Inge Lehmann

Fact Cards

Inge Lehmann

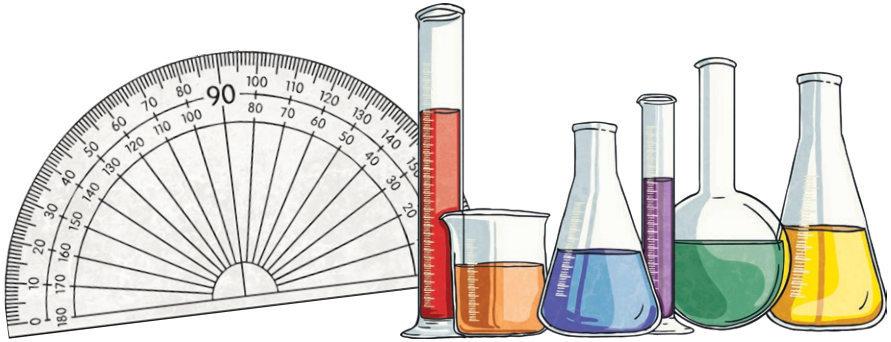
Inge Lehmann is one of the longest-lived scientists in history! She lived to be 104 years old.

Inge Lehmann

Inge went to a new school that was special at that time because boys and girls were not taught or treated differently.

Inge Lehmann

She started studying maths, chemistry and physics at Copenhagen University in 1907. It took her 13 years to get her degree, because she was working as an actuary (a type of mathematician) at the same time as studying.



Inge Lehmann

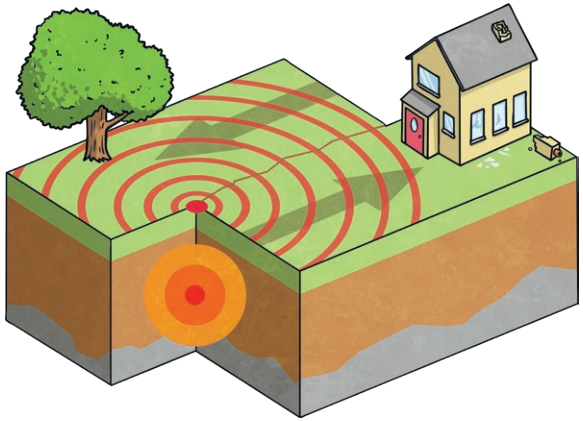
In 1923, she began working at the university and, in 1925, started to work in the area of seismology. This is the scientific study of earthquakes and the waves of energy caused by earthquakes.

Inge Lehmann

Inge loved her work as a seismologist and travelled all around Europe learning new techniques for studying earthquakes and their waves of energy. She was made Head of the Department of Seismology in 1928.

Inge Lehmann

Scientists already used the waves of energy caused by earthquakes to try to understand what the inside of Earth was like, and what it was made of. The waves of energy travel differently depending on the material they are travelling through.



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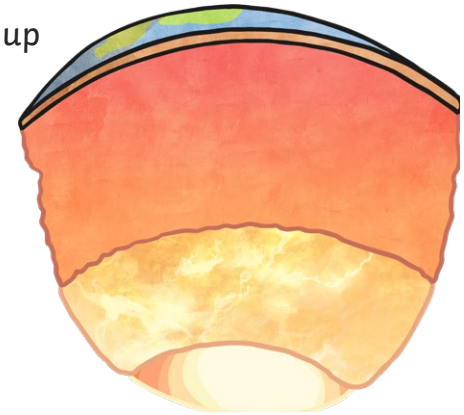
In 1906, a scientist called Richard Oldham had used seismology data to come to the conclusion that the centre of Earth was liquid metal. However, Inge Lehmann noticed that some of the information from the earthquake waves was puzzling and did not back up the idea of a liquid core.



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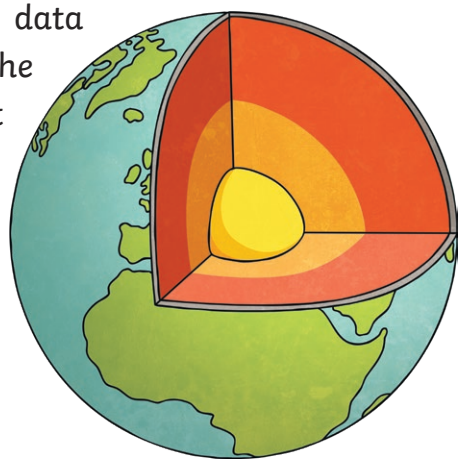
Inge wondered if, although there was liquid rock beneath Earth's surface, there was actually a solid core at the centre. She checked the seismology data to investigate the pattern of the earthquake waves and found that her ideas were backed up by this information. She was right!



Inge Lehmann

Inge Lehmann published her ideas and research proving that Earth has a solid core in 1936. It took a few years for most scientists to accept and believe her ideas. Now, as more and more accurate information has been collected, modern scientists completely agree with Inge's discovery that Earth has a solid core.