

# Galileo

## Introduction

Galileo has been called the founder of modern science. He was one of the first people to examine the heavens with a telescope. He also made breakthrough discoveries in the study of motion.

Galileo Galilei, who is generally known by his first name, was born in Pisa, Italy, on February 15, 1564. He entered the University of Pisa to study medicine but later switched to mathematics.

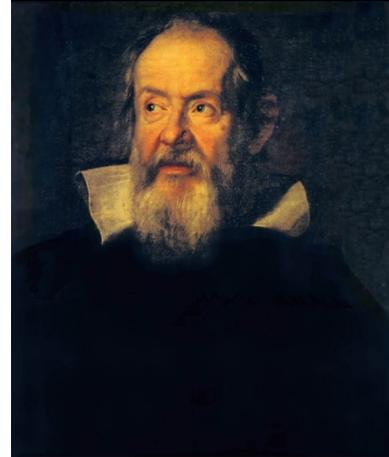


Figure 1: Galileo

## Early Work

Galileo was interested in studying the effect of forces on the motion of bodies. In the Cathedral of Pisa he observed a chandelier swaying back and forth. He realized that it took the same time for each swing, whether the swings were large or small. This discovery became known as the law of the pendulum. It led to the use of the pendulum to keep track of time.

## Use of the Telescope

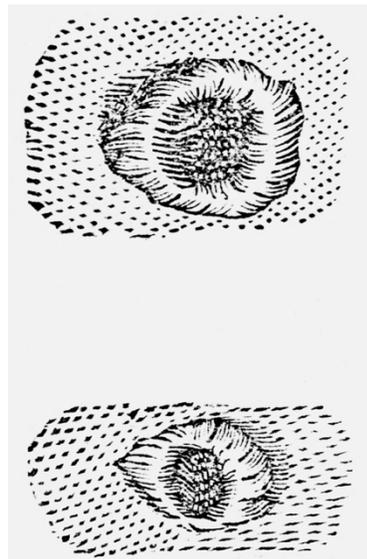


Figure 2: Galileo used a telescope to study the Moon. Based on his observations he was able to draw pictures of craters on the Moon.

In about 1609 Galileo learned of the invention of the telescope in the Netherlands. He later built his own version. The telescope allowed Galileo to make discoveries about space. On January 7, 1610, he discovered four moons revolving around the planet Jupiter. In his honor, these bodies are known as the Galilean satellites.

Discoveries Galileo made provided evidence that the Sun is the center of the solar system. Nicolaus Copernicus, another famous astronomer, had put forth this theory in 1530.

## ***Punishment and Death***

Galileo's studies brought him into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church. The church still taught that Earth was the center of the universe. Galileo was ordered not to teach or defend the ideas of Copernicus. He continued to do so, however.

In 1633 Galileo was brought before the Inquisition, a Roman Catholic institution that held power then. He was punished by being told he could not leave his house.

Galileo became blind in 1637 but continued to work. He died on January 8, 1642.

### **Citation (MLA)**

"Galileo." *Britannica School*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 11 Aug. 2018.  
[school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Galileo/351402](https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Galileo/351402). Accessed 7 Oct. 2018.

### **Citation (APA)**

Galileo. (2018). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from  
<https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Galileo/351402>