

Nicolas Sadi Carnot Encyclopedia Article

Nicolas Sadi Carnot

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Nicolas Sadi Carnot

1796-1832

French physicist whose discoveries created the study of thermodynamics. Carnot, in his short life, discovered the principles by which heat engines work. He was the first to show that the efficiency of a heat engine is related to the temperature difference across the engine and is inversely proportional to the temperature of the heat sink. Carnot's discoveries are used today to describe the efficiency of machines from engines to nuclear power plants.