

Jonas Salk was born in New York City on October 28, 1914. His parents were immigrants who did not have a formal education. They were determined to see their children succeed. Jonas Salk was the first member of his family to go to college. He wanted to study law, but he was also keenly interested in medical science. While attending medical school at New York University, he spent a year studying the flu virus. After finishing medical school, he continued his research on the flu virus. World War II had begun. Public health experts feared a repeat of the flu epidemic that had killed millions during the First World War. The creation of flu vaccines could stop the spread of flu and save many lives.

In 1947, after eight long years of work, Salk developed a vaccine against polio, a virus that caused paralysis and in some cases, death. Finally, in 1955, Salk's research yielded success; human trials of the polio vaccine were found to protect subjects from the polio virus. Salk was looked upon as a miracle worker. His research saved thousands of lives and improved the quality of life for many, many others. Even today, the polio vaccines that are a routine part of well-child medical examinations are related to Salk's important discovery.

Salk refused to patent his vaccine. He was not interested in making money from the discovery. Rather, he wished to see the vaccine provided to the largest number of people possible. He spent his final years searching for a vaccine to fight AIDS.

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Flesch-Kincaid: 9.3	Dale Chall: 9-10	258 words
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Mary Cassatt

Mary Cassatt, a famous artist, was born in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. She spent her childhood in Europe with her family and at age 16 she returned to America to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. She also studied in Paris where she copied the great works of earlier artists. When she was 22, Cassatt began private art lessons. She enjoyed painting with bright colors. The world renowned Paris Salon, an annual art exhibition chosen by jury, refused to acknowledge her paintings unless she agreed to tone them down. Finally, she did a painting of a girl playing a Mandolin. It was recognized by the Paris Salon.

Later, she became friends with Edgar Degas. He influenced her style and encouraged her to exhibit with the Impressionists, artists who painted in a particular style. She became a strong supporter of the Impressionists. Cassatt created scenes of everyday life. She painted images of mothers and children. She was good at drawing and printmaking. Some of her best works were created in pastel. Through her friendships with wealthy private collectors, she promoted Impressionism in America and had a lasting influence on American art. Cassatt moved to Chicago, Illinois where most of her best works were destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

Cassatt moved to Spain where she received an invitation to join the Impressionist group. Later, Cassatt refused to attend the Impressionists' show in order to protest the group's refusal to let in new people. In 1915, Cassatt stopped working because of poor eyesight and she finally passed away on June 14, 1926 at the age of 82.

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Flesch-Kincaid: 10.0	Dale Chall: 9-10	267 words
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Henry David Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts and graduated from Harvard University. He taught school for years before deciding to become a poet. From 1841-1843, Thoreau lived in the home of the famous philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thoreau began to publish pieces in the magazine titled, *The Dial*. In the years between 1845 and 1847, he lived in a hut beside Walden Pond. Essays recording his daily life were written in his work, *Walden* which describes his feelings toward nature and non-materialism. While living at Walden Pond, he spent much of his time studying nature and meditating. Thoreau supported himself with jobs such as gardening and carpentry in the local area. Emerson joined Thoreau at Walden Pond from 1847-1848.

Thoreau's *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* was the only other book he published during his lifetime. In another work, he described a night he spent in jail protesting the Mexican-American War. It was called "Civil Disobedience." Thoreau explained why he chose to go to jail rather than pay a poll tax, which paid for the Mexican War. This essay later inspired such figures as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, twentieth-century leaders for civil change through nonviolence. After his death, Thoreau's collected writings were published in 20 volumes, and other writings continued to appear in print.

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Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein was born in Germany. He was born on March 14, 1879. In 1896, he studied at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic School in Zurich. He studied physics and mathematics. He was not able to find a teaching position. He became a junior examiner at the Swiss patent office in 1902. He began creating the work that laid the foundation for twentieth-century physics.

During his work at the Patent Office, Einstein produced much of his amazing work. He was a professor before serving as director of Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in 1914. In 1915, he published his general theory of relativity. He received a Nobel Prize in 1921 for his work about the photoelectric effect. In 1933, he gave up his German citizenship for political reasons. He traveled to America to take the position of Professor of Physics at Princeton. Einstein was a part of the World Government Movement. He was offered the Presidency of the State of Israel. He turned it down. He then worked with another professor in beginning the Hebrew University.

Einstein helped develop quantum field theory and he worked to discover the mathematical relationship between electromagnetism and gravitation. Einstein believed the finding would be a first step toward discovering the common laws governing the universe. Einstein had difficulty putting together a unified theory. His theories of relativity and gravitation represent a big advance over Newtonian physics and transformed scientific and philosophical study.

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