

Neil deGrasse Tyson

Born: October 5, 1958, Manhattan, New York City, New York, United States.



“No one is dumb who is curious. The people who don’t ask questions remain clueless throughout their lives.”- Neil deGrasse Tyson

Overview:

Popular science writer, communicator and part-time celebrity, Neil deGrasse Tyson is a well-known astrophysicist who regularly brings science to the common people and protects them against the charlatans who would like nothing more than to generate doubt and chaos. Unlike many of his peers, Tyson is able to bring science to the masses in a way they can understand through popular culture, humor, social media as well as his other outlets. At present, he is the director of Hayden Planetarium at the Rose Center for Earth and Space and is one of the people most responsible for changing the status of Pluto to a “dwarf planet” in 2006. We will discuss his life, struggles, and accomplishments.

History of His Life:



Hayden Planetarium

Neil deGrasse Tyson was born (October 5, 1958) in New York City. He is the second child of the three children of a sociologist father, Cyril deGrasse Tyson, and a gerontologist mother, Sunchita Feliciano Tyson (famousscientists.org, 2016).

At the age of nine, Tyson discovered his fascination for astronomy when he and his family took a trip to the Hayden Planetarium at the Museum of Natural History. There, he got his first taste of stargazing that began his love of the cosmos (Rogers, 2000). Tyson later took classes at the Planetarium and got his own telescope, which he would use to observe the skies from the roof of his apartment building (biography.com, 2016).

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Tyson met his wife, former computer programmer, Alice Mae Young, in a physics class during graduate school at the University of Texas. They married in 1988 and now have two children: Miranda and Travis. Tyson being so fond of heavenly bodies, named their daughter, Miranda, after one of Uranus's 18 known moons (Rogers, 2000)



Outside of his scientific activities, Neil is an avid collector of writing instruments. Even to this day, his hobbies include writing poetry by candlelight with homemade quill pens (Rogers, 2000).

Struggles:

Being black in a very white-male-dominated society has been a social hurdle all of Tyson's life. "When I look at, throughout my life—I've known that I wanted to do astrophysics since I was nine

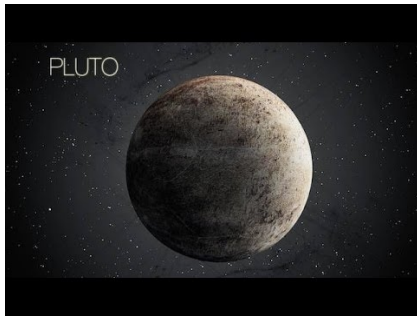
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What He Has Accomplished:

Tyson eventually became the **director of the Hayden Planetarium** and worked on an extensive renovation of the facility. He assisted with its design and helped raise the necessary funds to get the work done (famousscientists.org, 2016). He is also one of the research associates of the American Museum of Natural History's department of astrophysics.



Perhaps one of Tyson's most controversial and significant roles was the **removal of Pluto from the role of planets**. Tyson was persistently in favor of the decision to demote the planet in 2005.

On August 24, 2006, astronomers officially voted to demote Pluto to dwarf planet status (biography.com, 2016).

Tyson also served as a presidential adviser to President George W. Bush. In 2001, he was appointed to a commission on the future of the aerospace industry. Three years later, he also served another commission to inspect U.S. policy on space exploration (famousscientists.org, 2016).

At present, he is one of the most in-demand science experts. Tyson's fame comes primarily from his ability to promote science in an exceptional way. His ability to make difficult concepts understandable to every audience, his excellent speaking skills and good sense of humor has made him a media favorite. Because of these, he has also made multiple appearances on shows like *The Colbert Report*, *Real Time with Bill Maher*, and *The Daily Show*. Tyson also is the host of his own science-based talk show *StarTalk Radio*, a podcast that features comedic co-hosts (famousscientists.org, 2016).



From left to right: Bill Nye, President Barack Obama and Neil deGrasse Tyson (2014)

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Aside from being a man of science, Neil deGrasse Tyson has collaborated with PETA or the **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals**. According to him, one does not need to be a scientist to know the virtue of kindness (biography.com, 2016).

Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. Neil deGrasse Tyson is a renowned astrophysicist. What does an astrophysicist study? How is it different from a simple physicist?
2. How
3. What is the name of the planetarium that sparked Tyson's interest for stars and heavenly bodies? What is his position there now?
4. What is
5. Tyson
6. What
7. What are the awards and recognitions that Tyson has received?

Extension Questions:

8. What does being a "dwarf planet" mean? Do some research on Neil deGrasse Tyson's explanations on why Pluto deserves to be a dwarf planet.
9. Research

Watch the following video to answer the remaining questions. You can access it through the



URL or the QR code: <http://goo.gl/vRlfXt>

10. What
11. Simply

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