

# Introduction to Particle Physics

From lens of an experimentalist

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Prajita Bhattarai

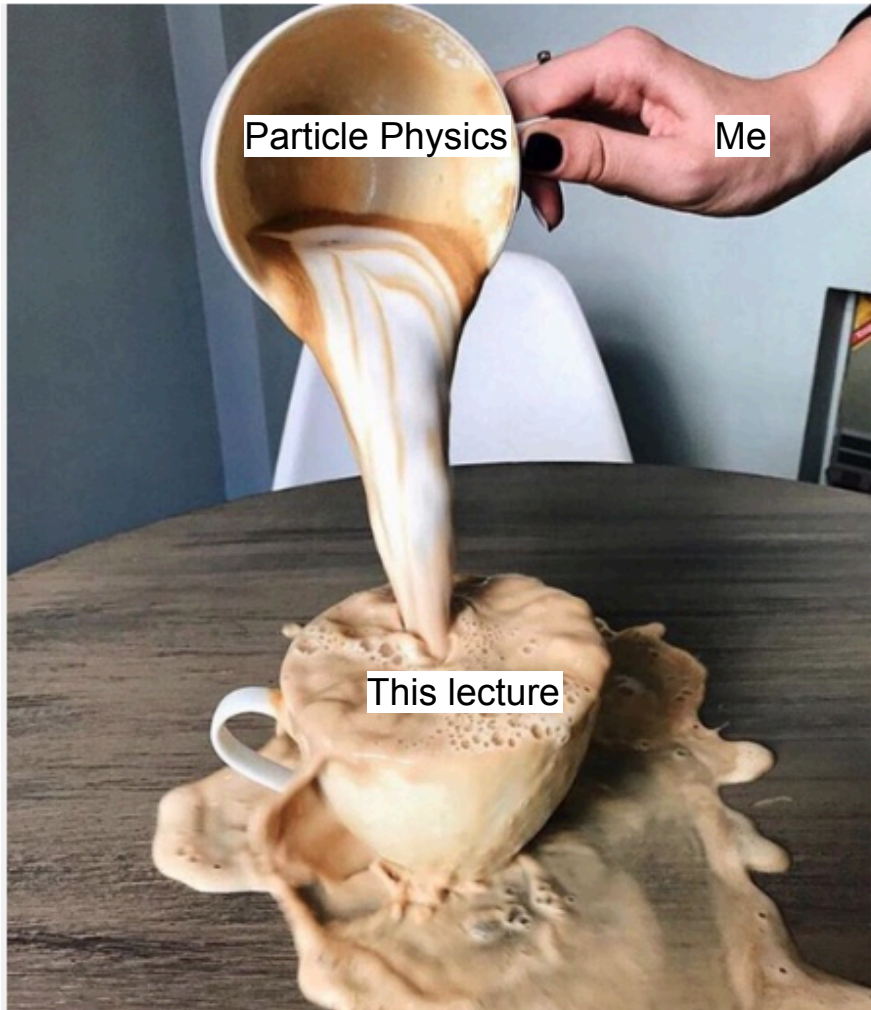
HEPIC Summer Week 2025

June 25, 2025

# Outline

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There is a lot one could cover within this topic



- Introduction & Theory
- Motivation
- Experimental Particle Physics
- Collider Physics

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Follow closely, there will be quiz questions —> correct answers?



# Introduction & Theory

# What is particle physics?

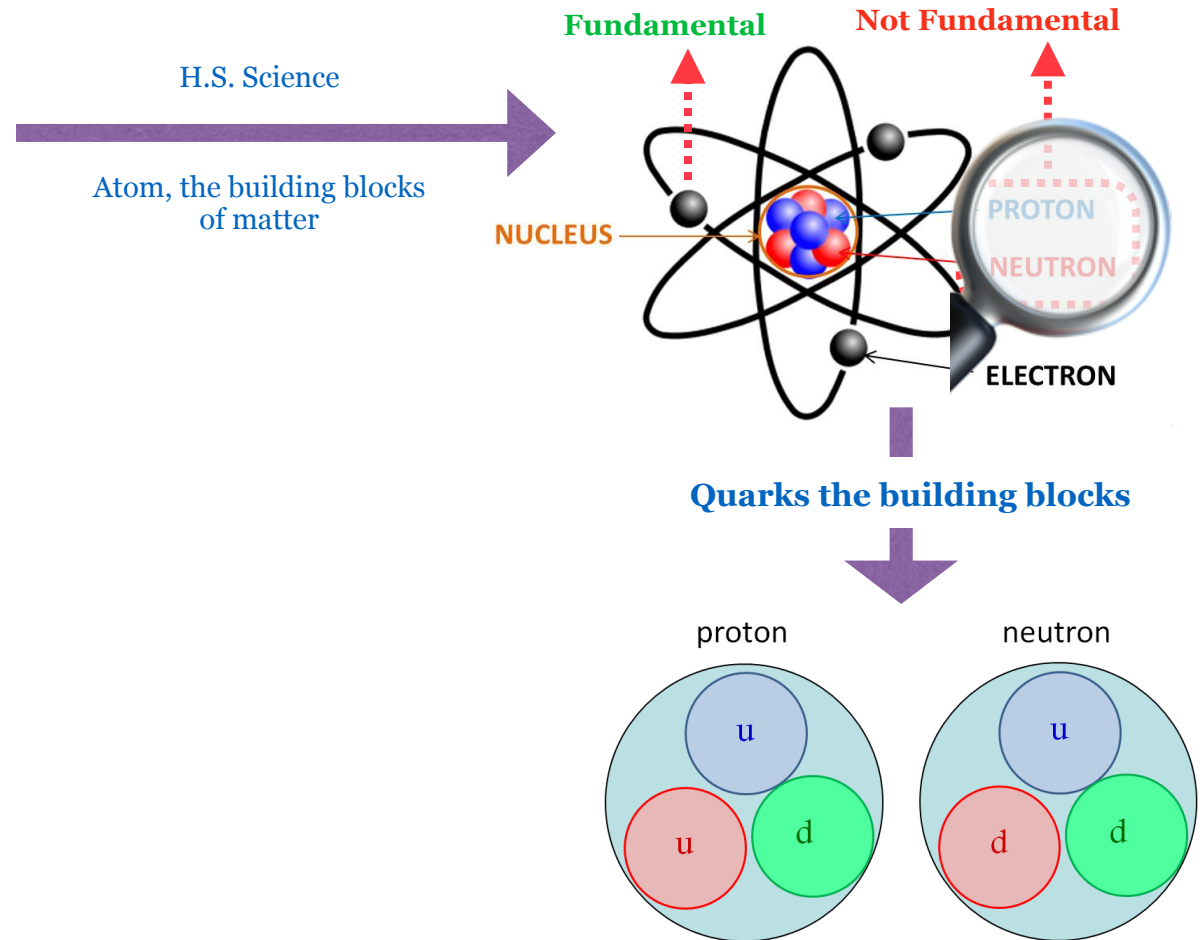
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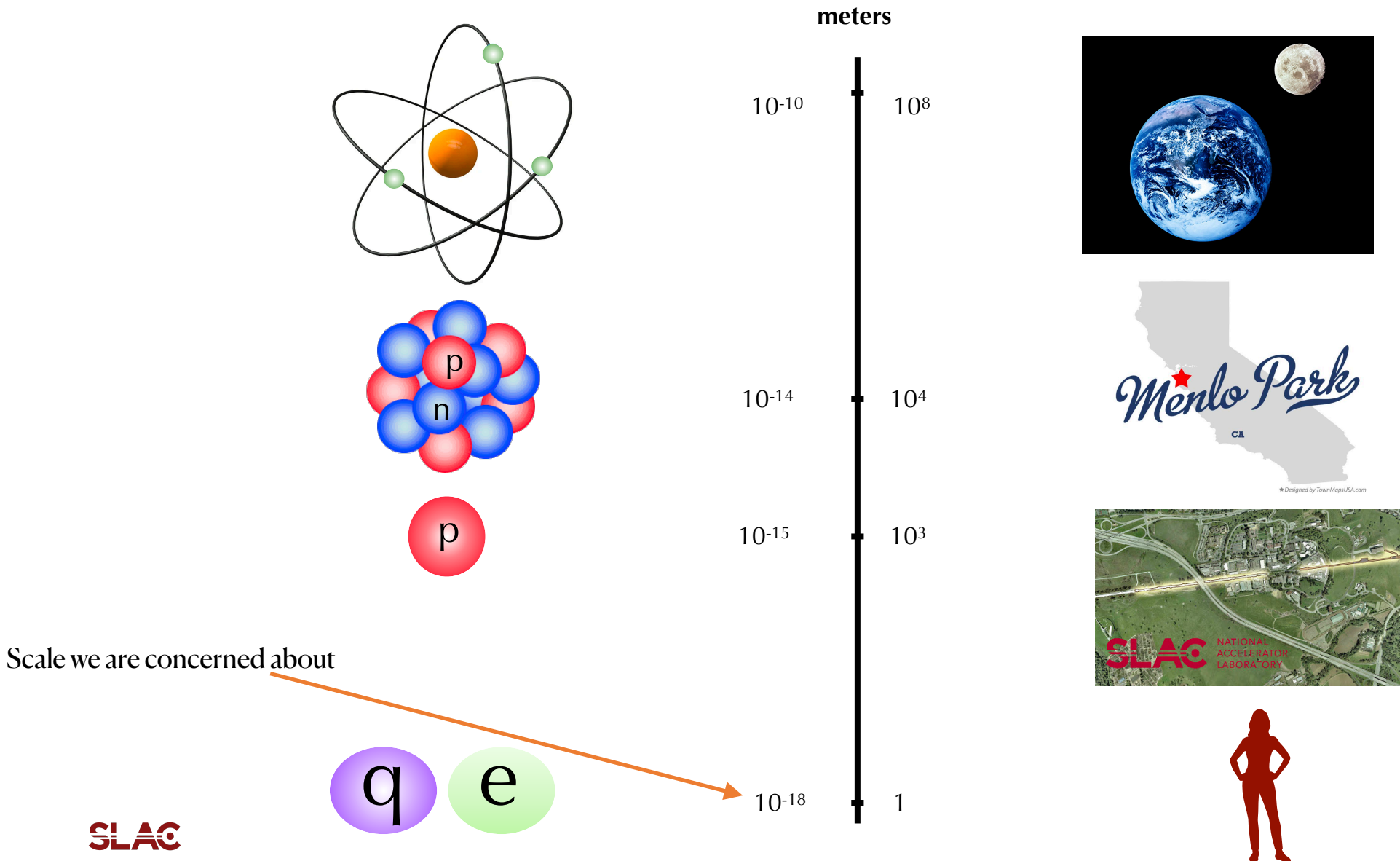
A field of physics that tries to understand the fundamental nature of the universe

In other words, what is the smallest building blocks of nature?

# What is particle physics?

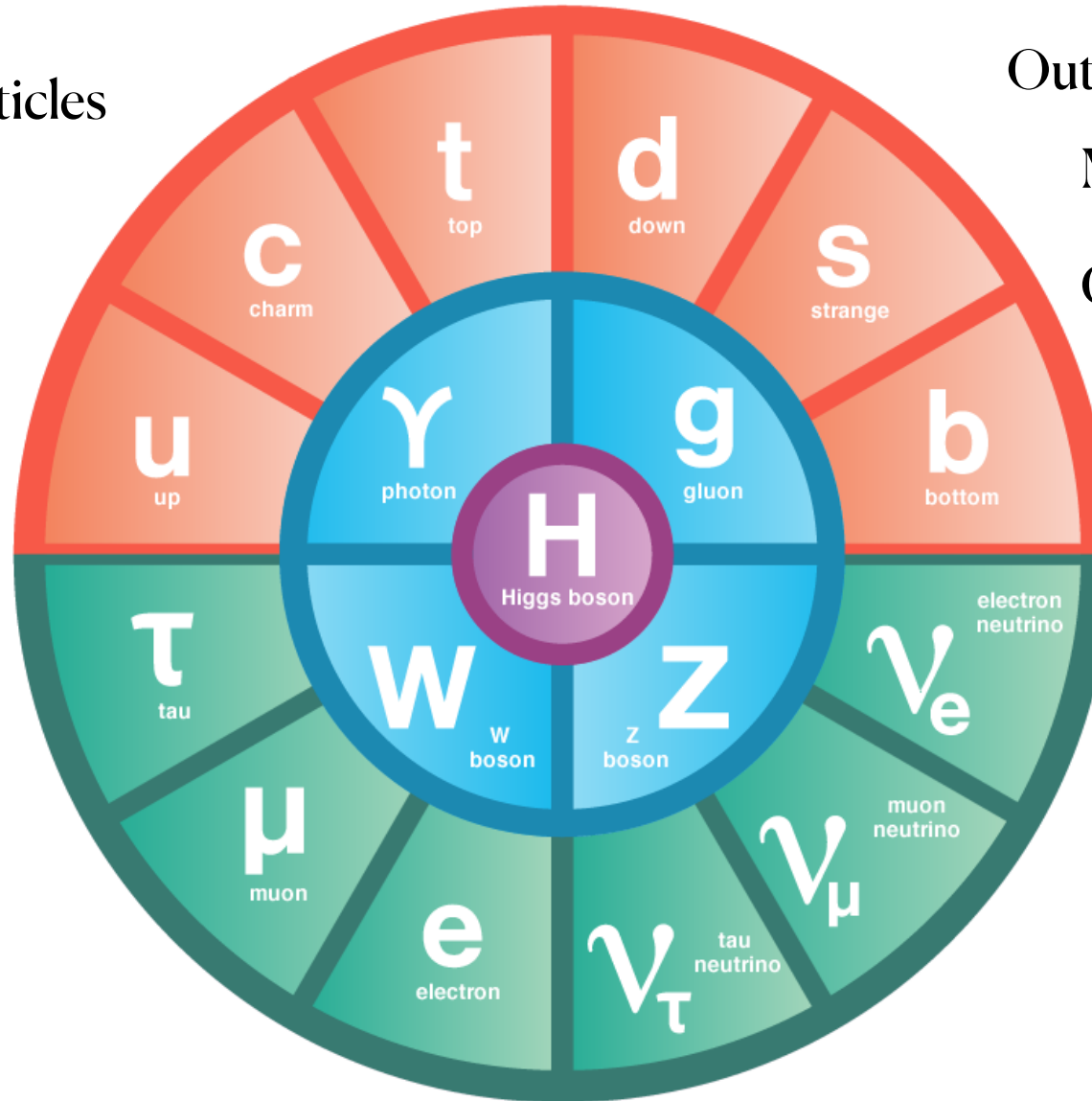


# The scale of fundamental interaction



# Our Current Understanding of Fundamental Nature of Universe

17 known fundamental particles



Outer layer: matter particle

Medium layer: force carrier

Center particle: Higgs Boson

Most recently discovered, very special

# Matter Particle: The Fermions

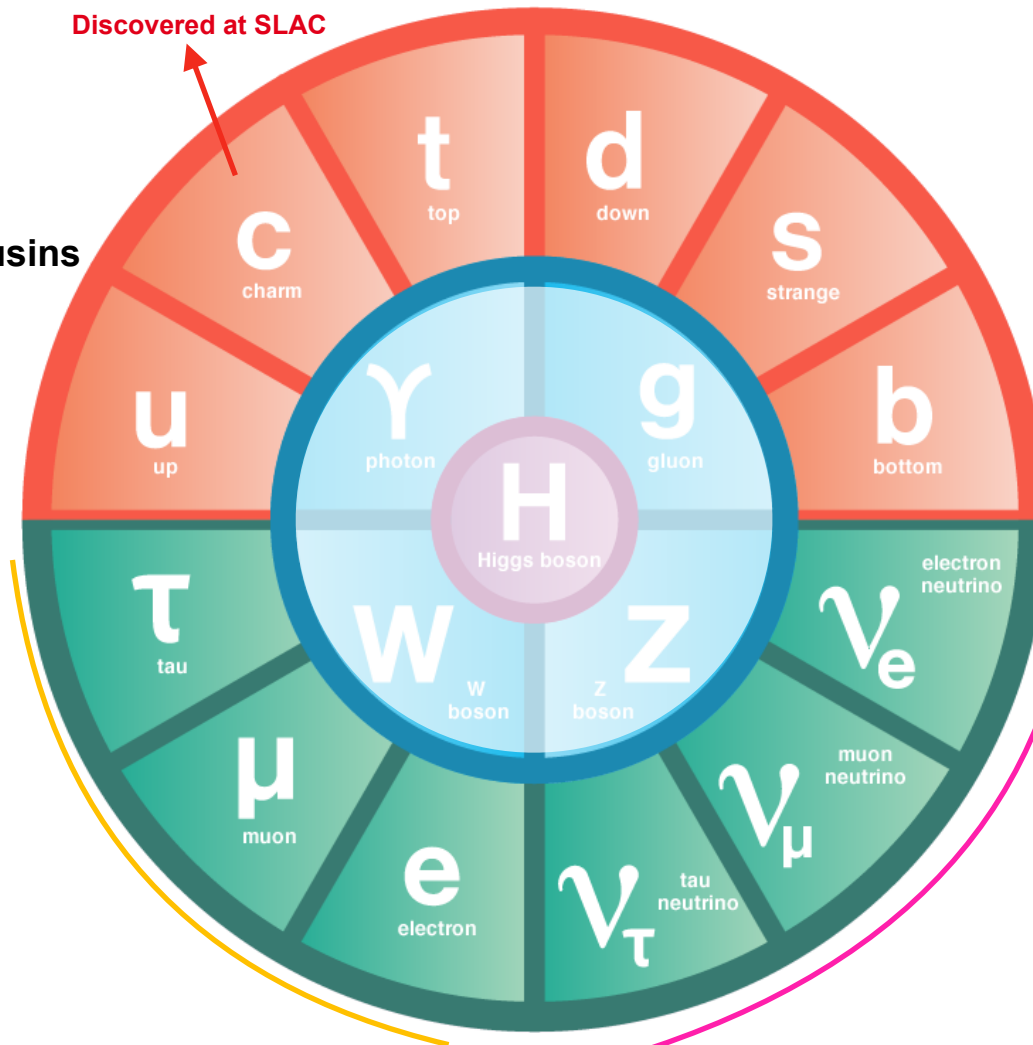
Matter component of visible universe (stars, galaxies, you, me...)

