Leo Esaki Encyclopedia Article

Leo Esaki

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Leo Esaki

1925-

Japanese physicist whose research into quantum mechanical tunneling won the 1973 Nobel Prize for Physics. Tunneling, the process by which electrons (and other particles) can "escape" from an atom, has been used most recently in the scanning tunneling microscope, which can provide atomic-scale "images" of surfaces. In addition to his work on tunneling, Esaki helped to develop the first quantum electron device, the Esaki tunnel diode.