

# The life and work of Caroline Herschel



[Home](#)

[Caroline Herschel](#)

[fact file](#)

[Astronomy links](#)



## Fact file



- Born in Germany on 16 March 1750.
- Died in Germany on 9 January 1848 in aged 97.
- As a child, her mother expected her to concentrate on household duties.
- She was 1.30 m (4' 3") tall.
- She joined her brother, William, in England in 1772 and trained as a singer. She also learnt English and mathematics.
- Caroline helped William with his astronomical activities by reading clocks and recording observations. She also did many mathematical calculations, and was very methodical and accurate.

## Fact file

- Caroline started making independent observations in 1782.
- In 1783, she discovered three new nebulae. Nebulae are hazy patches in the sky that can be galaxies, star clusters or clouds of gas and dust.
- In 1786, she discovered her first comet and comets became her special interest. By careful observation she discovered seven more comets.
- In 1787 King George III recognised her contributions. He gave her a salary of £50 per year as her brother's assistant.
- In 1798, she updated a catalogue of stars by adding an index and writing about 560 more stars. This work took 20 months to finish.
- She compiled a catalogue of nebulae from William Herschel's observations. It took over a year to complete. In 1828 she was awarded the Royal Astronomical Society's Gold Medal for this work.
- Caroline was very modest about her achievements. It was her self-sacrifice and devotion to her brother that helped him to make some important discoveries.



[Home](#)