

# Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock

## Fact File

### Early Life

Maggie is of Nigerian heritage. She went to 13 different schools before she was 18. When she was eight years old, Maggie discovered that the difficulties she had with learning to read and write were due to a learning difficulty called dyslexia. From a young age, Maggie loved looking up at the stars. It had always been her dream to go to space. Her family didn't have much money, so she saved up to buy her very first telescope.

**Date of Birth:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 1968

**Place of Birth:** Islington, London

#### Job Roles:

Space scientist

Television presenter

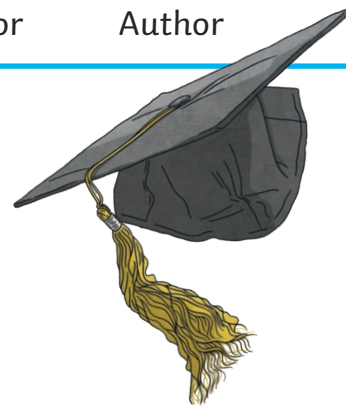
Science communicator

Author

### Career

After completing a university degree in physics and a PhD in mechanical engineering, Dr Maggie worked for the Ministry of Defence. She helped to develop a missile warning system that would warn people about missiles. She later moved to a team that developed global technology to try and detect landmines. After a short while, she returned to work as a space scientist.

Her first job in astronomy was to create a device that would help a telescope in Chile to gather data about the stars. While she has not yet had the chance to go to space, most of her work is centered around creating instruments and technology that can be used in space. She also worked on a space satellite that measured wind speeds to help investigate climate change.



## Achievements

Dr Maggie has published many books and has been nominated for a BAFTA award for presenting. She was also the first African woman to achieve a gold medal in the Physics News Award. In 2009, Dr Maggie was honoured as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for her work as a science communicator. She is admired for how she is able to make difficult scientific information easy and simple for everyone to understand and for her outreach to young people.



## Why is she significant?

Dr Maggie is committed to inspiring young people to pursue a career in science, astronomy, engineering and space. She has spoken to over 25,000 children on how she became a scientist, sharing the wonders of space and encouraging children to pursue a career in science no matter their gender, heritage or how much money they have.

Dr Maggie wants to break the stereotypes about scientists and show children that there are indeed Black female scientists out there. Her work as a science communicator allows her to talk to people about science in a way that's simple for them to understand. Because of her passion for science, and her enthusiastic personality, the BBC invited her to present some of their new science documentaries. Due to the success of these documentaries, Dr Maggie was offered a co-presenting position on a popular astronomy show called 'The Sky at Night'. Dr Maggie wants to be a role model for young people and to further reach and inspire children. She presented shows called 'Stargazing' on CBeebies and 'Out of This World' on CBBC, which she hosted with her daughter Lauren. When Maggie talks to young people, she tells them that it's OK to dream and OK to fail.

**'Role models should be real people; if you have a role model who is, or is perceived as, a superwoman, then people think, 'well, that's not me, I can't aspire to be that.'**

- Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock