catholics, whereas the Einsteins were Jewish. Albert's parents were not particularly religious, but Albert was still teased by the other children for being different. This made him feel lonely,



but it also helped him to look at the world differently. He became determined to uncover the secrets behind the invisible forces of life. Albert soon developed into a very independent boy who wasn't afraid to question anyone or anything.

As his first year of school approached, young Albert was more than ready. The real question was whether or not the schools in Munich were ready for him!

DID YOU KNOW?

Albert's birthday is also Pi Day—March 14, or 3.14, for pi! 3.14 is a special number in math and science.



Albert had one sibling—his younger sister Maria, nicknamed, "Maja." She was often his only friend during his otherwise lonely childhood.

