

Nikola Tesla for Kids: His Life, Ideas, and Inventions, with 21 Activities

Amy M. O'Quinn

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Nikola Tesla was an accomplished scientist and inventor as well as an enigmatic technological dreamer, as shown in Amy M. O'Quinn's thorough biography *Nikola Tesla for Kids*.

The book moves from Tesla's youth in modern-day Croatia to his death in New York. The list of his accomplishments is incredible: the invention of the alternating current system of electricity; pioneering studies of wireless technology; work instrumental to the development of radio and leading to the posthumous acknowledgement of his radio patents.

Though Tesla is not as well known as Thomas Edison or other contemporary inventors, he proves to be an intriguing and sympathetic subject. Throughout his life, his grand ideas were either brought to fruition or, more often, stymied by his handling of business and finances. The ups and downs of Tesla's fortunes provide the raw dramatic fodder for the book. Although the book makes concessions for short attention spans, including plenty of pictures, short asides on interesting but tangential subjects, and activities, nothing is oversimplified.

The book's activities include instructions for experiments like building a simple electric circuit and a basic working model of a maglev train, as well as projects inspired by other aspects of Tesla's story, such as making a bust, patent drawing, or creating fluorescent slime. With a few exceptions, they are simple enough for young readers to tackle with minimal adult supervision, requiring few raw materials.

Nikola Tesla contributed much to science, and his story—especially the mysterious promise of the particle beam or “death ray” that he worked on near his end—is compelling. *Nikola Tesla for Kids* is a natural fit for any school library or classroom.

PETER DABBENE (July/August 2019)

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