## Top half Quarks:

Up & down makes proton/neutrons

Charm, strange, top & bottom heavier cousins

Discovered at SLAC



## Bottom half Leptons:

Electrons & heavier cousins muons, tau

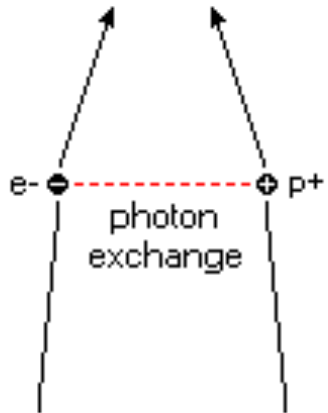
Electron-neutrino, muon-neutrino, tau-neutrino

Very light passes through entire earth without interacting

# Force Carriers: Bosons

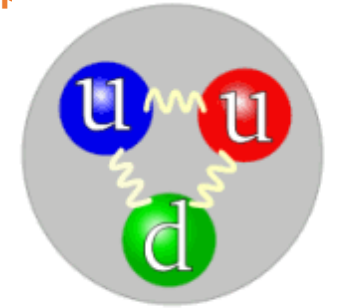
Force carriers

Electromagnetic force



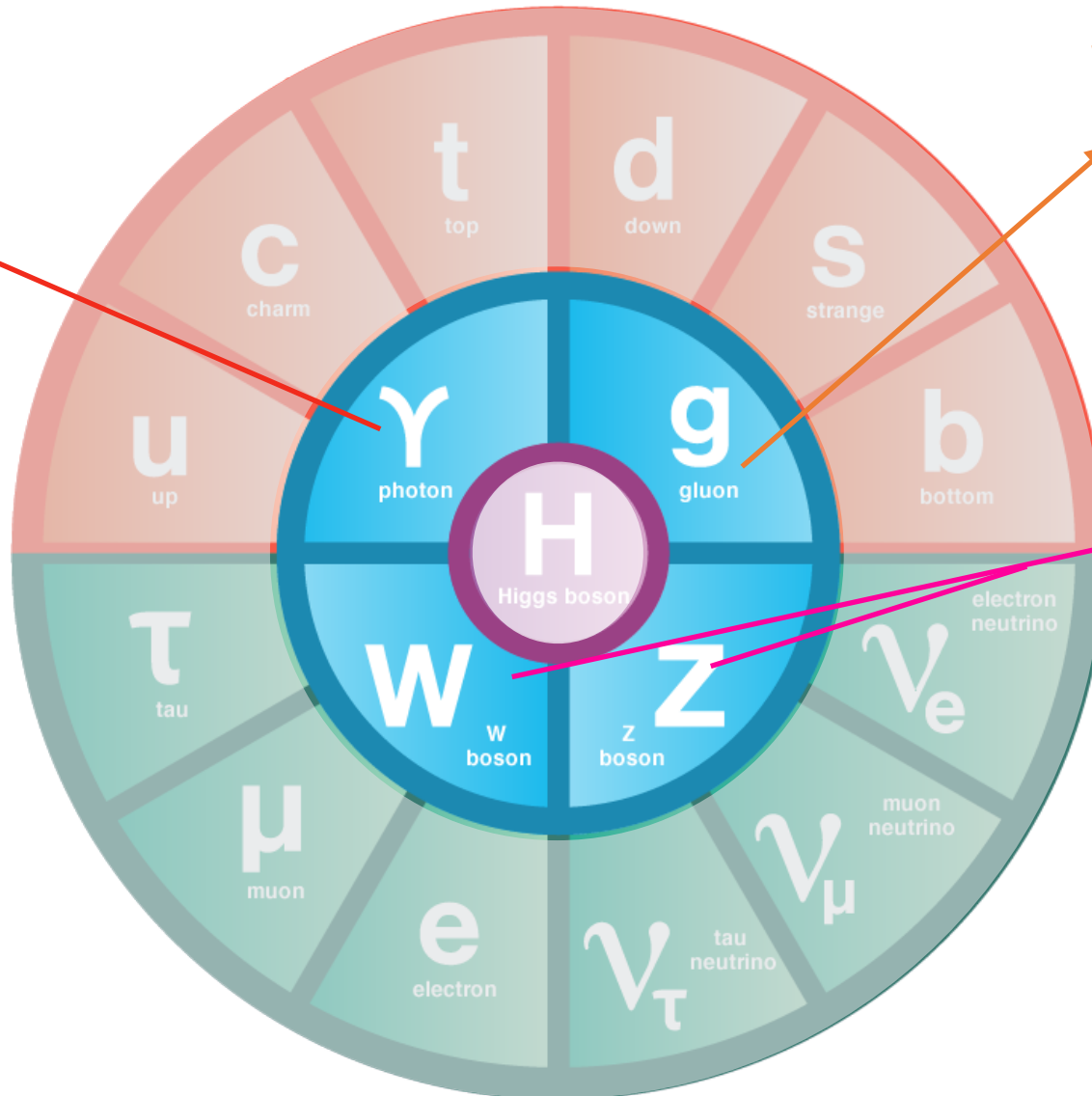
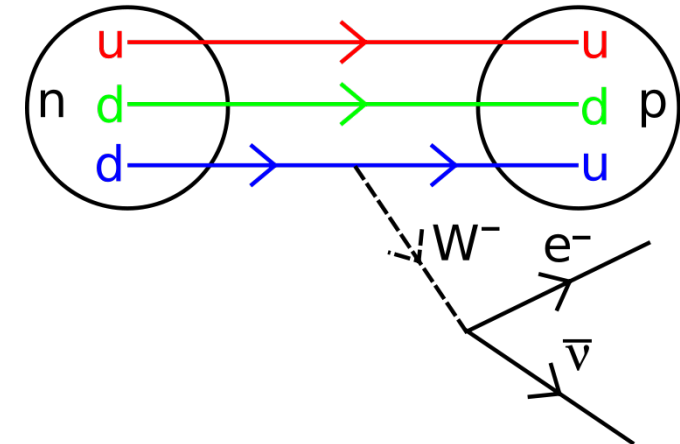
Strong force: between quarks

Example: binds proton/neutrons



Weak force:

Example: radioactivity



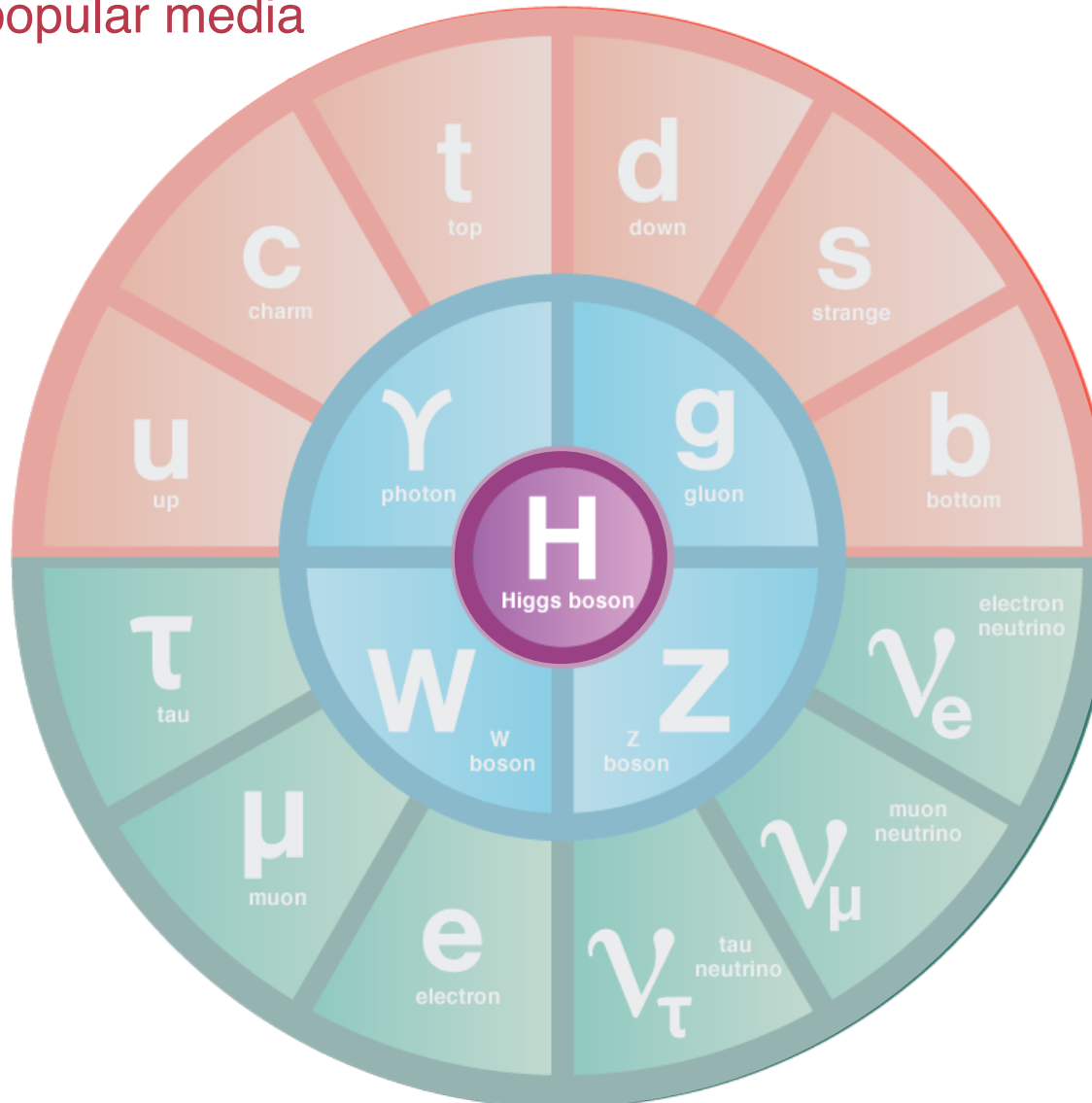
# The Higgs

Known as god particle in popular media

Most recently discovered

A central role

Gives mass



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François Englert  
Prize share: 1/2



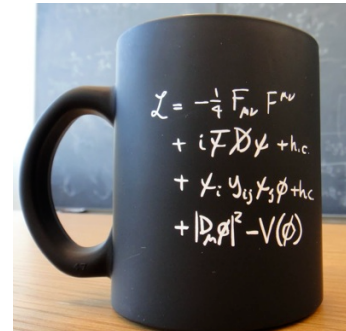
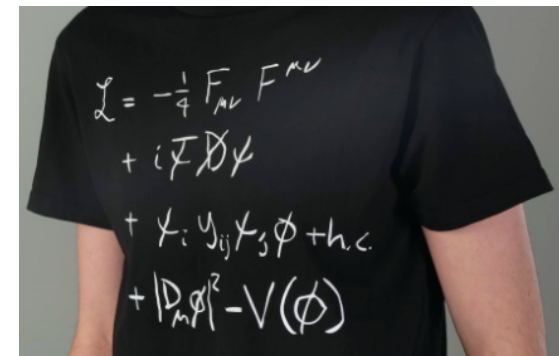
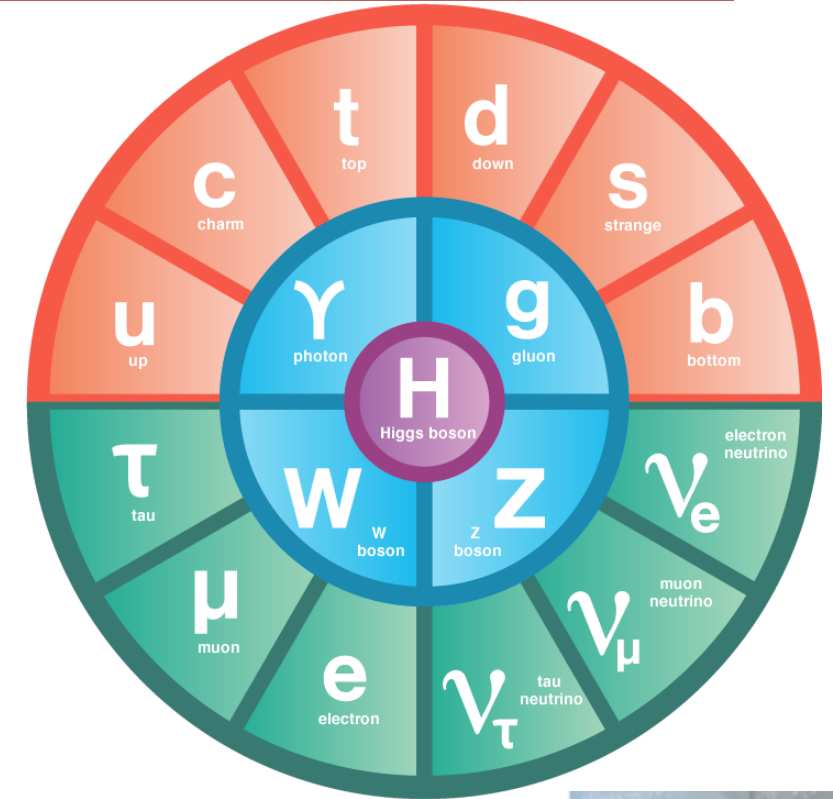
© Nobel Media AB. Photo: A. Mahmoud  
Peter W. Higgs  
Prize share: 1/2

# Theory of Our Current Understanding

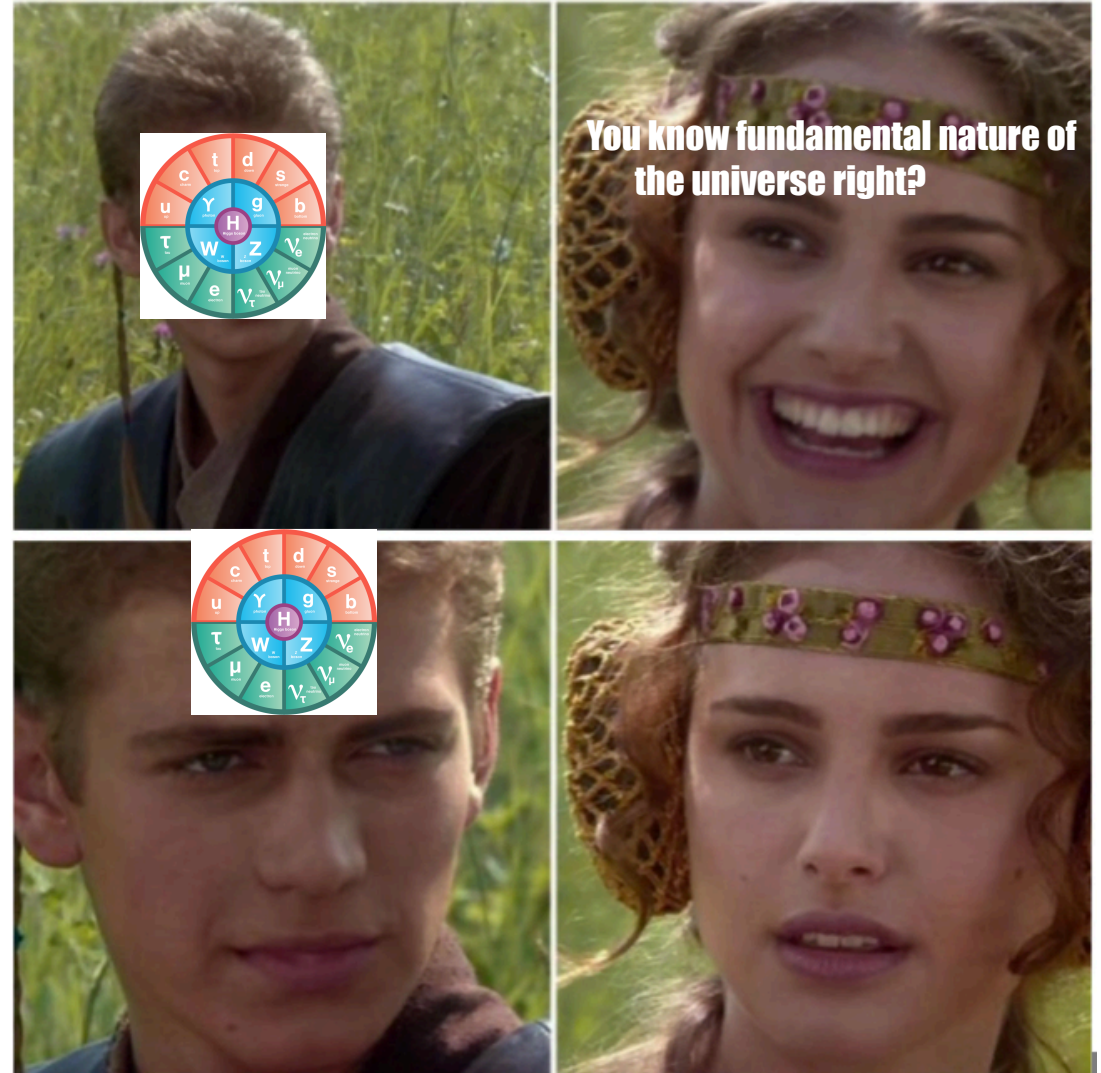
## The Standard Model

A theoretical framework describing all known fundamental particles & their interactions

Periodic table of particle physics



# Motivation

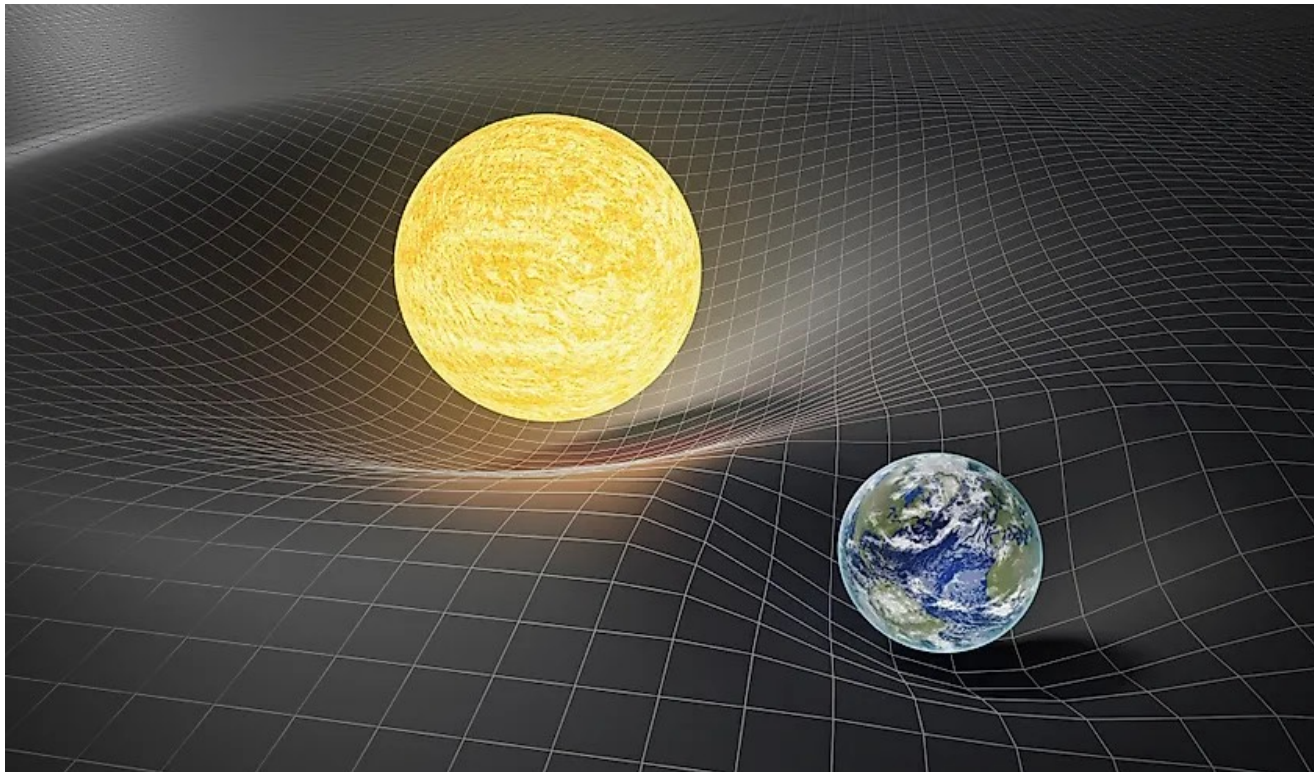


# Out Limited Understanding of the Universe

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## Limitation of The Standard Model

