

Biography

Rosalind Franklin was born in London on 25 July 1920, the second of five children of Ellis Franklin and Muriel Franklin. While growing up Rosalind's parents adopted two Jewish kids from Nazi, Germany. Franklin was educated in London at St. Paul's Girls' School where girls were encouraged to prepare for a career. After graduating from St. Paul's Franklin went on to study chemistry and physics at Newnham College. After receiving a second-class degree in physical chemistry, she chose to work for the British Coal Utilisation Research Board. While working she published her work on the structure of coals and carbons which gave her an international reputation. In 1945 Franklin received her doctorate from Cambridge with a thesis titled *The Physical Chemistry of Solid Organic Colloids with Special Reference to Coal and Related Materials*.

In 1947, Rosalind went to the Central Government Laboratory for Chemistry in Paris, where she worked on X-ray diffraction. In 1951, she moved to King's College where she worked on a DNA project. Franklin made many advances in x-ray diffraction techniques with DNA that allowed her to discover crucial elements in what had become a race between competing research teams to discover the structure of DNA. Rosalind produced X-ray diffraction pictures of DNA that were published in *Nature* in April 1953 which played an important role in establishing the structure of DNA. While visiting the United States, Franklin began to experience terrible pains that she soon learned were related to ovarian cancer. She continued to work up until a few weeks before her death on April 16, 1958.



***"Science and everyday life
cannot and should not be
separated."***

~Rosalind Franklin