Women in Science

Rosalind Franklin

Rosalind Franklin was born in Notting Hill, London in 1920. She grew up in an affluent and influential family and started studying chemistry at Newnham College, Cambridge in 1938. In her early years she researched many chemical structures including that of coal. in 1951 Franklin started working at King's College London where she studied and started to apply her knowledge of X-ray techniques to the structure of DNA. While working with a student named Raymond Gosling she took X-ray pictures and drew scientific conclusions about the structure of DNA which would later be used by Francis Crick and James D. Watson to declare the structure of DNA to be in the form of a double helix. In 1962, Watson and Crick won the Nobel Prize for their studies and Rosalind Franklin's research helped them acheive that honor.

Further Study Questions (circle one)

1. Critics claim James Watson was guilty of this in regard to Rosalind Franklin's portrayal in Watson's memoirs: Racism Religious Persecution Sexism Ageism

2. Franklin studied the structure of what virus in 1955?

Tobacco mosaic virus Cowpox virus Influenza virus Smallpox virus

3. In 1942, Franklin studied coal. Franklin's projects helped inspire which developments?

High-strength carbon fibers Diamonds for powered drills Fuel for generators Briquettes for cooking stoves