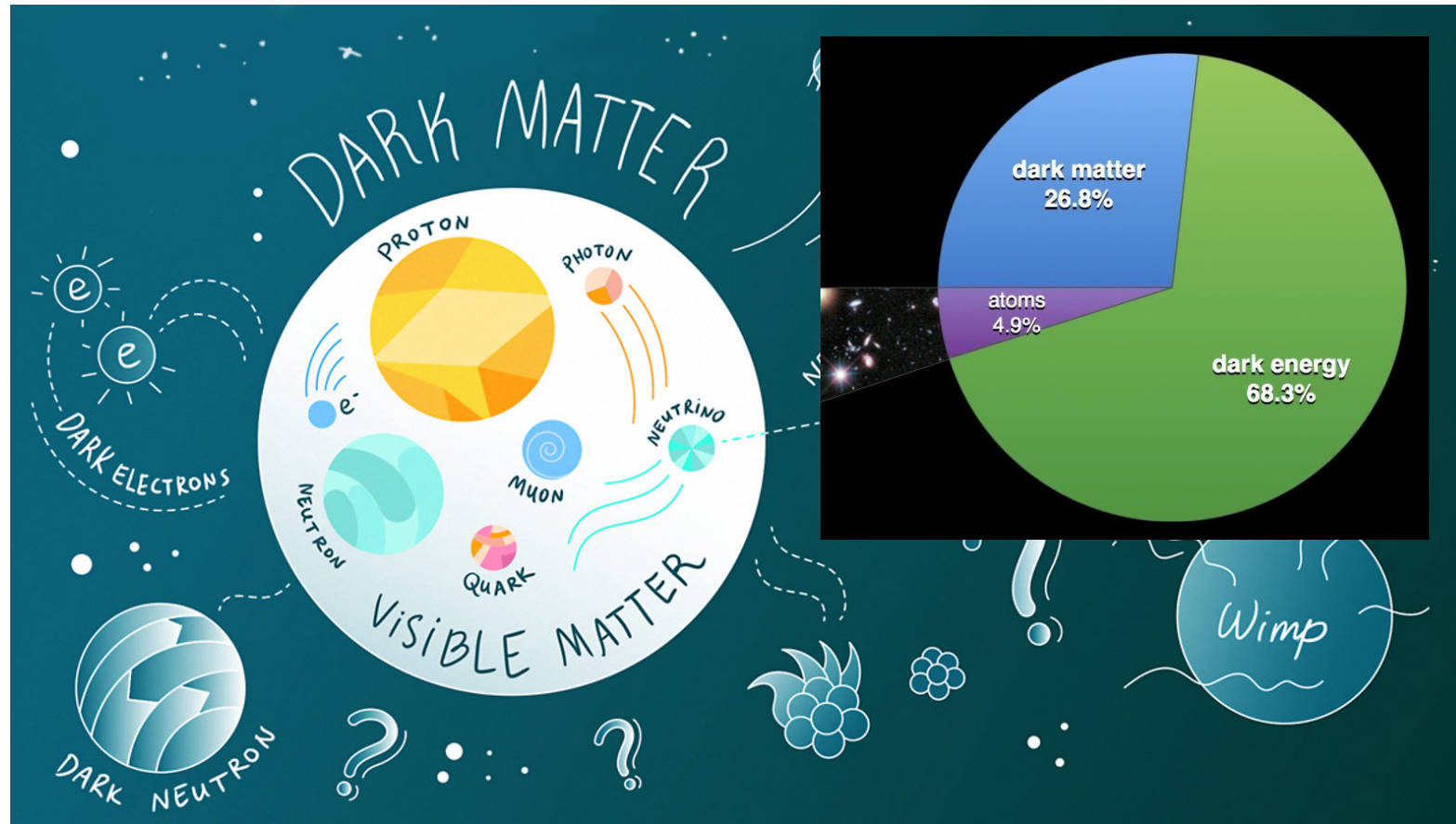
- I. Where is gravity, the fourth fundamental force?



# Out Limited Understanding of the Universe

## Limitation of The Standard Model

### II. Nature of dark matter?

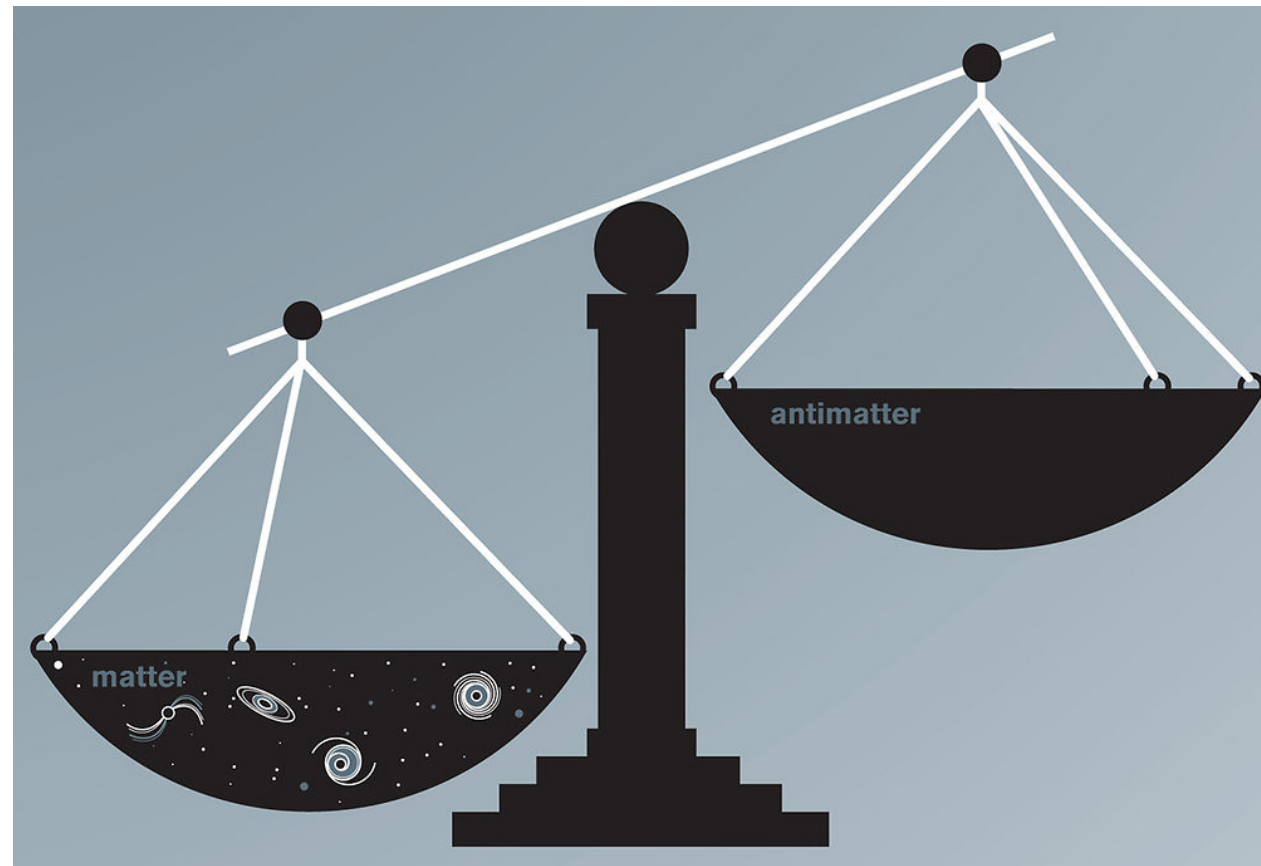


# Out Limited Understanding of the Universe

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## Limitation of The Standard Model

### III. Why more matter than antimatter?

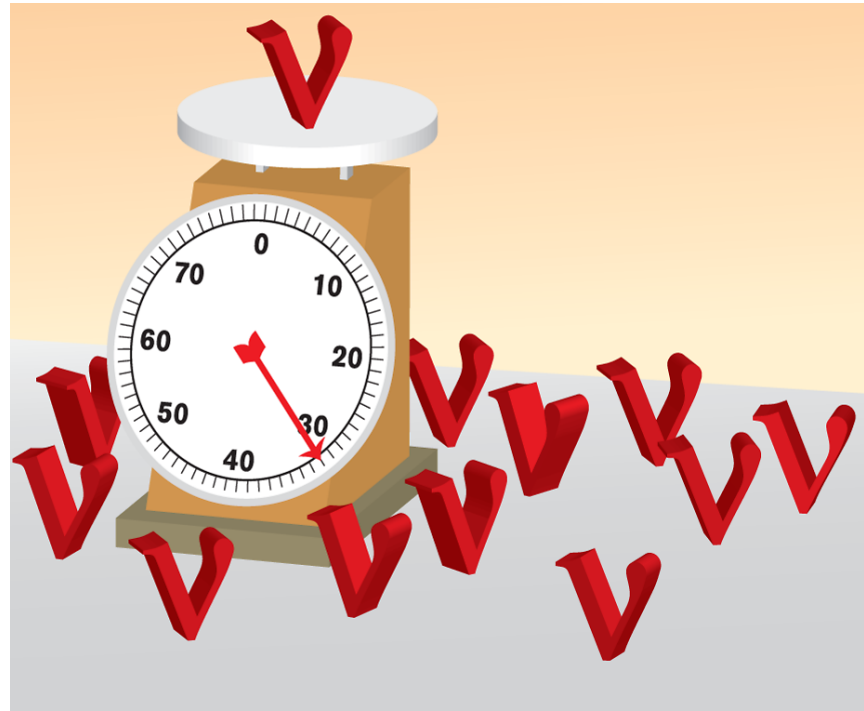


# Out Limited Understanding of the Universe

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## Limitation of The Standard Model

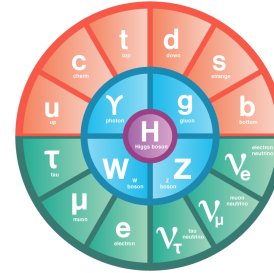
### IV. Origin of Neutrino masses?



# Summarizing Our Current Understanding

We know 17 fundamental particles

Standard Model, a theoretical framework gives description of this particle & how they interact



There are certain observations the theory can't describe



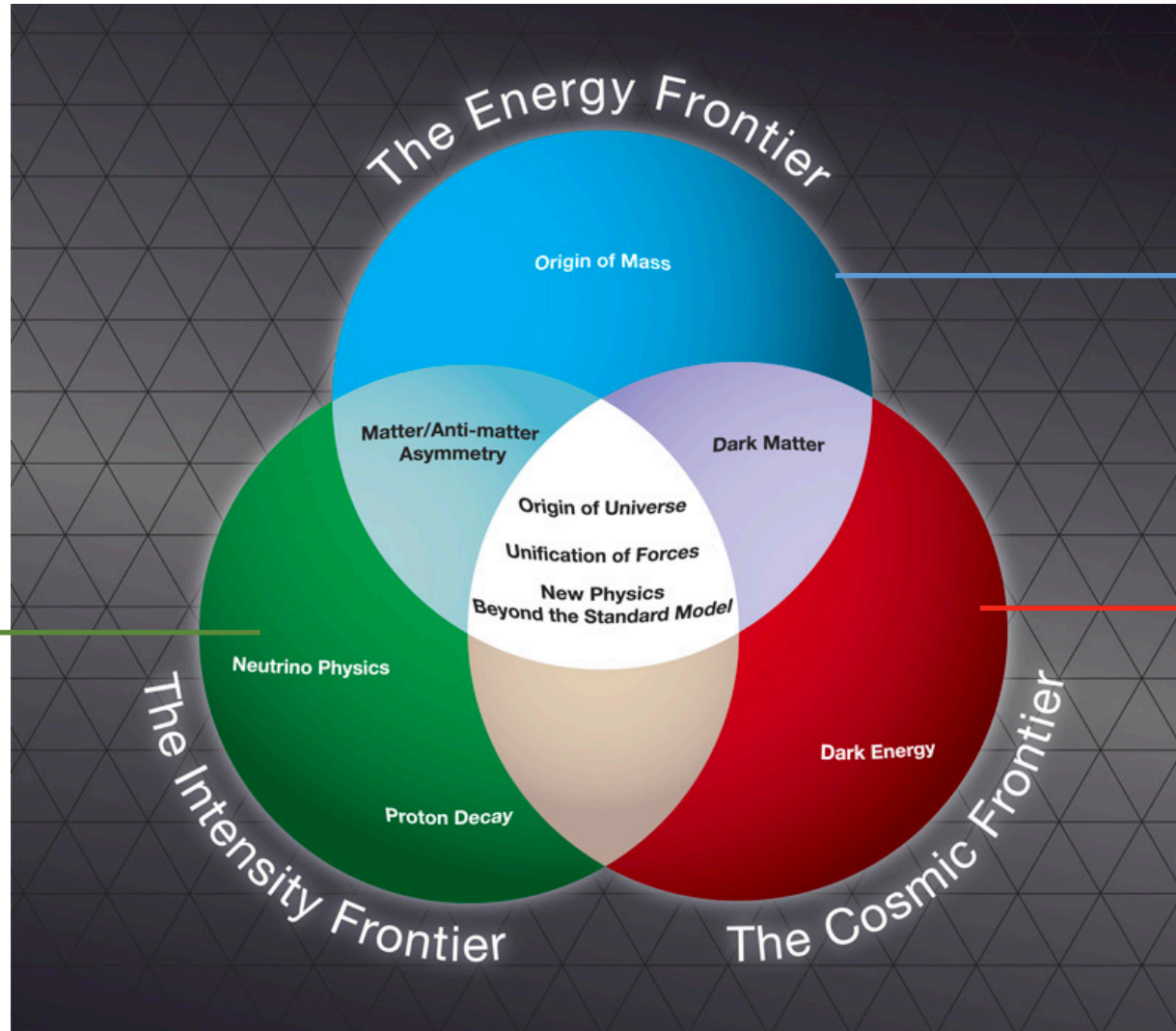
our understanding is incomplete

- We want to understand what we don't within the Standard Model
- And
- Look for new particles & interactions

Scope of experimental particle physics research

# Experimental Particle Physics

# Particle Physics Today



High energy colliders

Example: LHC

Experiments directly looking for dark matter, survey of dark energy

Example: LSST, LZ

Rare processes

Example: neutrino experiments

like DUNE

# Collider Physics



# Why call colliders?



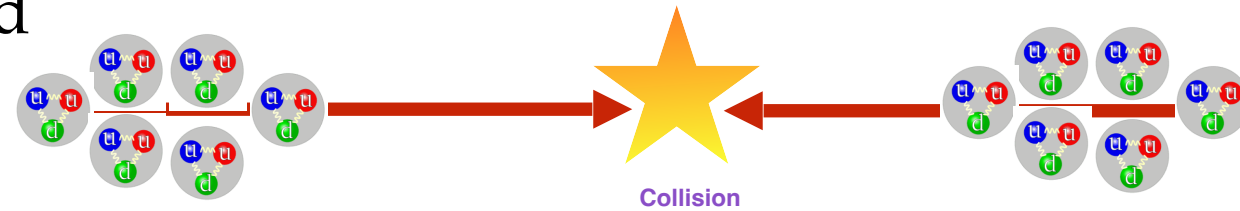
Collides particles at **high energies**, look for a **new type of particle or interaction** in data

Not present in Standard Model

# Large Hadron Collider (LHC)

World's most powerful accelerator

- ▶ 27km circumference, 100m underground
- ▶ Collides bunches of protons at very high energies at different interaction points



# How Does Particle Accelerator Work?

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First order: Electric & Magnetic Field

Lorentz Force  $\longrightarrow$

$$\overline{F}(t) = q \left( \underbrace{\overline{E}(t)}_{F_E} + \underbrace{\overline{v}(t) \otimes \overline{B}(t)}_{F_B} \right)$$

Accelerates particle to very high energies

Control direction of beam & collision

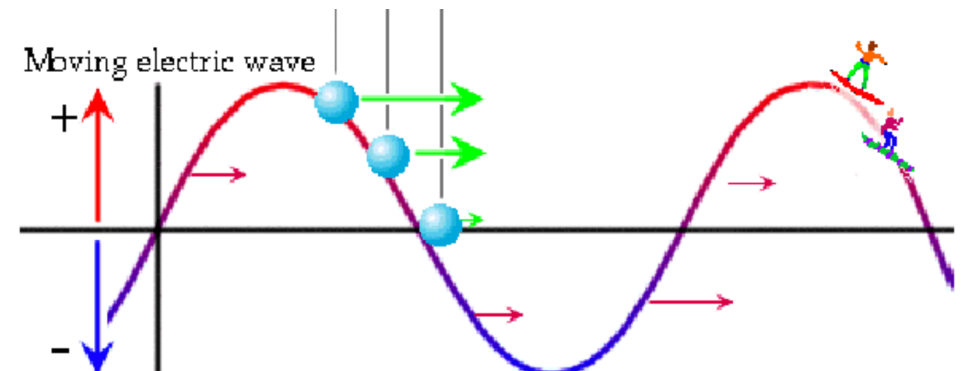
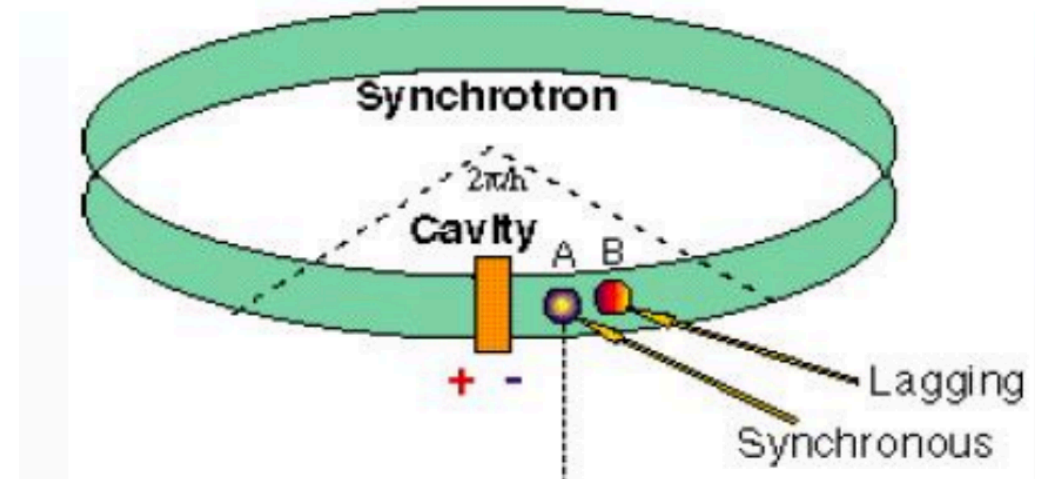
# How Does Particle Accelerator Work?

## First order: Electric & Magnetic Field

Lorentz Force  $\longrightarrow \vec{F}(t) = q \left( \underbrace{\vec{E}(t)}_{F_E} + \underbrace{\vec{v}(t) \otimes \vec{B}(t)}_{F_B} \right)$

### ▶ Synchrotron

- ▶ Accelerator cavity has oscillating field, particle at different x/y position gets different energy
  - ▶ Slow particle gets extra energy, creating bunches of particles
- ▶ Dipole magnet bends particle
- ▶ Quadrupole magnet used for collisions



# LHC

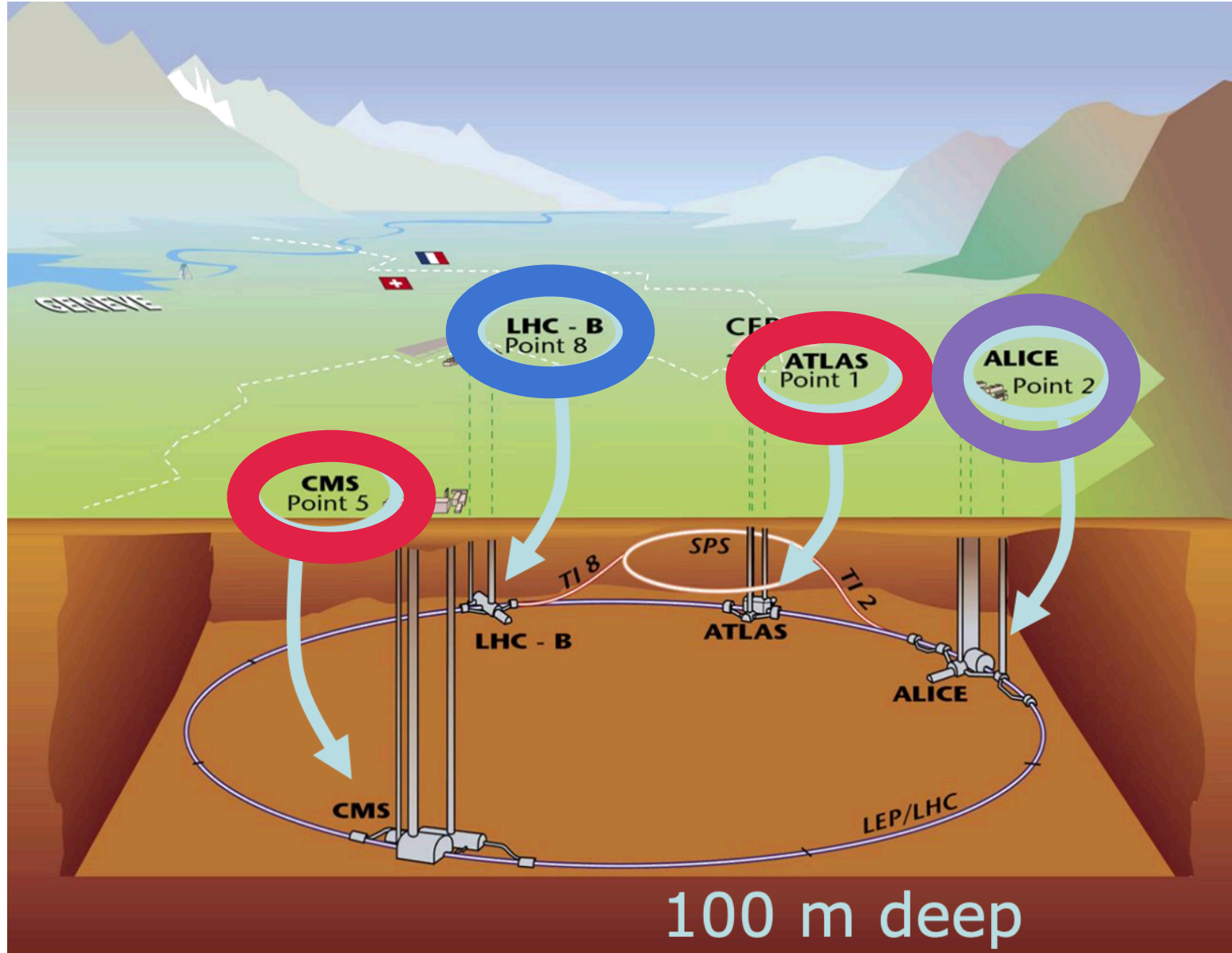
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# Collision Points & Experiments

**Goal:**

**Study SM particles & search for new phenomena beyond SM**



**Physics of b-quark**

**Strong interaction using heavy ion**

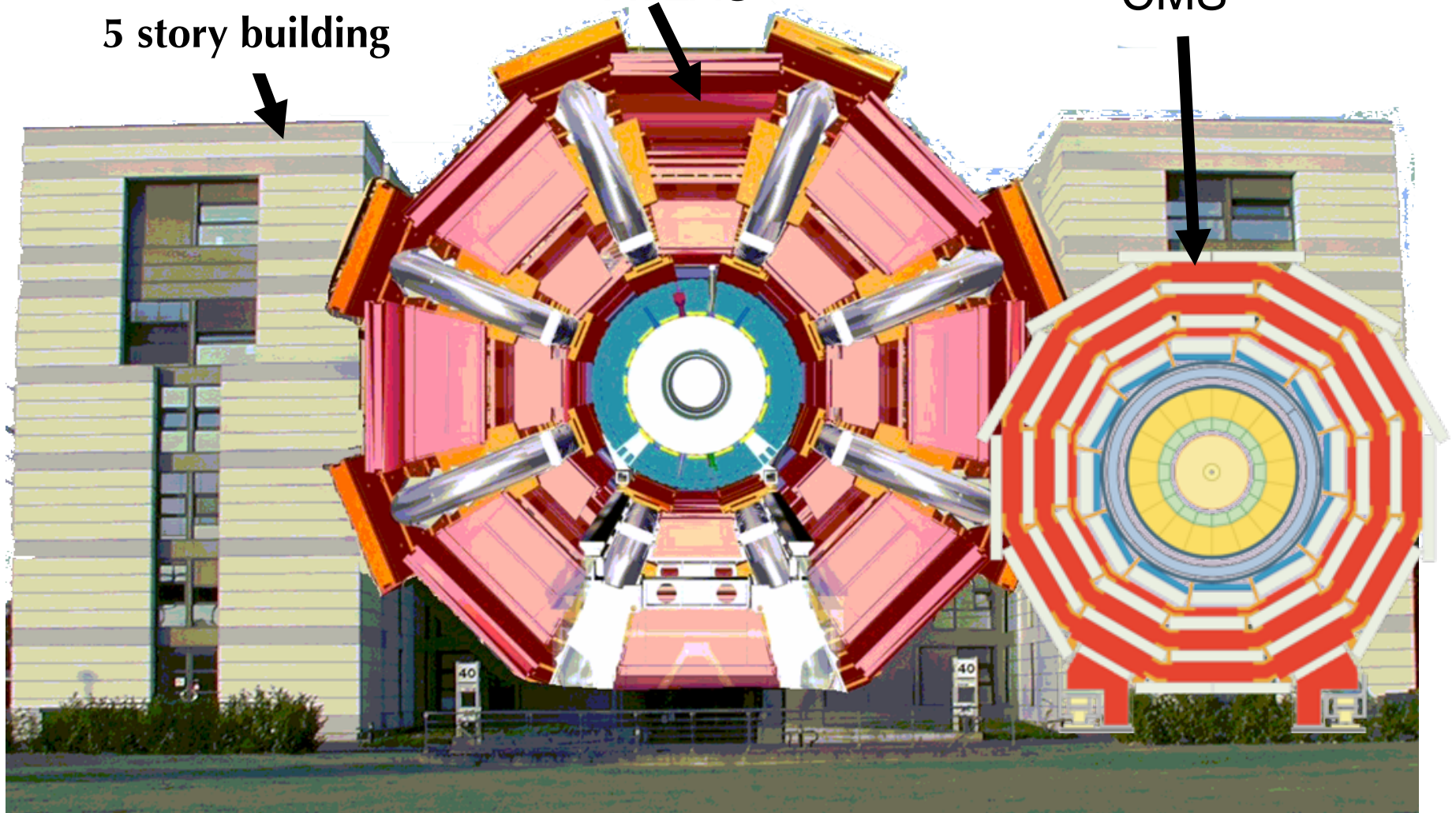
# General Purpose Experiment

*ATLAS & CMS Detectors*

5 story building

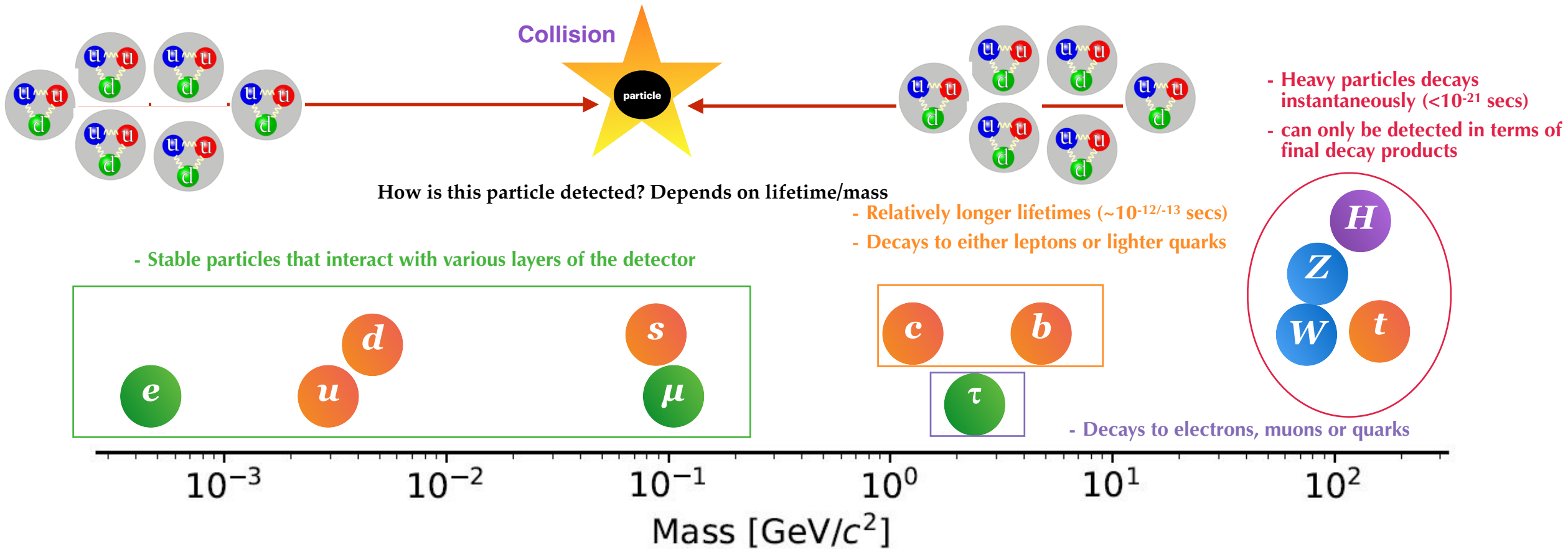
ATLAS

CMS



General multipurpose  
experiment

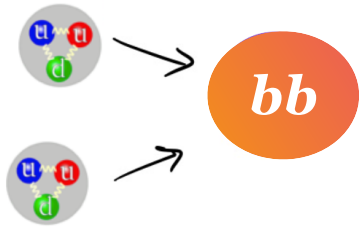
# Fundamentals of Particle Reconstruction



- Neutrinos are undetectable in ATLAS
- Photons (gluons) massless stable, interact similar to electrons (lighter quarks)

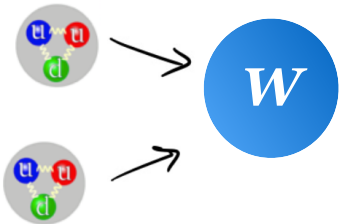
# So How do we detect particle like Higgs?

## Game of probability



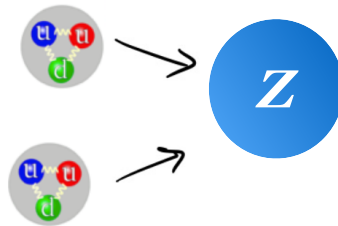
bottom + anti bottom

1 in ~5



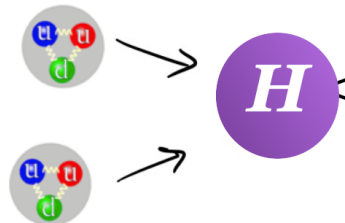
W

1 in ~10,000



Z

1 in ~ 100,000



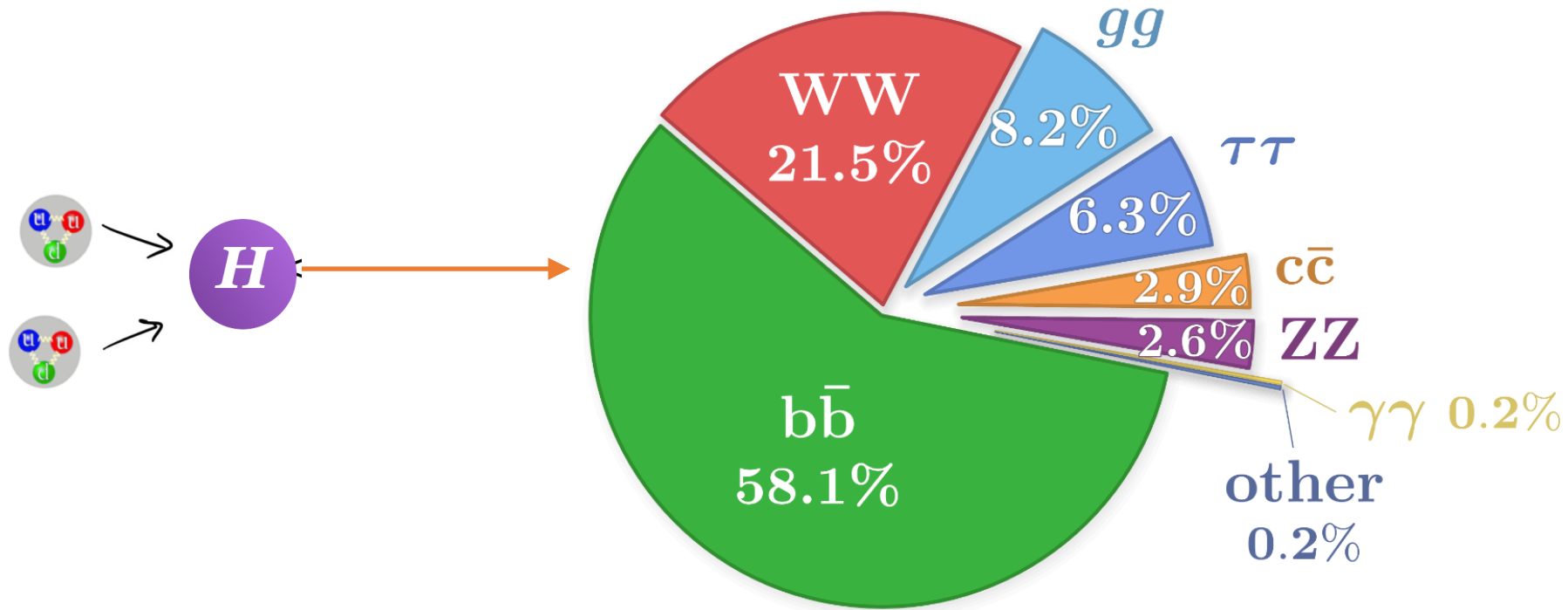
H

**1 in a billion**

In other words, 1 Higgs in ~1.5 million collisions

# So How do we detect particle like Higgs?

But all heavy particle decay instantaneously!



Remember Z, W, tau, b-quark, c-quark all decay

# How do we really detect Higgs?

Based on final state particles!

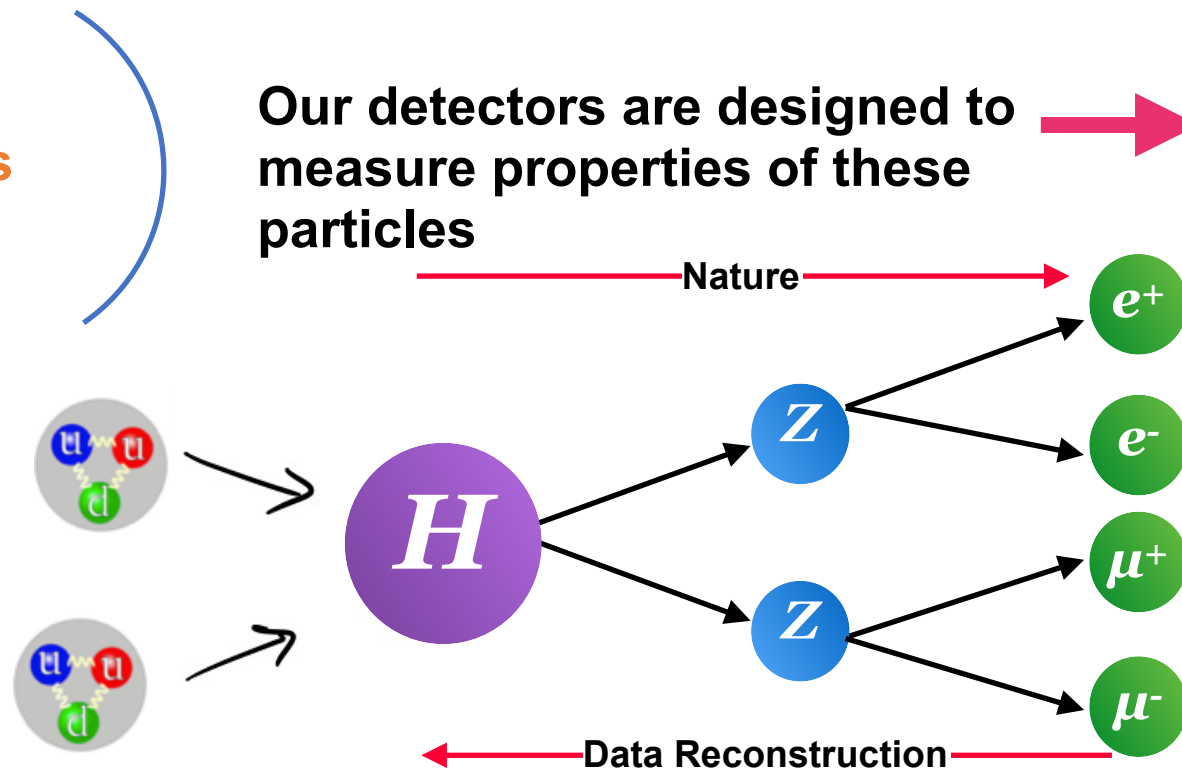
**Final state particle** → **stable particles that interact with our detectors**

