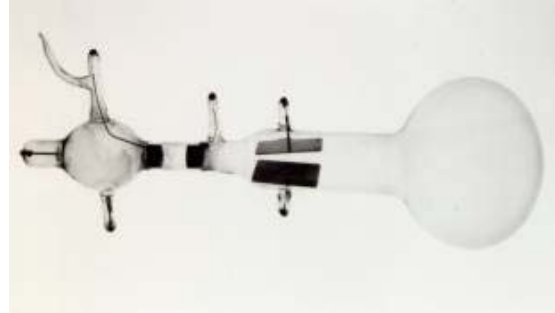




Sir J.J. Thomson: Nobel Prize in Physics 1906



Sir J.J. Thomson



Sir Joseph John (J.J.) Thomson was born in Cheetham Hill, a suburb of Manchester on December 18, 1856. He studied at Owens College, Manchester (now the [University of Manchester](#)), from 1870. In 1876 he entered [Trinity College, Cambridge](#), and became a Fellow of Trinity College in 1880. In 1883 he was appointed as a Lecturer, and as College Master in 1918. He was Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge, where he succeeded [Lord Rayleigh](#), from 1884 to 1918. He was also appointed as Honorary Professor of Physics by the Royal Institution, London.

Thomson's early interest in atomic structure was reflected in his Treatise on the Motion of Vortex Rings, which won him the Adams Prize in 1884. In 1896, Thomson visited America to give four lectures, which summarised his current research, at Princeton. On his return from America, he achieved the most brilliant work of his life: an original study of cathode rays, which eventually assisted him in the discovery of the electron, using the conduction of electricity by gases. J.J. Thomson was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics 1906 "in recognition of the great merits of his theoretical and experimental investigations on the conduction of electricity by gases".

Thomson, a recipient of the Order of Merit, was knighted in 1908. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1884 and was President during the years 1916-1920. J.J. Thomson received many awards, including the Royal and Hughes Medals twice, in 1894 and 1902; the Copley Medal in 1914; the Hodgkins Medal (Smithsonian Institute, Washington) in 1902; the Franklin Medal and Scott Medal (Philadelphia), 1923; the Mascart Medal (Paris), 1927; the Dalton Medal (Manchester), 1931; and the Faraday Medal (Institute of Civil Engineers) in 1938. He was President of the British Association in 1909 and he held honorary doctorate degrees from many world-class universities.

In 1890, he married Rose Elisabeth. They had one son, [Sir George Thomson](#), who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1937, and one daughter. He died in 1940.