

—— 世界名人 ——

英文传记

ENGLISH BIOGRAPHIES
OF WORLD'S
CELEBRITIES

小伯纳德·瑞安/著



STEPHEN
HAWKING

斯蒂芬·霍金

当代最伟大的物理学家被称为
“当今的爱因斯坦”

中国书籍出版社

—世界名人英文传记—

斯蒂芬·霍金

小伯纳德·瑞安/著

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“IN SOME WAY DIFFERENT”

In Aspen, Colorado, in August 1995, some 1,500 music lovers were **thrilled**^① to greet an unusual master of **ceremonies**^② at a major outdoor concert. Most of the crowd considered Aspen a favorite place not only for music festivals but for meetings of leading physicists. Now they were **enthusiastically**^③ **applauding**^④ a master of ceremonies (MC) who could not walk onto the stage. He rolled into view in a motorized wheelchair in which he **slumped**^⑤ rather than sat. As their applause quieted,

① thrilled [θrɪld] *adj.* 兴奋的, 激动的

② ceremony ['serəməni] *n.* 仪式, 典礼

③ enthusiastically [ɪnθʊzɪ'æstɪklɪ] *adv.* 热情地

④ applaud [ə'plɒd] *vt.* 鼓掌欢迎

⑤ slump [slʌmp] *vi.* 伏

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Stephen Hawking is the most famous scientist alive today.
(Campix)

they knew the frail, motionless man in the wheelchair could not speak, yet he was being honored with the opportunity to introduce the musical numbers on the program.

The voice they heard was **synthetic**^①: sounds created by a computer attached to the arm of the MC's wheelchair. "This is the **Siegfried Idyll**^②," said the steady **monotone**^③, "which Wagner wrote in 1870 to be performed on Christmas morning outside the bedroom of his new

① synthetic [sɪn'thɛtɪk] *adj.* 人工合成的

② Siegfried Idyll 《齐格菲牧歌》，瓦格纳作品

③ monotone ['mɒnə,tɒn] *n.* 单音调

wife. I am here with my fiancée^①, Elaine, and we will be married in September, so I think this piece is rather appropriate^②.”

The MC was Stephen Hawking, the most famous scientist of his time. He was a man whose body had suffered for 53 years with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis^③), known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, but whose mind had provided answers to many of the questions about how our universe works. He was a leading physicist and the world’s foremost expert in cosmology^④—the study of the origin, structure, and relationships to space and time of the Earth and everything beyond it.

Son of a Doctor

Stephen William Hawking was born in Oxford, England, on January 8, 1942, the 300th anniversary^⑤ of the death of Italian astronomer and physicist Galileo Galilei. Stephen’s father, Frank Hawking, was a doctor who had specialized in tropical diseases in East Africa. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 had drawn Frank Hawking home

① fiancée [ˌfiːnˈseɪ] *n.* 【法】未婚妻

② appropriate [əˈprɒpriət] *adj.* 合适的

③ amyotrophic lateral sclerosis 肌萎缩性侧索硬化

④ cosmology [kɒzˈmɒlədʒɪ] *n.* 宇宙论

⑤ anniversary [ˌænəˈvɜːsəri] *n.* 周年紀念

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expecting military service^①, but authorities^② valued him more as a medical researcher. In that job, he met and married a medical secretary who became Isobel Hawking. Stephen was the first of their four children.



Dr. Frank Hawking and his son, Stephen, in 1942 (Campix)

Following the war, Frank Hawking became head of the division of parasitology^③ at England's National Institute of Medical Research. When Stephen was eight, his family moved to St. Albans, a prosperous middle-class town. There in 1952 Stephen passed entrance exams for the local private school, St. Albans School. Like other students, he wore a school uniform and cap. He appeared to be the kind of skinny little kid who was often teased and sometimes bullied. He had an awkward^④, unclear manner of speaking that his few friends dubbed^⑤ Hawkingese.

① military service 军役

② authority [ə'θɔ:riəti] *n.* 官方, 当局

③ parasitology [ˌpærəsai'tɒlədʒi] *n.* 寄生生物学

④ awkward [ˈɔ:kwəd] *adj.* 尴尬的

⑤ dub [dʌb] *vt.* 给……取绰号

Within three years, teachers at St. Albans School knew that Stephen was bright, but his marks stayed only just above average. With friends who were also known as smart kids, Stephen listened to classical music programs on BBC radio and attended concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. They rode their bicycles far into the countryside, and they spent long hours playing complex board games for which Stephen invented the rules.

“Awkward questions I can’t answer”

By the time Stephen was 12, one of his friends later recalled, “I realized for the first time that he was in some way different and not just bright, not just clever, not just **original**¹, but **exceptional**².” Another friend remembered that Stephen was always taking things apart—clocks, radios, anything mechanical or **electronic**³—to see how they worked. This friend recalled that 14-year-old Stephen seldom spent much time on homework, yet “while I would be worrying away at a complicated mathematical solution to a problem, he just knew the answer—he didn’t have to think about it.”

