

Michael Faraday 1791-1867

Michael Faraday was a great scientist who made lots of discoveries. His most important discovery led to the invention of the first electric generator.

Michael's family was poor, so when he was ten, he went to work in a bookshop to earn money. While he was in the shop, he enjoyed reading books about science.

Michael also went to science talks. He enjoyed talks given by the great scientist, Sir Humphry Davy, because they included exciting demonstrations.

During one talk, Michael made detailed notes. He added pictures and turned them into a book, which he sent to Sir Humphry. Sir Humphry was so impressed, he gave Michael a job as his assistant.

Michael went on to do his own experiments. His inventions helped to make coal mines and lighthouses safer. His most important invention, though, was his electric generator. A handle turned a metal disc between the arms of a horseshoe magnet, creating an electric current. This is the basis of the method we still use to produce electricity today.

1. How did Michael Faraday's poverty lead to him becoming a scientist?

2. Why do you think scientific lectures were popular and what might people have seen there?

3. What did Michael produce after one particular lecture and why? Think of two reasons.

4. What do you need to generate electricity? Think of *three* things.
