

## 居里夫人及女儿

As teachers, many of us find ourselves encouraging our female students to pursue interests in mathematics and the sciences. That we are able to point to women who have achieved in these fields began with **Marie Curie**.

*“Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained.”*

– Marie Curie

*The life of Marie Curie contains prodigies in such number that one would like to tell her story like a legend. She was a woman; she belonged to an oppressed nation; she was poor; she was beautiful. A powerful vocation summoned her from her motherland, Poland, to study in Paris, where she lived through years of poverty and solitude. There she met a man whose genius was akin to hers. She married him; their happiness was unique. By the most desperate and arid effort they discovered a magic element, radium. This discovery not only gave birth to a new science and a new philosophy: it provided mankind with the means of treating a dreadful disease.*

–Eve Curie in *Madame Curie* by her Daughter  
(translated by Vincent Sheean)



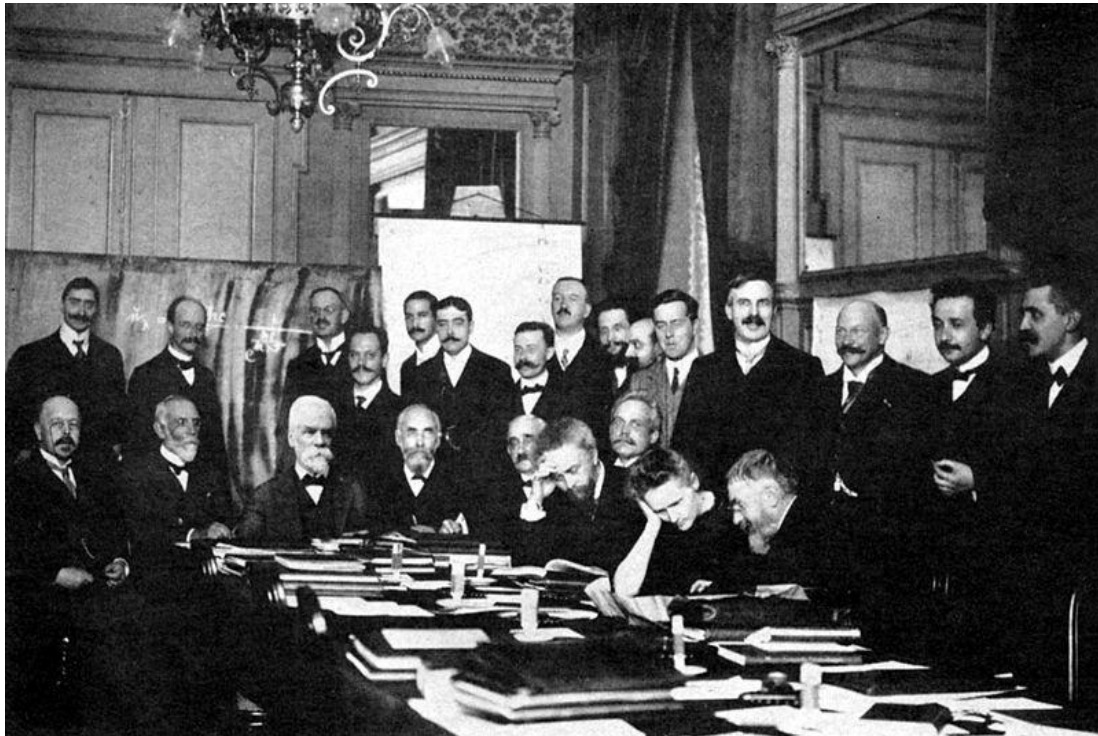
**Marie Curie**, 1911, awarded the Nobel Prize in **Chemistry**, her second Nobel Prize (her first one is in Physics)

[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1911/marie-curie.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1911/marie-curie.html)

**Marie Skłodowska-Curie** was **the first** person to win or share two Nobel Prizes. She is **the only** person who has been awarded Nobel Prizes in two different scientific fields.

The physical and societal aspects of the work of the Curies contributed substantially to shaping the world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

If the work of Marie Curie helped overturn established ideas in physics and chemistry, it has had an equally profound effect in the societal sphere. To attain her scientific achievements, she had to overcome barriers that were placed in her way because she was a woman, in both her native and her adoptive country. This aspect of her life and career is highlighted in [Françoise Giroud](#)'s *Marie Curie: A Life*, which emphasizes Curie's role as a feminist precursor. She was ahead of her time, emancipated, independent, and in addition uncorrupted. [Albert Einstein](#) is reported to have remarked that ***she was probably the only person who was not corrupted by the fame that she had won.***



*At First Solvay Conference (1911), **Curie** (seated, 2nd from right) confers with Henri Poincaré. Standing, 4th from right, is Rutherford; 2nd from right, **Einstein**; far right, Paul Langevin*



**Irène Joliot-Curie**, the daughter of Marie Skłodowska-Curie, jointly with her husband, Joliot-Curie was **awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry** in 1935 for their discovery of artificial radioactivity. This made **the Curies the family with most Nobel laureates to date**.

Both children of the Joliot-Curies, Hélène and Pierre, are also esteemed scientists.

1. Irène Joliot-Curie 's daughter, Hélène Langevin-Joliot, is a nuclear physicist and professor at the University of Paris;
2. her son, Pierre Joliot, is a biochemist who achieved an essential breakthrough in photosynthesis science.

I would like to end this post by quoting what **Marie Curie** had to say for making a better world :*“You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each of us must work for an own improvement and, at the same time, share a general responsibility for all humanity, our particular duty being to aid those to whom we think we can be most useful.”*