1 original [əˈrɪdʒənl] *adj.* 有独创性的

2 exceptional [ɪkˈsepʃənl] *adj.* 卓越的

3 electronic [ɪlekˈtrɒnɪk] *adj.* 电子的

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Stephen and his classmates were taken on field trips to museums and factories. At one chemical plant, a scientist who had been conducting their **tour**^① took the teacher aside after Stephen had asked some questions. “Who... have you got here?” asked the scientist. “They’re asking me all sorts of **bloody**^② awkward questions I can’t answer!”



*As a boy, Stephen lived and attended school in St. Albans.
(Campix)*

① tour [tʊr] *n.* 游览

② bloody [ˈblʌdi] *adj.* 【俚】该死的, 非常的

Planning His Future

Looking ahead toward college, Stephen decided to **concentrate**^① on mathematics and physics during his last two years in St. Albans School. (Unlike American high school students, many British students decide on a college major while in the 11th grade.) His father **assured**^② him the only future in math was in teaching. He thought his son should plan a career in medicine, which would require more chemistry courses than Stephen wanted to take. After many arguments, Stephen agreed to study some chemistry as well as math and physics in St. Albans, but not to make any **commitment**^③ to medicine.

By the time he was 16, Stephen and his friends were rounding up parts from clocks and a telephone **switch-board**^④ to build their own computer. Stephen's mind worked out the design, while his **pals**^⑤, whose hands were better **coordinated**^⑥ than his, took care of **assembling**^⑦ the machine. They named it the Logical Uniselecting Computing Engine (LUCE) and proved—as a

① concentrate [*'kɒnsɛntrət*] *vi.* 全力以赴(+on/upon)

② assure [*ə'ʃʊə*] *vt.* 使确信

③ commitment [*kə'mɪtmənt*] *n.* 承诺, 保证

④ switch-board [*'swɪtʃbɔ:d*] *n.* 电话按键

⑤ pal [*pæl*] *n.* 【口】伙伴, 好友

⑥ coordinated [*kə'ɔ:dnetəd*] *adj.* 协调的

⑦ assemble [*ə'sembl*] *vt.* 组合

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local newspaper, the *Herts Advertiser*, reported—that it could answer certain mathematical questions. (The LUCE would be a valuable museum item today if only a computer teacher at St. Albans School had not tossed into the trash a box marked *LUCE*. It contained what he thought was just a mess of old wires and transistors.)

Stephen wanted to follow in his father's college footsteps by going to University College, one of 35 colleges within Oxford University. To get in, he had to pass two days of **entrance**^① tests: two exams in physics, two in math, and one in world **issues**^② and current affairs. Each exam lasted two and a half hours. Then came two sets of interviews. The first was with four deans and



Before the onset of his illness, Stephen was as physically active as any other boy.
(Campix)

① entrance [ˈɛntrɛns] *n.* 入学

② issue [ˈɪʃju] *n.* 问题

tutors^① who mainly wanted to find out what kind of person the applicant was. The second was with a specialist who wanted to find out how much he knew about physics.

Within two weeks, Stephen was accepted for entrance at Oxford in October 1959. He did not know that he had received a 95 percent grade on both physics tests and only **slightly**^② lower marks on the other three exams. He did know, however, he was offered a scholarship.

① tutor [ˈtju:tə] *n.* (大学中的)导师

② slightly [ˈslaɪtli] *adv.* 稍微地

LIFE AT OXFORD

At 17, Stephen Hawking was one of the youngest students at University College, Oxford University's oldest college, which dates from 1249. No friends from St. Albans went with him. Many other students at Oxford had performed military service before college and were several years older than he was, so Stephen's college social life was lonely; college work, as far as he was concerned, was a bore.

Each week in the Oxford curriculum^①, students were expected to attend several lectures^② as well as

① curriculum [kə'ɪkjələm] *n.* 课程

② lecture ['lektʃə] *n.* 授课, 演讲

one **tutorial**¹—a small group of students led by a young professor or graduate student in a discussion of problems assigned the week before. One week, Dr. Robert Berman, who was Stephen's adviser, **assigned**² 13 problems to his four physics students. On the morning of the tutorial a week later, the other three students told Stephen that two of them had managed to do one and a half problems, while the third student had completed just one. Hawking said he had not yet looked at the problems. The others went off to lectures while Stephen, skipping the morning's lectures, went to his room to **tackle**³ the physics problems. At lunchtime, just before the tutorial, one of the friends asked Stephen how many he had done. "I've only had time," he replied, "to do the first nine."

"I think at that point," said one of the other students a few years later, "we realized that it was not just that we weren't in the same street (as Stephen), we weren't on the same planet."

Another tutor, Patrick Sanders, assigned some problems from a textbook. Stephen returned the next week to say that he had done none of the problems but had marked all the errors in the textbook. He then spent

① tutorial [tjuˈtɔriəl] *n.* 导师的个别指导

② assign [əˈsaɪn] *vt.* 分配, 分派

③ tackle [ˈtækl] *vt.* 着手对付(或处理)