We only have handful

- **Electrons**
- **Photons**
- **Lighter quarks**
- **Gluons**
- **Muons**

Our detectors are designed to measure properties of these particles

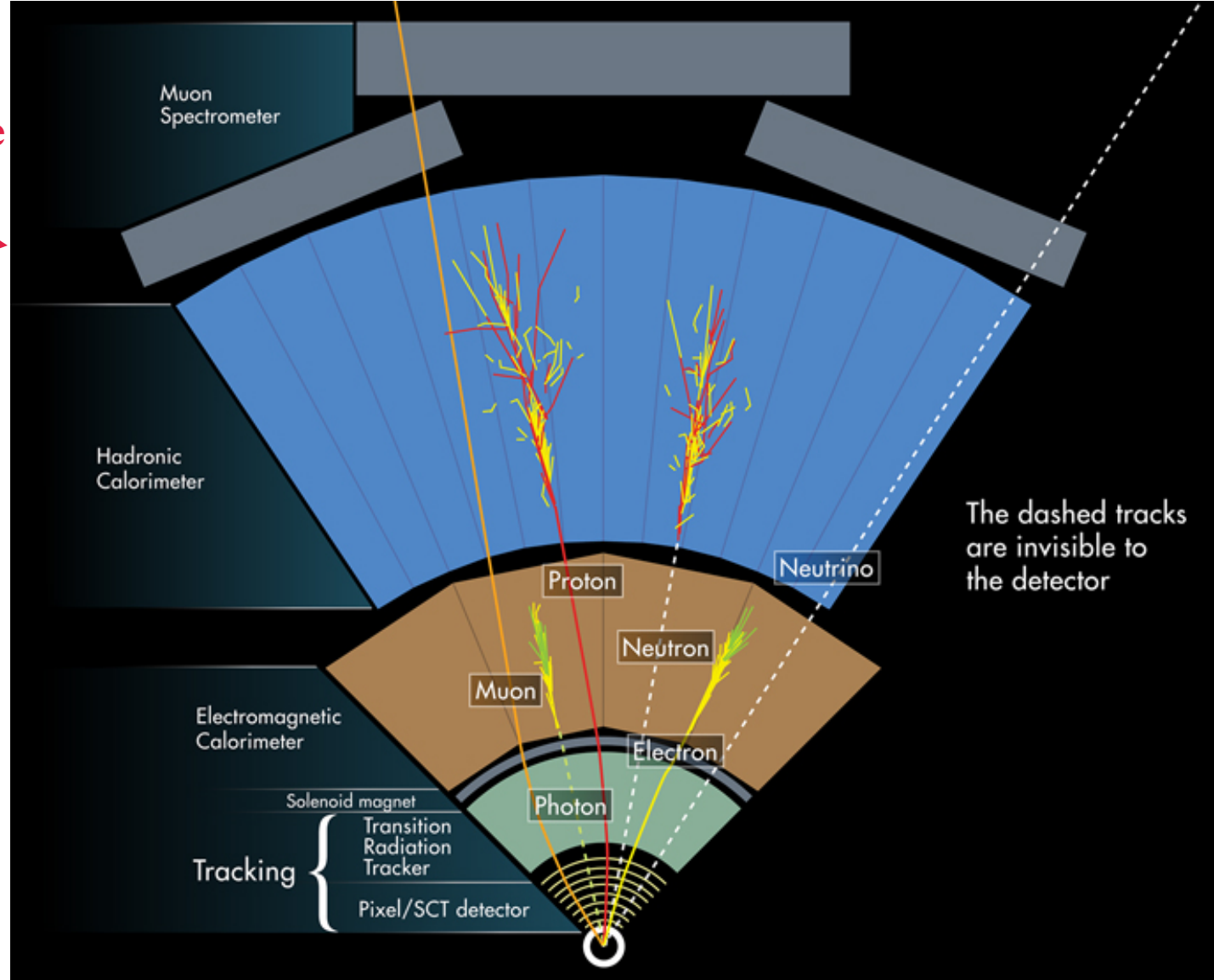
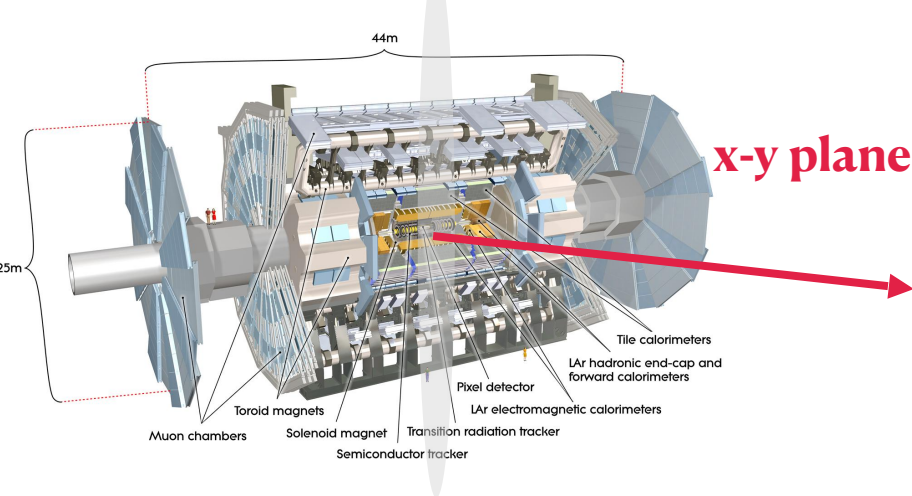
We measure properties of these, identify the parent particle & measure its properties



We look for Higgs in the final state that has 2electron & 2muon

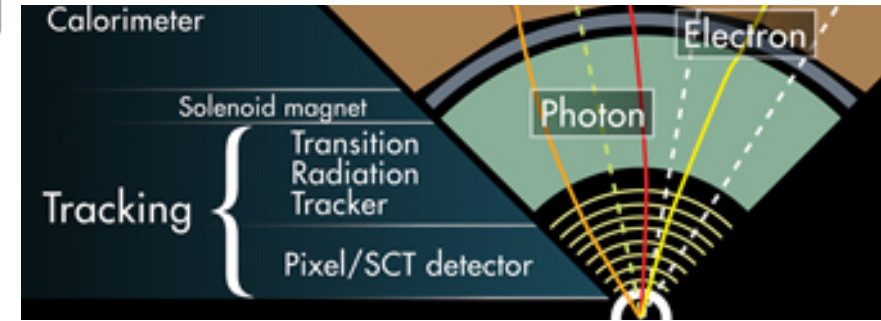
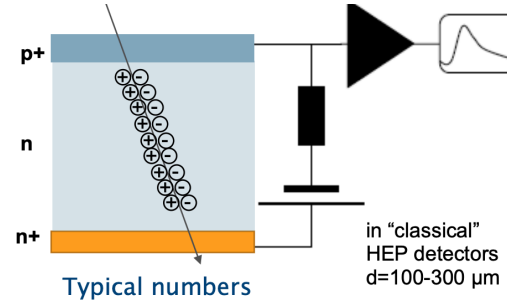
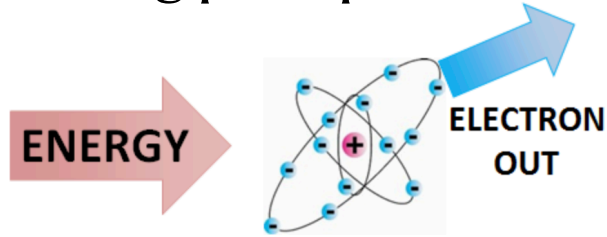
# How does detector detect final state particles?

Combining information from various sub-detectors designed to do different things

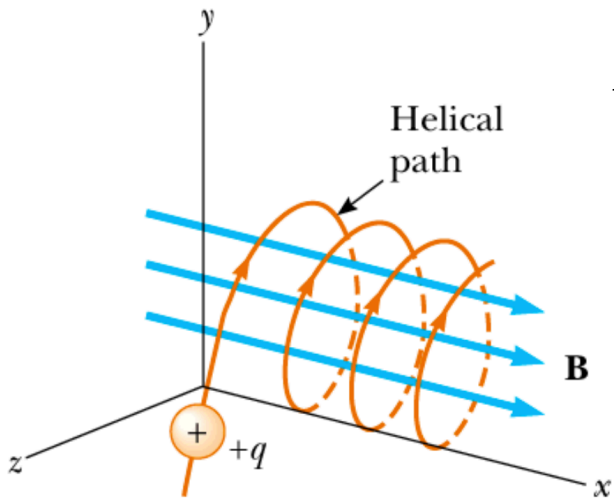


# Tracking Detectors

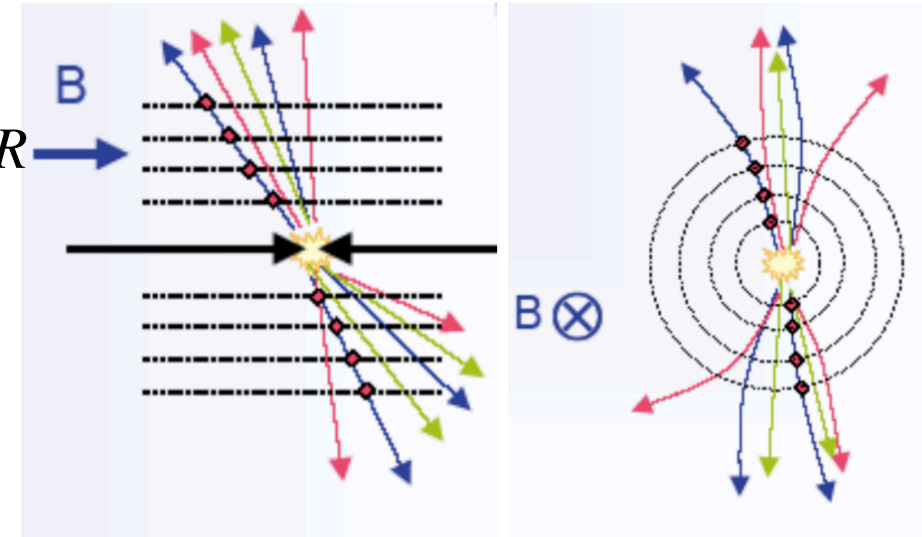
- Ionization working principle



A charged particle inside magnetic field, Lorentz force



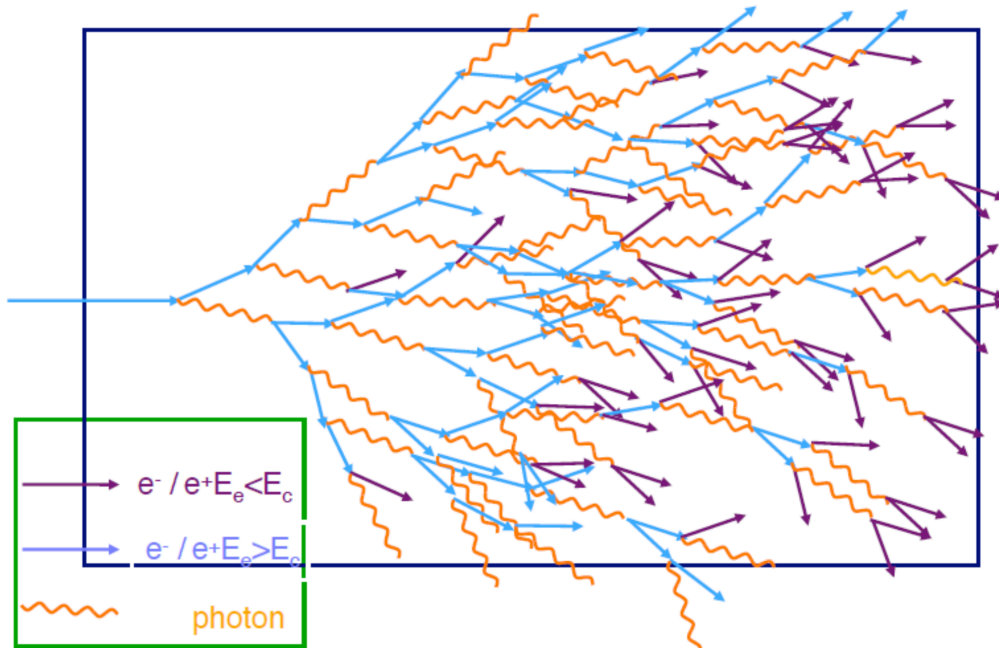
$$F = Bqv = \frac{mv^2}{R} \longrightarrow p = BqR$$



# Calorimeters

Energy Absorption: aka stop particles entirely

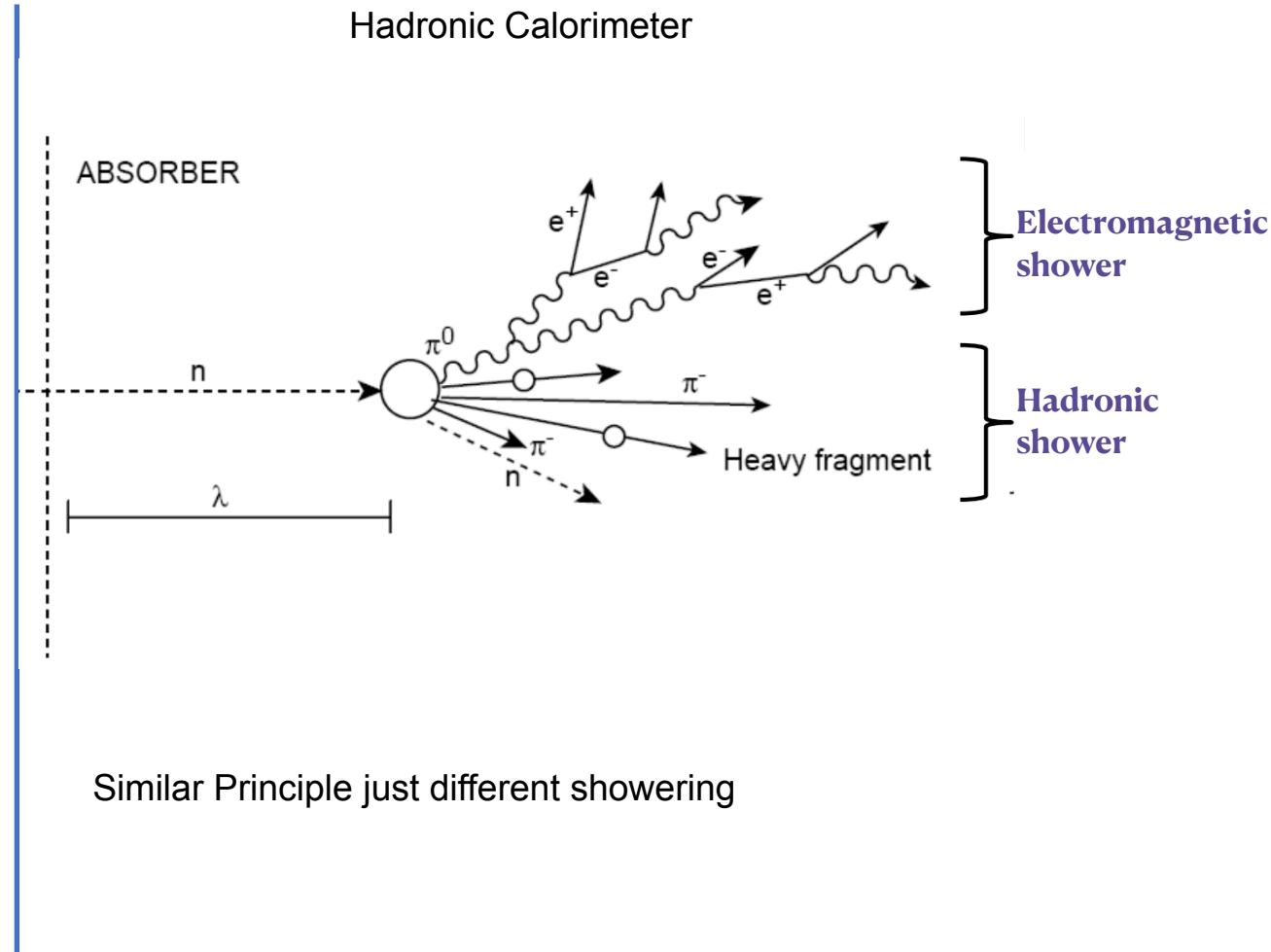
Electromagnetic Calorimeter



Electron & photon creates shower

Good calorimeter absorbs all the particles from the shower

Hadronic Calorimeter



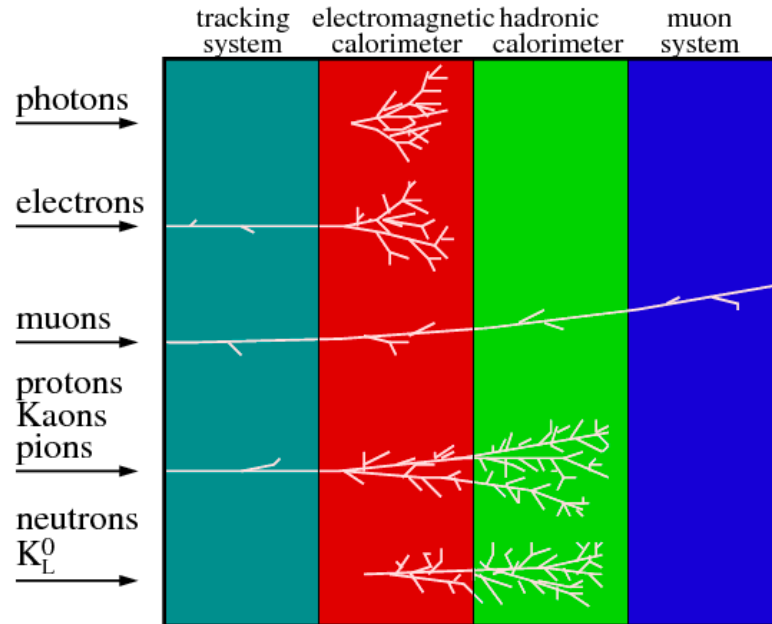
Similar Principle just different showering

# Muon Spectrometer

## Goal: measure momentum of muons

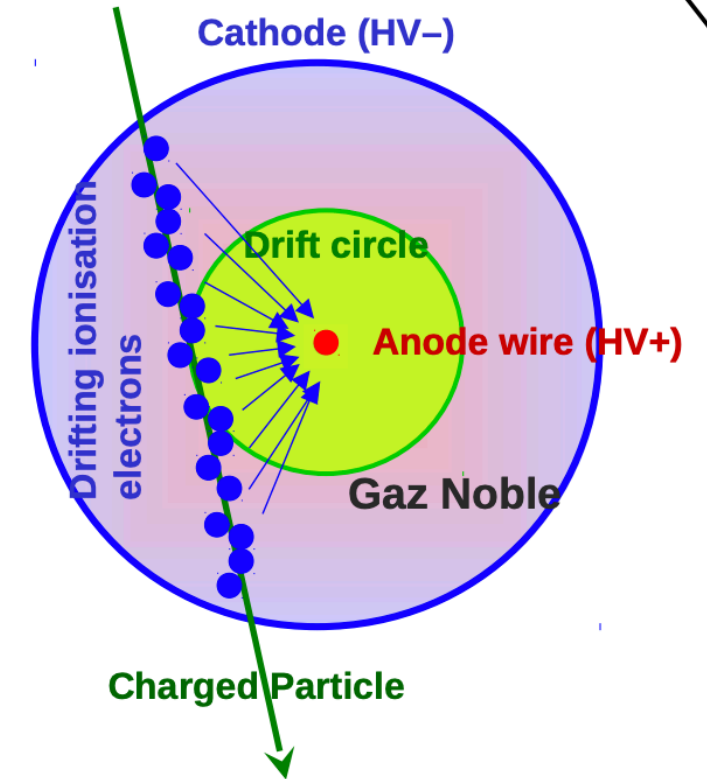
- Similar principle as tracking detectors, track muon's momentum

