

Connecting ideas – Writing a biography

Alexander Fleming was born in 1881. He was born in Ayrshire, Scotland. His father worked as a farmer there. His father died when Alexander was seven.

Fleming left school. He worked as a shipping clerk in London for four years.

He received an inheritance. He was 20. He enrolled at St Mary's Hospital Medical School. He wanted to pursue his interest in medicine.

He completed his medical degree in 1908. He won Gold Medal as the top medical student. He joined the research team at St Mary's.

It was World War I. Fleming served in the Medical Corps in France. He worked in a hospital. It had been set up in a casino in Boulogne.

He saw many soldiers die from infected wounds. He decided to specialize in this area of medicine.

The war was over. Fleming returned to St Mary's. He applied himself to research into bacteria.

On September 28, 1928, Fleming was cleaning petri dishes in his laboratory. He wanted to be able to reuse them. He'd just returned from a holiday.

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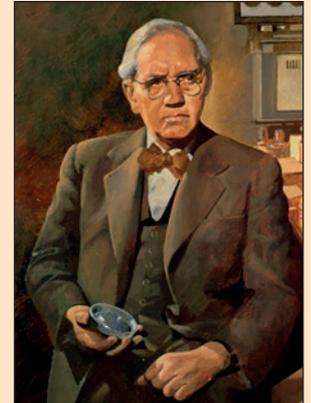
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He was generally untidy. The dishes had been left out in the warm laboratory. They were covered in bacteria. They were also covered in mould.

Fleming picked up one dish. He saw that no bacteria were growing around the mould. He decided to study it. It might prove to be an antibacterial agent.

Fleming had discovered the world's first antibiotic, penicillin. Two other researchers, Florey and Chain, brought it to mass production, in 1942. They changed the face of modern medicine.

The D-Day landings took place in 1944. Enough penicillin had then been produced. It treated all of the wounded Allied forces in World War II.

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