

Dr. Walter Kohn

Dr. Walter Kohn is an Austrian-born American theoretical physicist, fleeing Vienna in 1939 on the famous Kindertransport. Dr. Walter Kohn was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry on October 13, 1998 for his development of the density-functional theory. Walter Kohn is a condensed matter theorist who has made seminal contributions to the understanding of the electronic structure of materials. He played the leading role in the development of the density functional theory, which has revolutionized scientists' approach to the electronic structure of atoms, molecules and solid materials in physics, chemistry and materials science. With the advent of supercomputers, density functional theory has become an essential tool for electronic materials science. Professor Kohn has also made major contributions to the physics of semiconductors, superconductivity, surface physics and catalysis. Professor Kohn was the founding director of the National Science Foundation's Institute for Theoretical Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The Institute brings together leading scientists from throughout the world to work on major problems in theoretical physics and related fields. Under Professor Kohn's leadership it quickly developed into one of the leading research centers in physics, and has been widely copied.