

# Lise Meitner

Circle the words and unscramble them in the boxes. Lise Meitner was born in Vienna, Austria November 7, 1878. The Meitner children were taught to listen to their parents, but to think for themselves. Her formal schooling as a child ended when she was fourteen years old, but she still wanted to learn. She asked her father if she could study at the University of Vienna. Her parents insisted she first learn how to be a teacher before she pursued a higher education. They felt she needed to have some way to support herself financially. In 1899 the university began to admit women even if they lacked a high school diploma. She began to prepare for the entrance exam. She finished an eight year study in two years. She took the exam and passed. Meitner was one of four women who passed the test. She was able to enroll and attend physics classes with the men. Five years later she had a PhD in Physics. She went to the University of Berlin. While in Berlin she worked with Otto Hahn. She and Hahn discovered a radioactive element and named it protactinium. She did most of the work because Otto had to serve in World War 1. Hahn, however, received all the credit for the work. In 1944 Hahn would receive the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the interpretation of nuclear fission. Meitner was not mentioned. She stayed in Berlin as long as she dared, but fled the Nazis because they were about to arrest her. After 30 years in Berlin she went to Sweden. She had named the process on which she was working nuclear fission. Without her knowledge other scientists built on her work and called it the "Manhattan Project" which was actually the development of the atomic bomb. She refused to help with the development of the weapon. During her 60 years of work in the field of atomic physics she wrote 128 articles, served on scientific commissions, and served on the United Nations committee on atomic energy. She and Eleanor Roosevelt in 1945 pledged to work together for world peace. Albert Einstein affectionately called her "our German Madame Curie". Two years before she died she received the Enrico Fermi Award along with her co-workers Strassman and Hahn. In 1997, twenty-nine years after her death, the chemical element 109, the heaviest known element was named Meitnerium in her honor.

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