**Radioactivity Note**

-Radioactivity is the process whereby unstable atomic nuclei release energetic subatomic particles. The process releases the invisible and imperceptible ray.

-The first decay processes to be discovered were [alpha decay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpha_decay), [beta decay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beta_decay), and [gamma decay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamma_decay).

-In 1895, Wilhelm Roentgen discovered the existence of X-rays.

-His discovery indirectly influenced the discovery of radioactivity.

-In 1896, [Henri Becquerel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri_Becquerel) for whom the SI unit for radiation is named . Becquerel discovered that uranium salts were able to blacken a photographic plate placed in the dark, even through a paper barrier.

-In July 1898, Marie and her husband published a paper together, announcing the existence of an element which they named "[polonium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polonium)"

-On 26 December 1898, the Curies announced the existence of a second element, which they named "[radium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radium)" for its intense [*radioactivity*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radioactivity) – a word that they coined.

-nuclear reactors exploit it to generate heat. Phosphorescent materials sometimes include small quantities of radioactive atoms.

-In large doses, radioactivity is extremely dangerous.

-Many weapons have been designed and tested which use radiation to kill people in large numbers