**Muons go through all layers of the ATLAS detector, we can't stop them, only measure momentum**



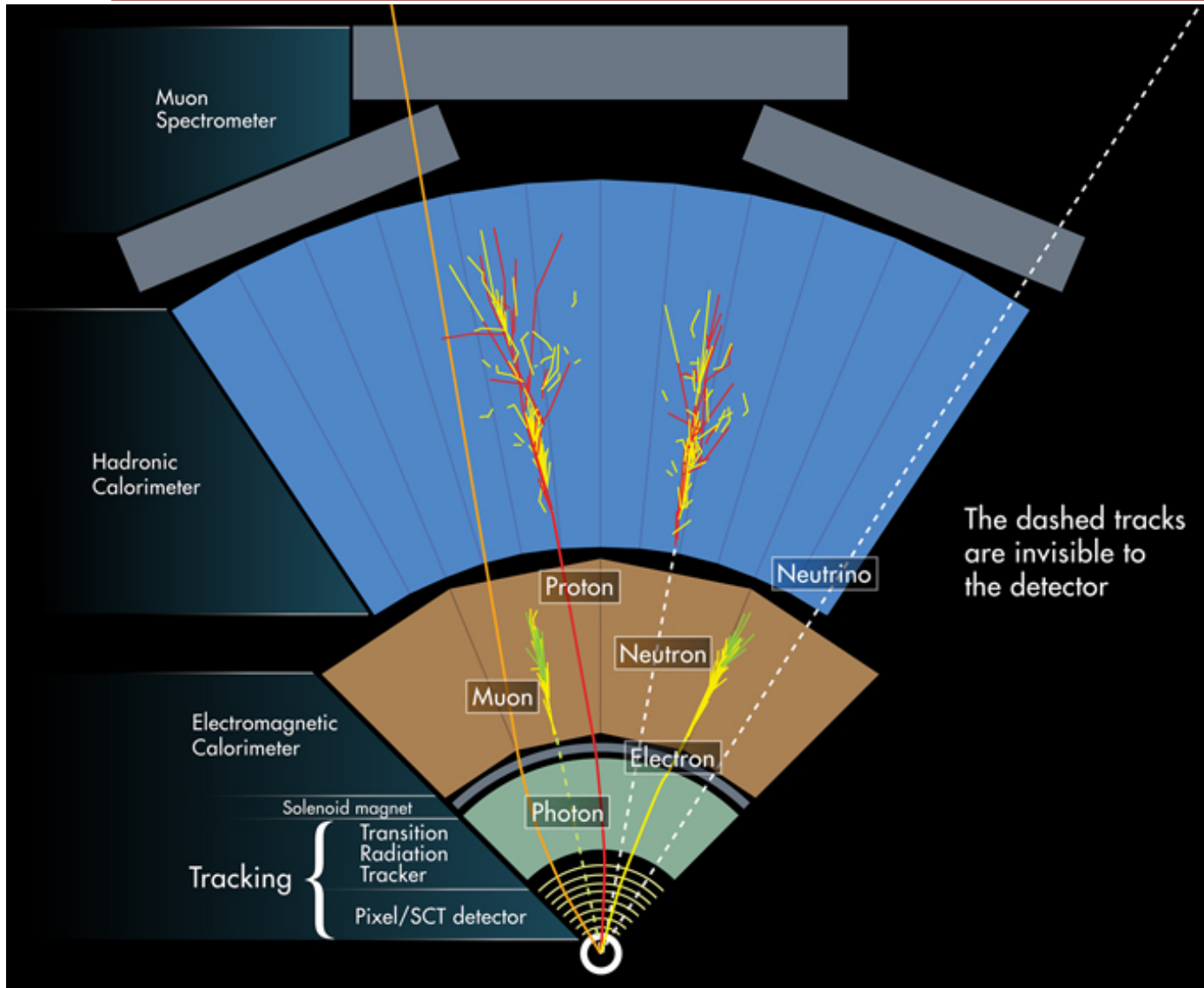
C. Lippmann - 2003

Muons, most precisely measured objects in ATLAS

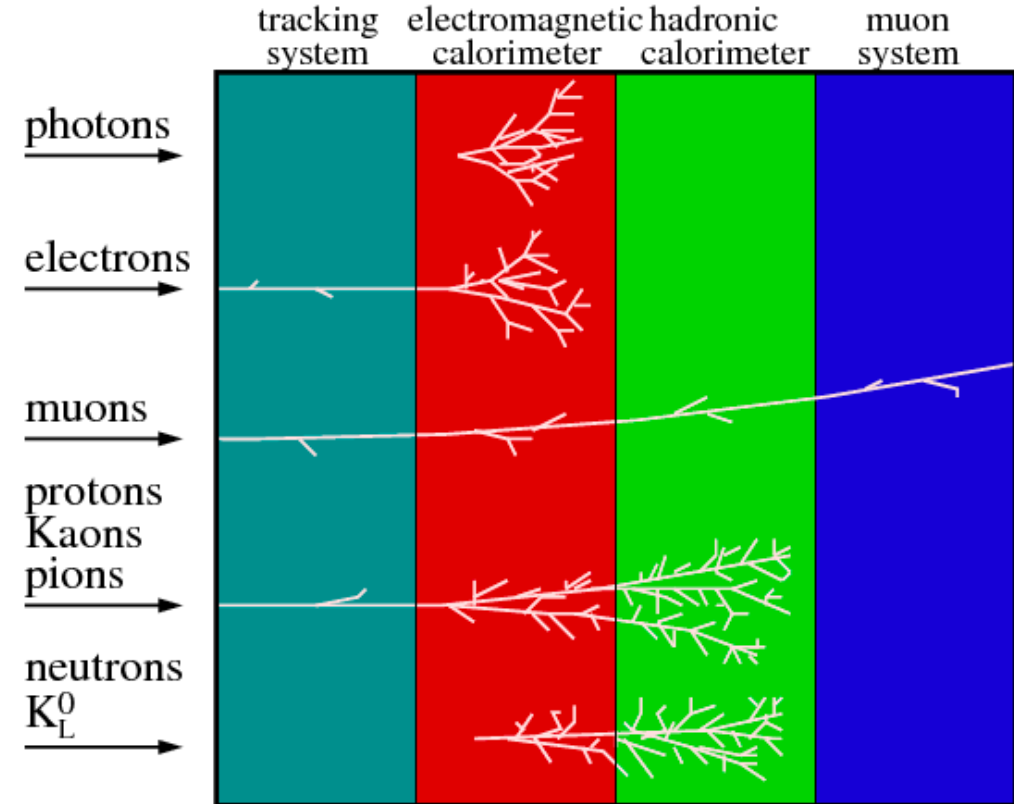


Charged particle: Muon

# Putting it all together—> the ATLAS Detector

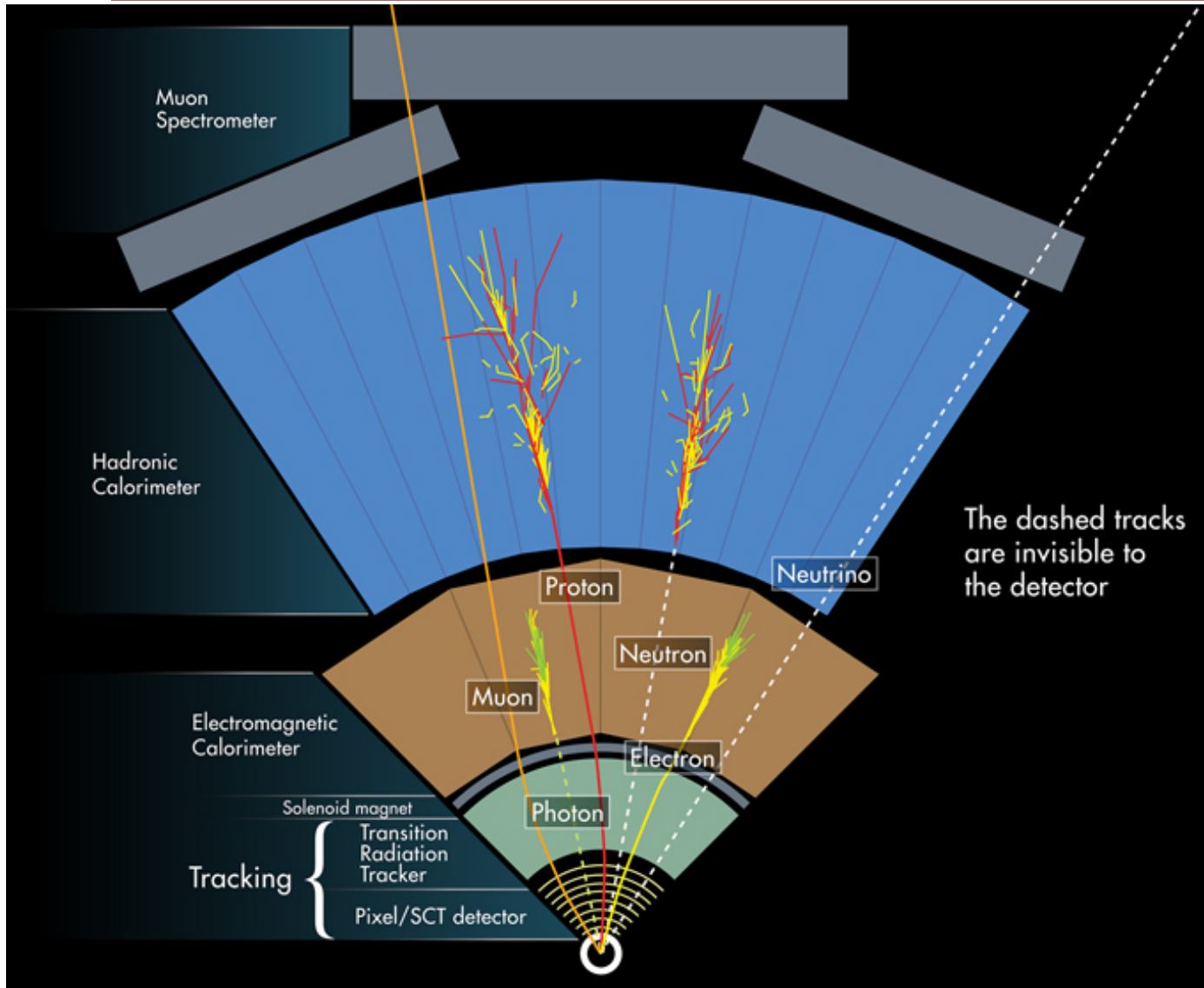


The dashed tracks are invisible to the detector



C. Lippmann – 2003

# Putting it all together—> the ATLAS Detector



## Tracking detectors:

- Goal is to track trajectory of charged particles
- You want light tracking detector, ionization

## Electromagnetic calorimeters:

- Goal measure energy of electrons/photons
- You want it dense and deep enough to stop them entirely

## Hadronic Calorimeters

- Measure energy of all hadrons (pion, kaon, proton, neutron)
  - Up, down, strange quarks and gluons

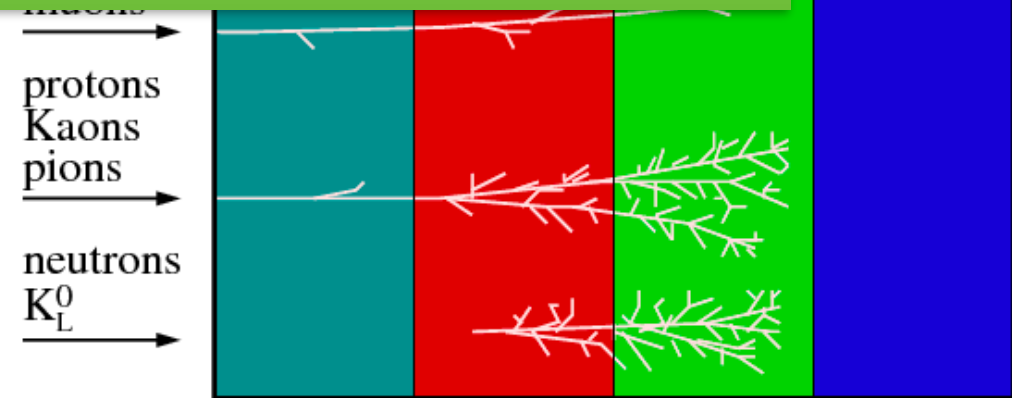
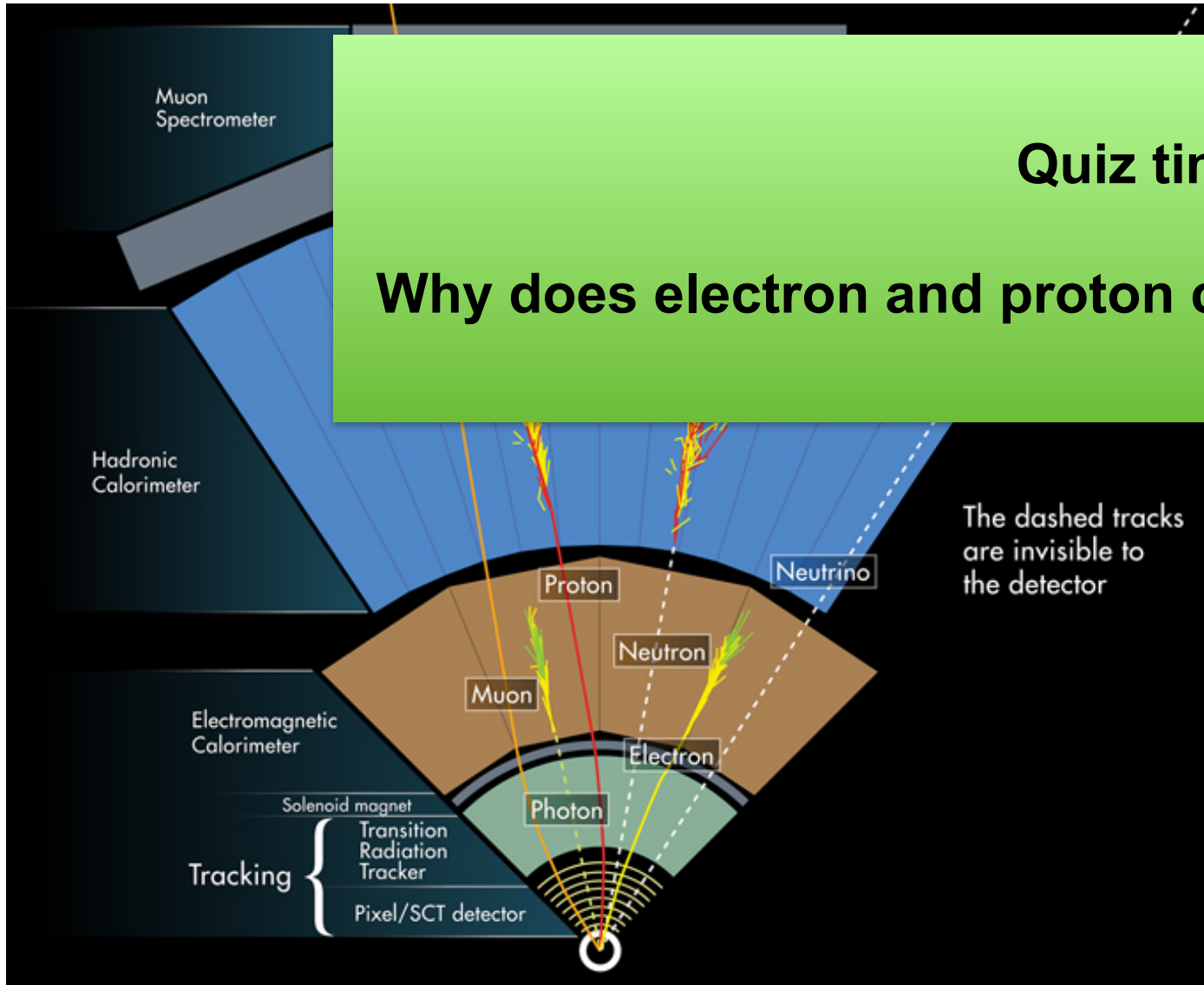
## Muon Spectrometer

- Goal measure the momentum precisely
- Ionization

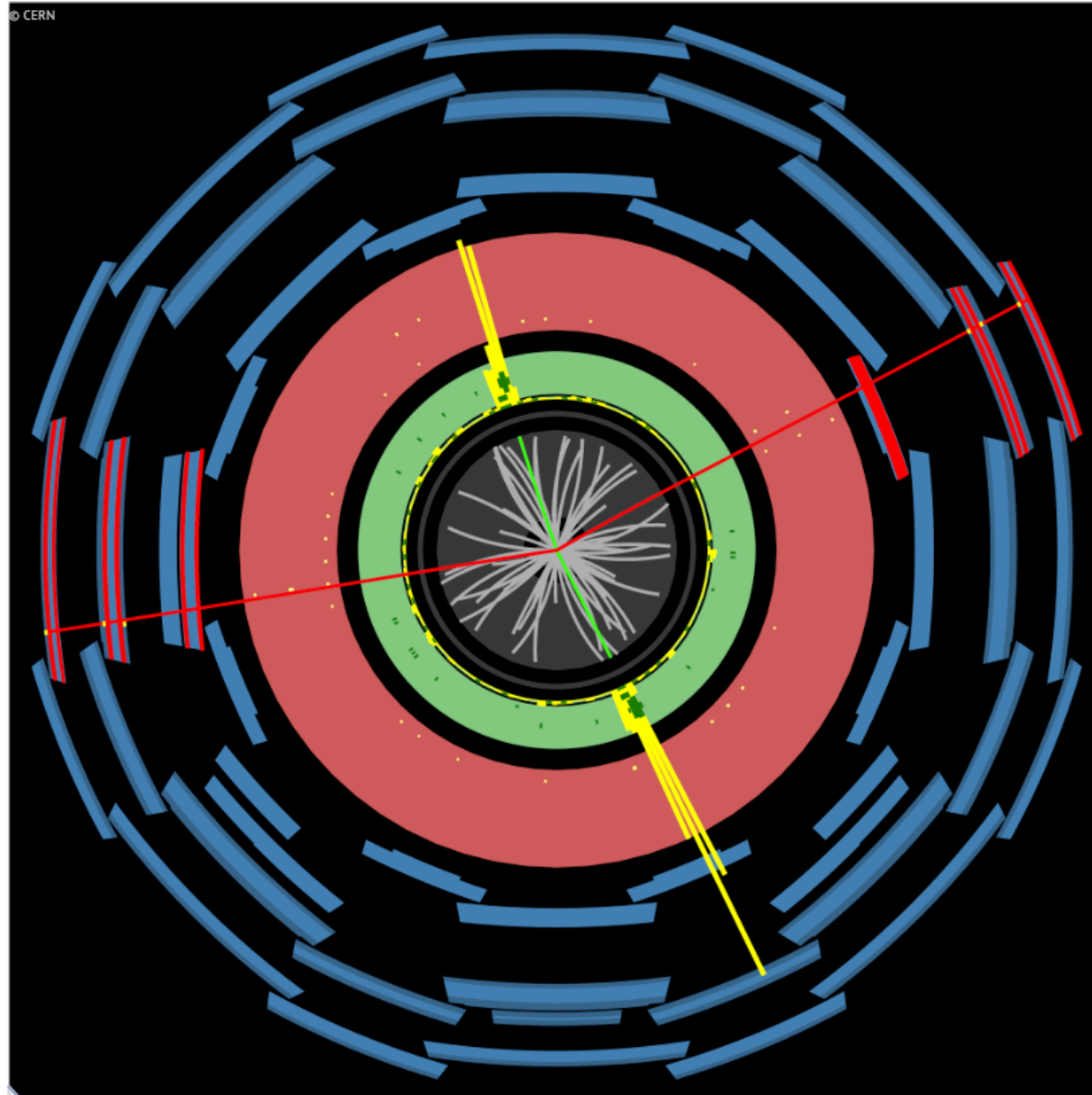
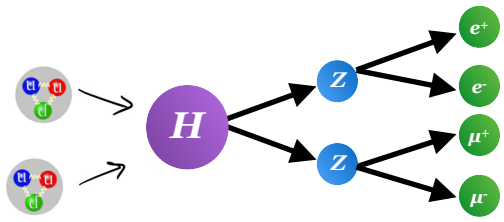
& the magnetic field!!

