<http://www.astronomy-for-kids-online.com/galileo-galilei-biography.html>

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The **Galileo Galilei biography** is a story of invention and [scientific achievement](http://www.astronomy-for-kids-online.com/galileo-galilei-biography.html). In fact, he did so much in the various fields of scientific study, that he is considered by many to be the father of science itself.

**Galileo's background**

He was born in a place called Pisa, in Italy, on the fifteenth of February, in 1564. He was the first born of six kids. His father, Vincenzo Galilei, wanted his son to have a better life. So he sent him to be tutored by a Jesuit priest.

Sending Galileo to a monastery for four years produced an unexpected result. He announced his intention to become a priest! If his father would have allowed that, the Galileo Galilei biography would have been very different.

Galileo's father wanted his son to study medicine, so in 1581 he enrolled in the University of Pisa to honor his father's wishes.

**The law of the Pendulum**

Around the age of twenty, Galileo was in a church when he observed a lamp that was swinging back and forth over his head. he decided he wanted to find out how long it took the lamp to swing from one side to the other. To his surprise, he discovered that each swing of the lamp took precisely the same amount of time. That's how the law of the Pendulum was born. See, there was more to the Galileo Galilei biography than just [astronomy](http://www.astronomy-for-kids-online.com/galileo-galilei-biography.html)!

**Did you know that Galileo was also an inventor?**

Galileo was also a prolific inventor, even though it was for mostly financial reasons. Among the devices he invented were a thermometer, and a military compass that was used to precisely aim cannonballs during battles.

**Galileo Galilei and astronomy**

Now we to the part of the Galileo Galilei biography where astronomy fits in. While on vacation in Venice, Galileo heard a rumor about a Dutch spectacle-maker Hans Lippershey, who invented an object that made whatever a person was looking at through it appear to be closer. We now call this device the telescope, but at the time it was called a spyglass.

**Galileo builds a better telescope**

Upon hearing this news, Galileo wanted to make his own version of the telescope, and boy did he! Until this point, the Galileo Galilei biography was only mildly interesting, but now we're getting to the good stuff!

Galileo's new and improved telescope was three times more powerful than the one the dutch spectacle-maker invented, and that was just the prototype. By the time he turned his telescope to the night sky, it was a twenty powered instrument.

He was the first person to use a telescope to see the planets and stars. This is probably due to the fact that earlier versions of the telescope weren't powerful enough to see anything worthwhile in the sky. Galileo used his telescope to see four of Jupiter's [moons](http://www.astronomy-for-kids-online.com/galileo-galilei-biography.html), and to see the craters on the Moon in great detail.

**The Catholic church punishes Galileo**

Because his telescope was so powerful, Galileo could plainly see that not all celestial objects in the [Solar System](http://www.astronomy-for-kids-online.com/galileo-galilei-biography.html) were in orbit around the Earth. This idea may seem silly now, but people who lived in Galileo's time believed the earth was the center of the Solar System. In fact, that was the official policy of the Catholic church at the time.

Because of his observations, Galileo accepted the Copernican theory of heliocentrism. The idea that the Sun is at the center of the Solar System.

This belief obviously did not sit well with the Catholic church, which was very powerful at the time. The Vatican had the power to torture people who went against its policies if need be.

Eventually, the Catholic church put Galileo on trial for his supposed crimes. In the end, he had to publicly confess that he was mistaken in his belief. His punishment was confinement in his house in Florence, where he remained until he died in 1642.

[Return to the top of this Galileo Galilei biography page](http://www.astronomy-for-kids-online.com/galileo-galilei-biography.html)