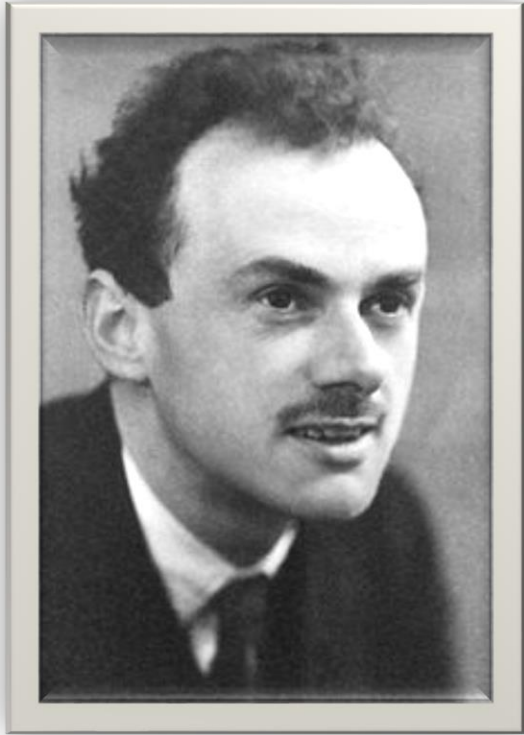


Paul Adrien Maurice Dirac

(8 August 1902 – 20 October 1984)



The theoretical physicist, Paul Adrien Maurice Dirac was born in Bristol, England. He made fundamental contributions to the early development of both quantum mechanics and quantum electrodynamics. He formulated the Dirac equation which describes the behavior of fermions and predicted the existence of antimatter. Dirac shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with Erwin Schrödinger in 1933 for the discovery of “new productive forms of atomic theory”. Dirac graduated with first class honors in 1923, and received a £140 scholarship from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Dirac pursued his interests in the theory of general relativity, an interest he had gained earlier as a student in Bristol.

Dirac published his greatest own achievement—the relativistic wave equation for the electron in 1928. In 1932, he was appointed as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, the position once held by Sir Isaac Newton. He was the first to write the Heisenberg equation of motion. Most physicists speak of Fermi–Dirac statistics for half-integral spin particles (and Bose–Einstein statistics for integral spin particles). Dirac was also awarded the Royal Medal in 1939 and both the Copley Medal and the Max Planck Medal in 1952. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1930; an Honorary Fellow of the American Physical Society in 1948; and an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Physics, London in 1971. He received the inaugural J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Prize in 1969.

Teachers may suggest students to make a collage of photographs of scientists in physics depicting the advancements in the subject.