# Putting it all together —> the ATLAS Detector

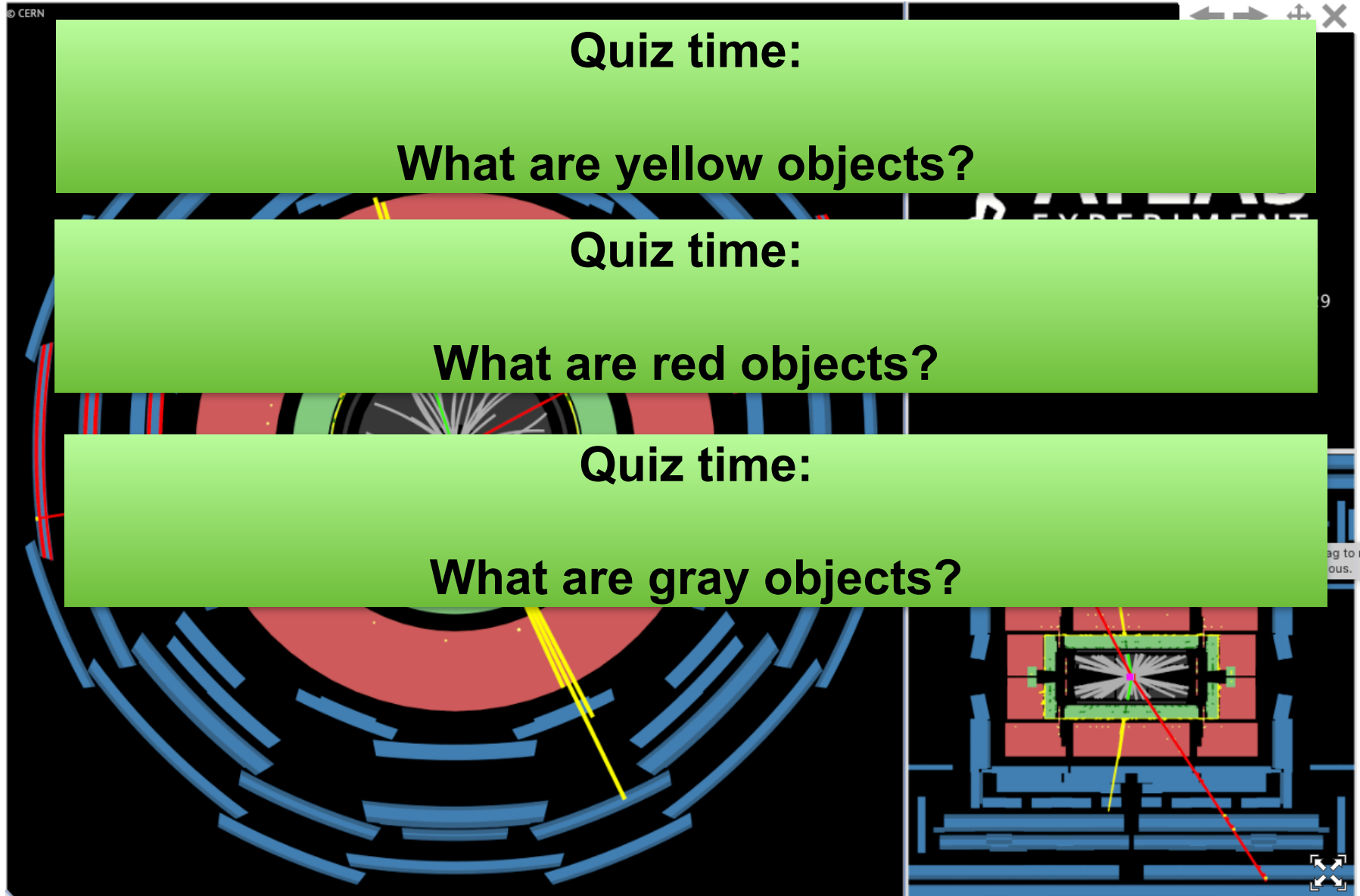
**Quiz time:**  
**Why does electron and proton curve in different direction?**



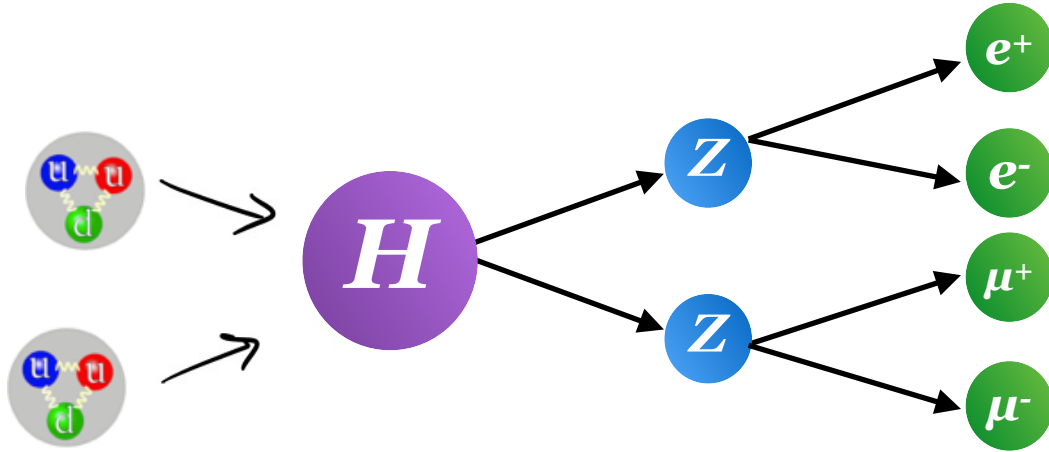
# Higgs in a detector



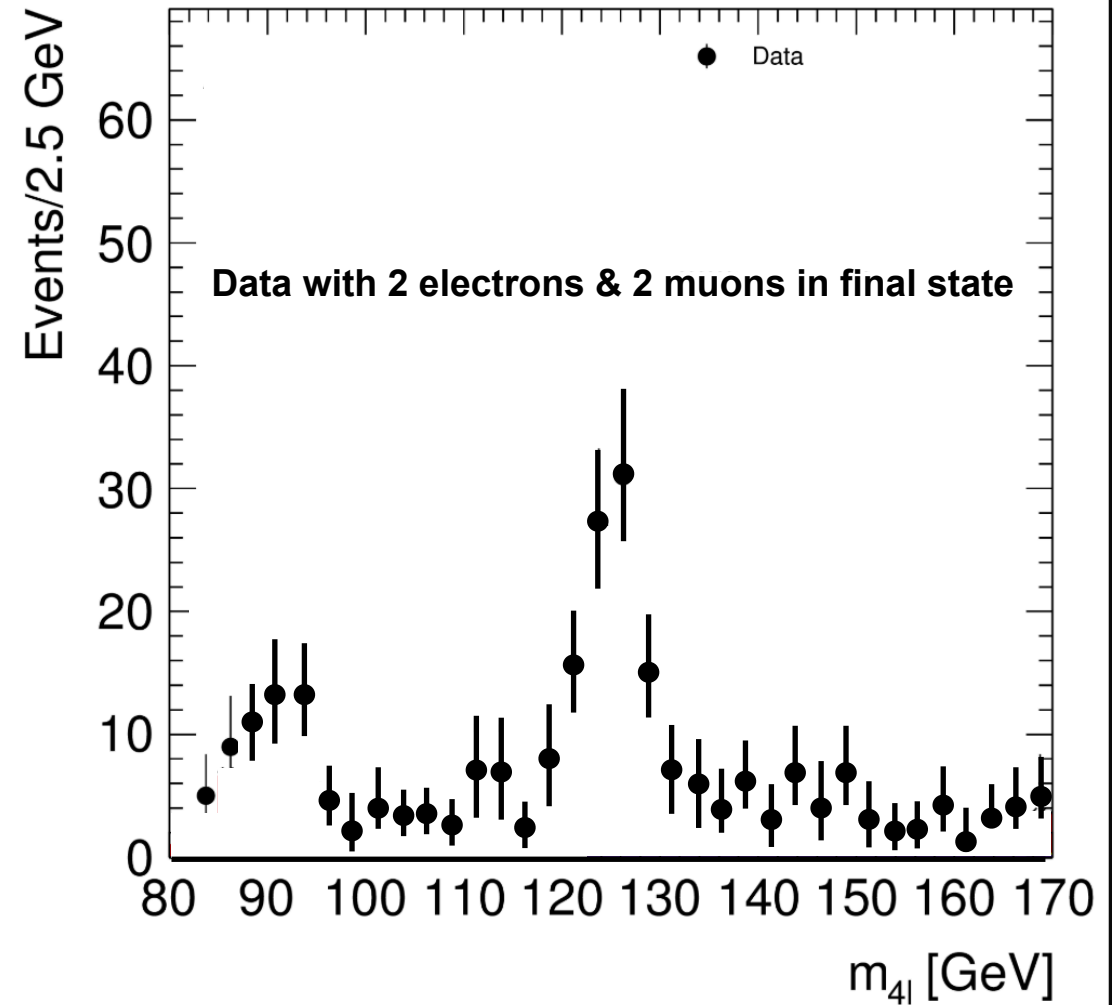
# Higgs in a detector



# Higgs Hunting



How do we know this is Higgs?

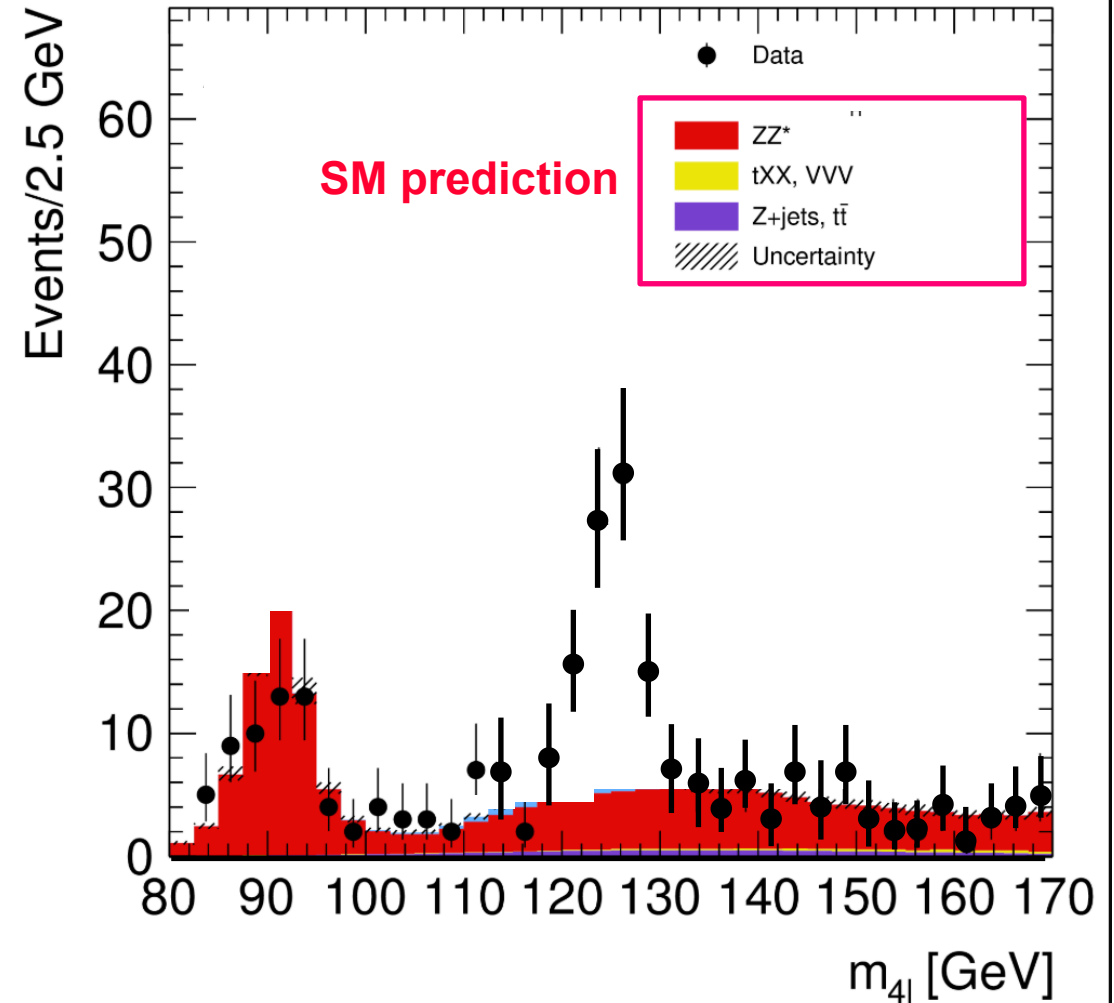


# Power of Statistics & Theory Prediction

## Hypothesis Testing

Null hypothesis  
( $H_0$ ): there is no  
Higgs boson in data

Does data match this prediction?

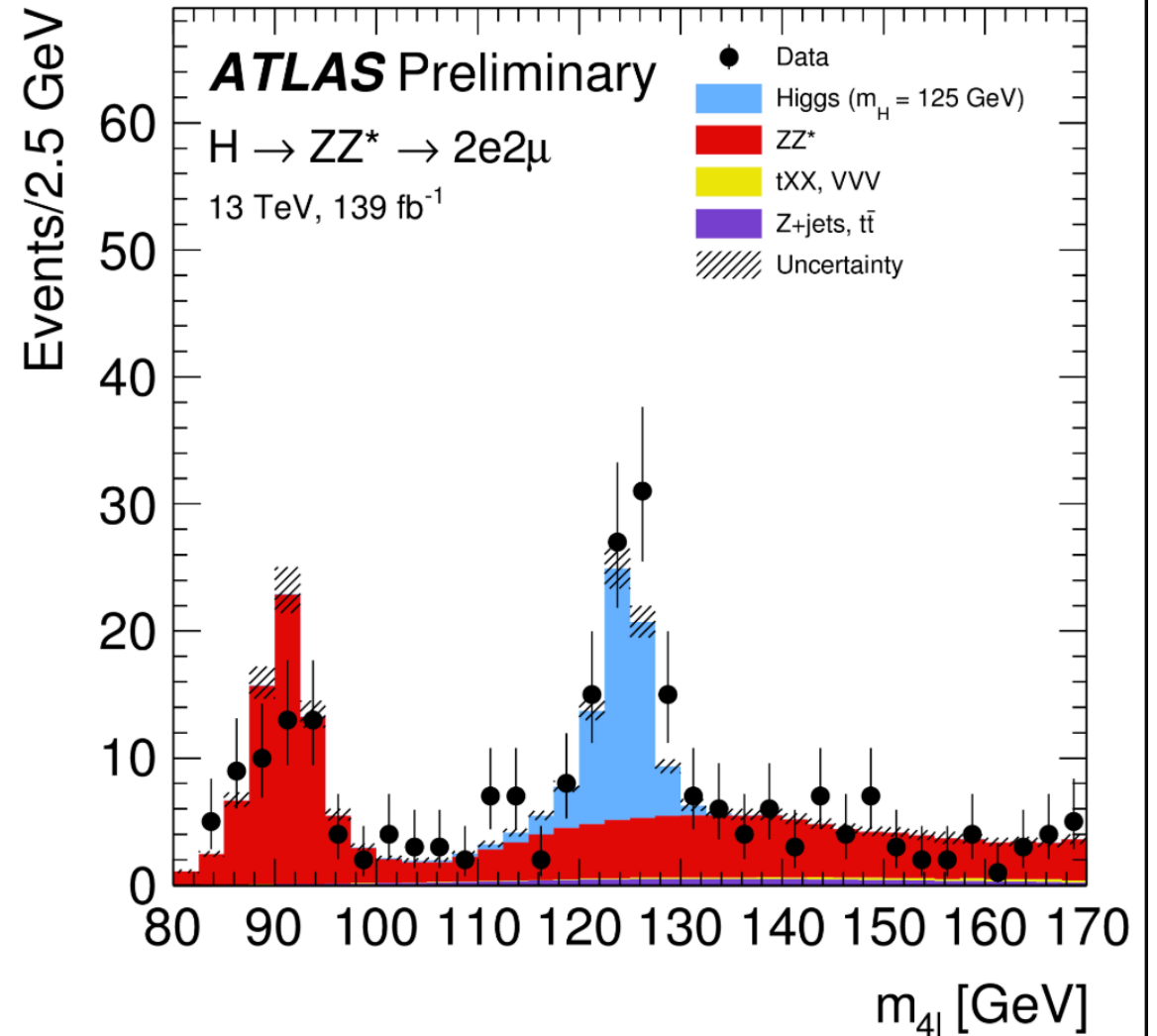


# Power of Statistics & Theory Prediction

## Hypothesis Testing

Test hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):  
there is Higgs boson  
in data

Looks more likely!!!



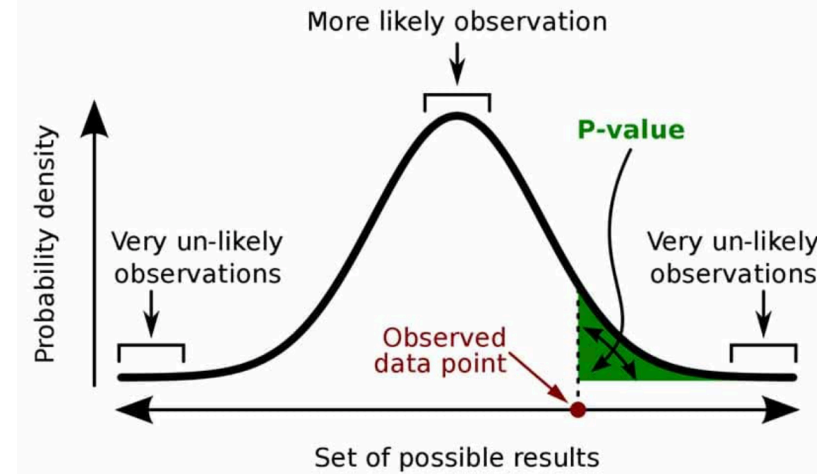
# Quantitative Requirement for Hypothesis testing

## Hypothesis Testing

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):  
there is no Higgs  
boson in data

Test hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):  
there is Higgs boson  
in data

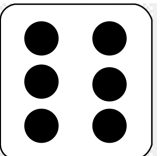
Fit the data! → Find p-value



### Numbers & Terms

Sigma ( $\sigma$ )	p-value	What it Means
$1\sigma$	~32%	Not surprising at all
$2\sigma$	~5%	Happens often by chance
$3\sigma$	0.3%	Interesting hint (often called "evidence")
$5\sigma$	~0.00003% (1 in 3.5 million)	Discovery level — chance of fluke is tiny

corresponds to  
getting a 6, 30  
times in a row



This is what we need for discovering a new particle

# All about the Higgs!

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Currently at the LHC:

- We search for new particles directly
- We study properties of Standard Model particles
- We study Higgs in detail:
  - Have measured properties like mass, spin, interactions to other particles
  - & will continue to do so!!

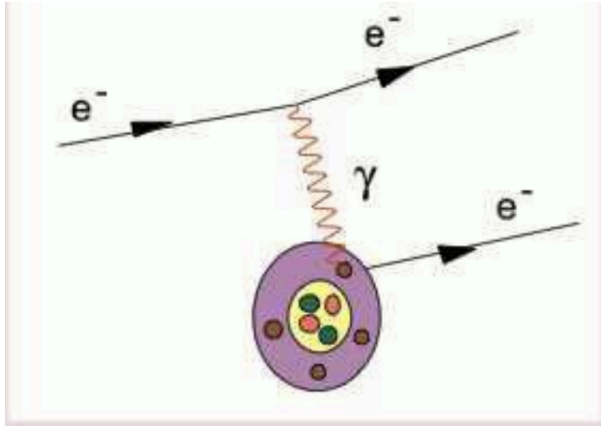


Questions?? ==>

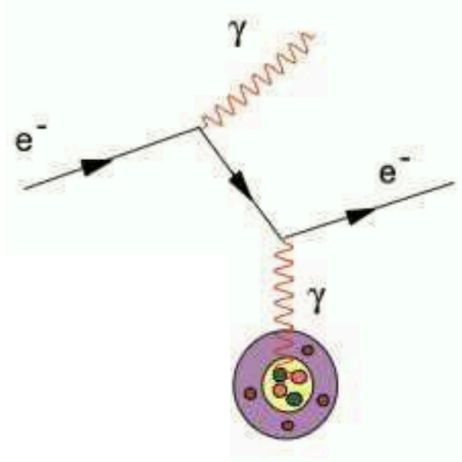


# Both electrons and photons lose energy when interacting with the detector material

## Electrons

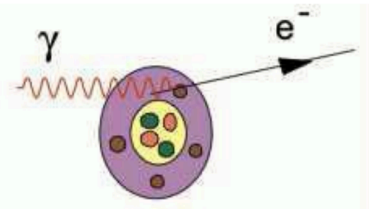


**Ionization**, dominant at low energies

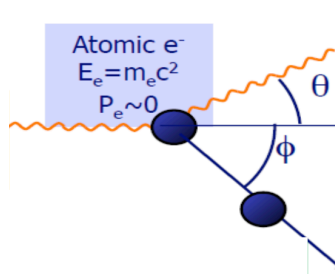


**Bremsstrahlung**, dominant at high energies  
Main mechanism for electron to lose energies in ATLAS/CMS

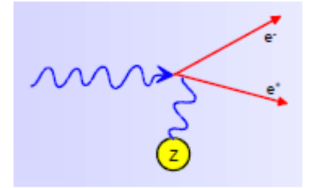
## Photons



**Photoelectric effect**: dominant at low energy  
Completely knocks off electrons from atom



**Compton effect**: dominant at medium energy  
knocks off electrons from atom that doesn't absorb photon

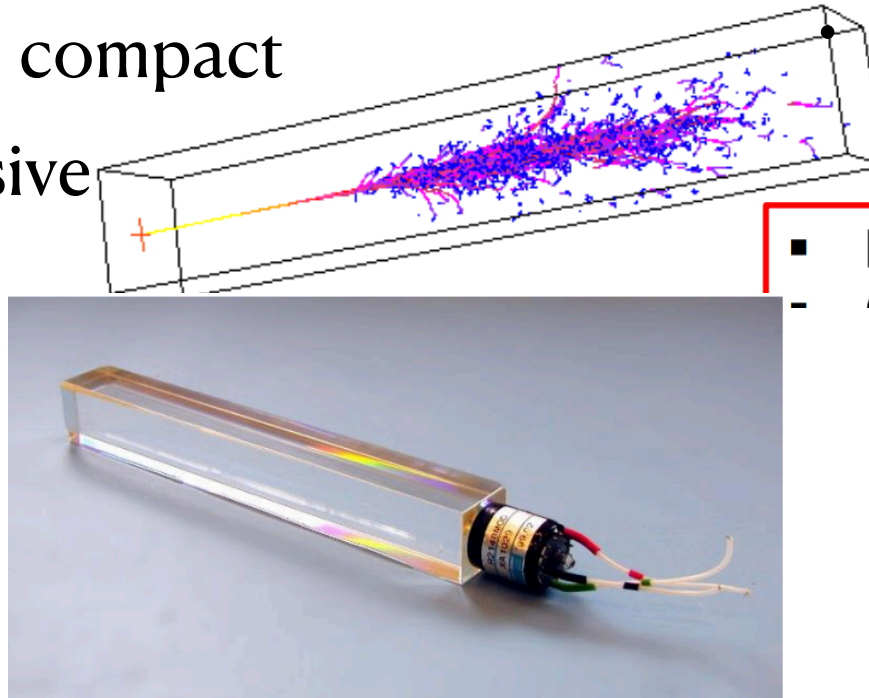


**Pair production**: dominant at high energy  
Splits to e+e-

# Two types of calorimeter for both electromagnetic & hadronic

## Homogenous

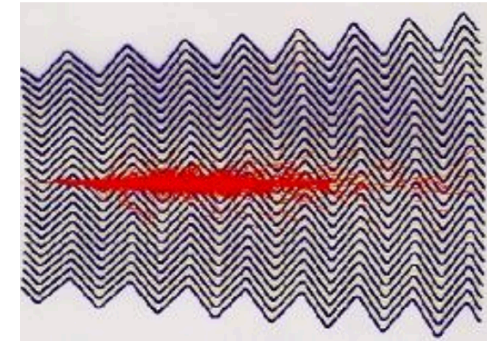
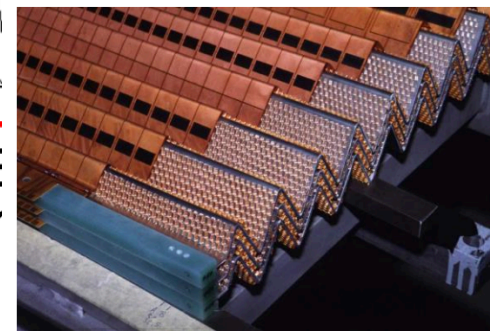
- All same material, very dense to contain shower
- Example: lead tungstate crystal material for CMS detector
- Best resolution, compact
- But very expensive



## Sampling

- Sandwich of high-Z absorber material like lead & low-Z material like gas/liquid

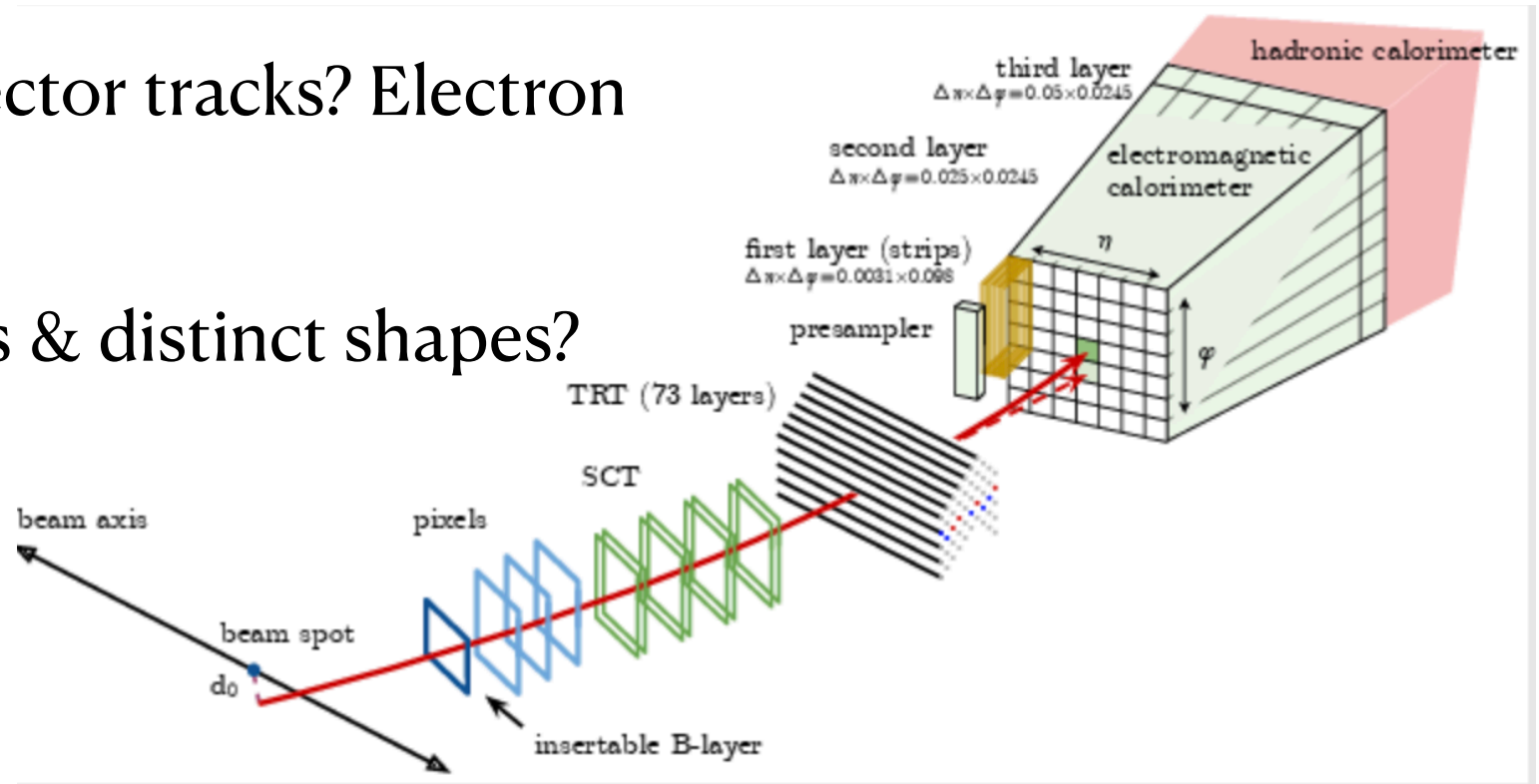
Worse resolution



# Electrons, Photons

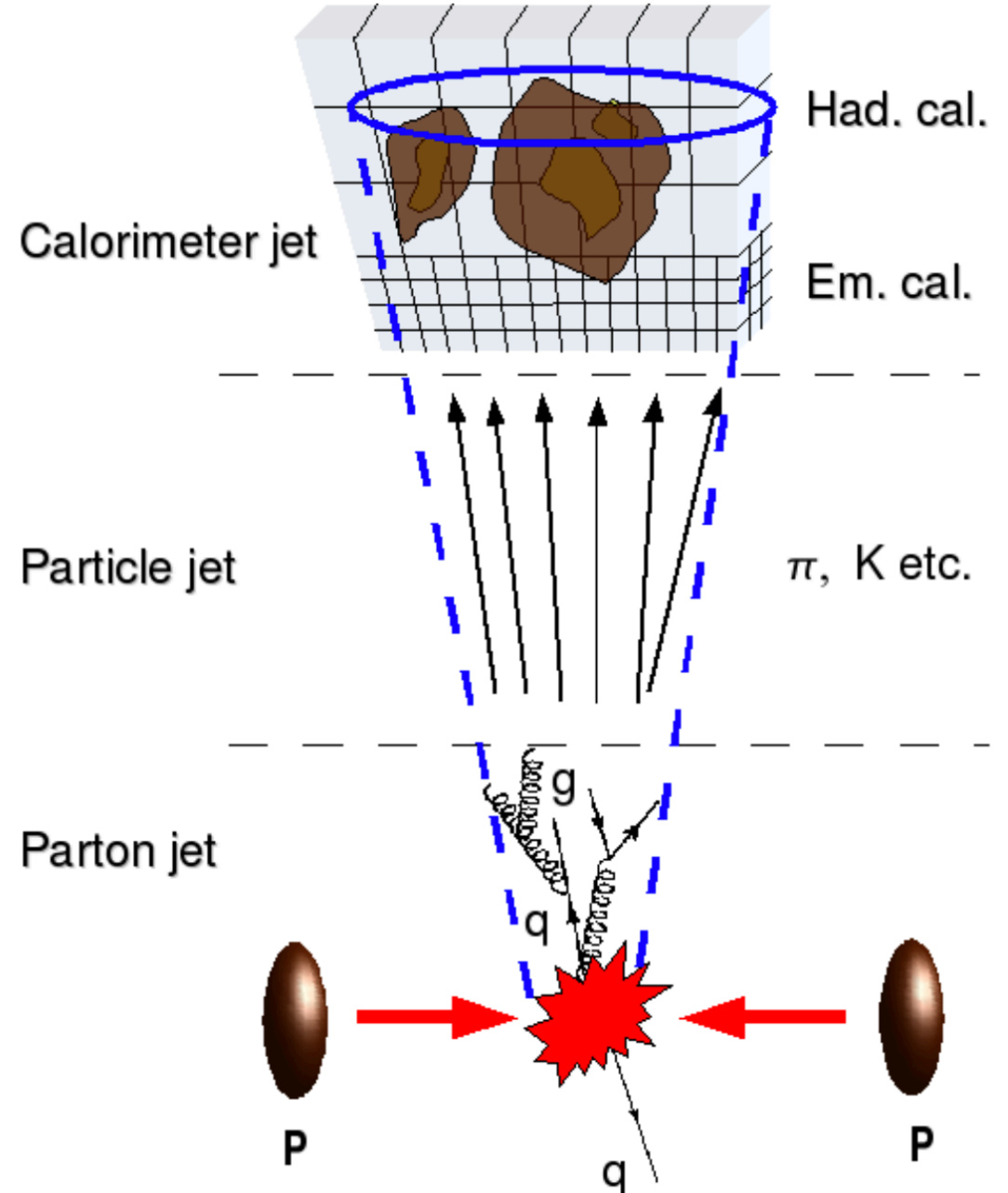
## Electrons/photons

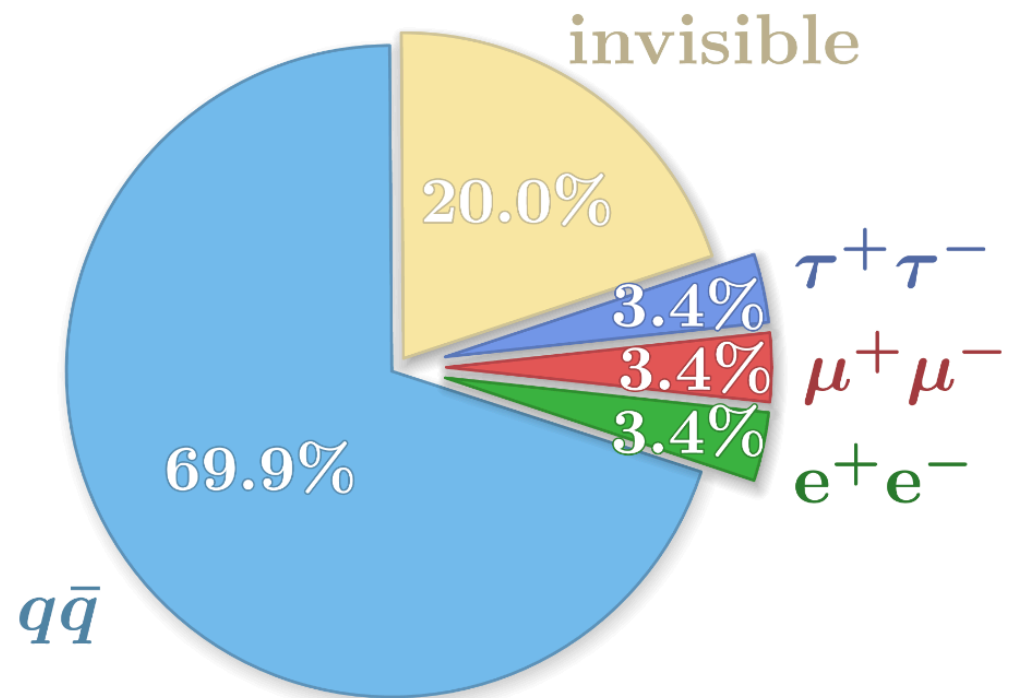
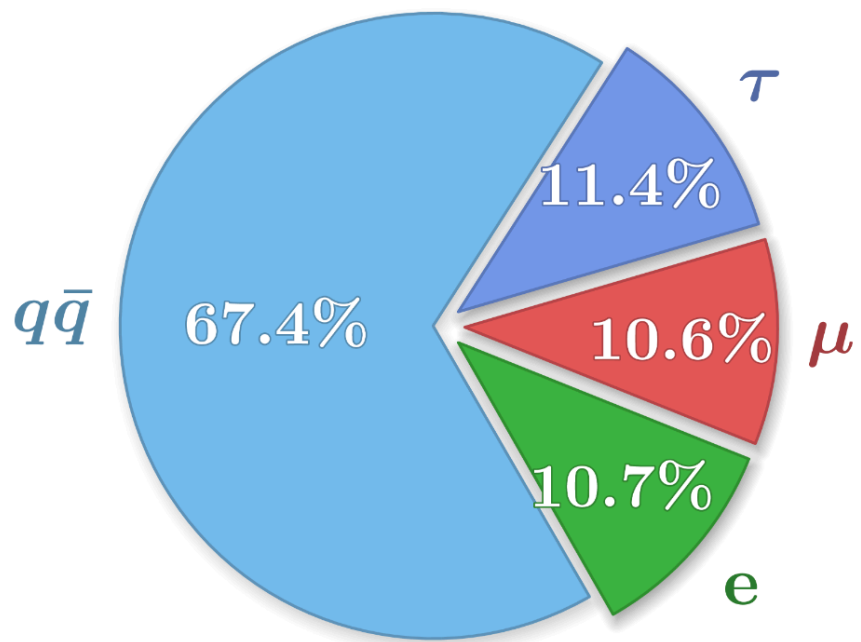
- Energy deposits in EM calorimeter cells as clusters
- Matches with inner detector tracks? Electron candidate
- No inner detector tracks & distinct shapes? Photon candidate



# Jets

- Energy deposits in hadronic calorimeter cells as clusters, within a radial cone (i.e. delta R)
- Matches with inner detector tracks?
- Machine learning to distinguish heavy flavor jets (b/c)
- Machine learning to distinguish quark vs gluon jets





hadrons

