

1. SCIENTISTS TODAY: READING BIOGRAPHIES

1 HOUR

This activity has been designed to develop cross curricular links with science during an English lesson.

Children read articles from the publication '*Scientists Today*' about the life and work of living scientists.

They discuss the vocabulary that has been chosen to describe the scientists and their jobs. Children talk about what the article does and doesn't tell them about the scientists. If they have the opportunity to meet a scientist, they should plan questions to ask.

TYPE OF ENQUIRY

Secondary Research

OBJECTIVES

To ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge (English)

TO BE ABLE TO

Understand that scientists come from a wide range of backgrounds and do a wide range of jobs.

VOCABULARY

(this will vary depending upon the article read)

palaeontologist	science	laser
non-fiction	biography	passion
chemistry interview	university	spectroscope
historian	substance	chemistry
treatment	recovery	

RESOURCES

Activity Sheets 1-6 may be printed out for small groups of children to work on or displayed on the interactive white board.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE

Children should be familiar with different forms of non-fiction text. They should be aware that writers and journalists make choices about what information to include and what vocabulary to use.

ACTIVITY NOTES

Begin by explaining to the children that they are going to read about a real scientist. Ask them to think about what they already know about scientists, and to discuss this with a partner before sharing with the whole class. What sort of people are scientists? Where do they work? What do they do? What are they like? Listen out for stereotypes but do not challenge them at this stage. Notice if children have a tendency to use 'he' exclusively in their descriptions.

Children now read '*Scientists Today*'. Different groups could work on different biographies or you may choose to work as a whole class to read one biography on the interactive white board.

Ask children to summarise what they now know about the scientist that they have read about. If different groups have read different biographies, they might report to the rest of the class about 'their' scientist.

Ask children to 'think, pair, share' about how the scientists that they have read about differ from their initial descriptions. Are they surprised by any of the differences? Were there less or more similarities than they expected?

Challenge children to think about the choices that the writer has made when writing about the scientist. What words have they chosen? Why do they think that they have chosen those words? What does the article tell them about the scientist? What does it leave out?

If you are working with an ambassador, and the children will therefore meet a scientist, ask them to work in pairs to think of things they would like to know and to write questions on post-it notes. Tell the children that they will be meeting the scientists and work as a group to decide which of the questions it would be appropriate to ask them when they visit. Support them to consider the best way to frame their questions and to elicit the information that they want. If possible email the questions to the ambassadors prior to the visit to enable them to think about their answers.

QUESTIONS FOR THINKING

- What sort of people work as scientists?
- Where do scientists work?
- What do scientists do?
- How many different jobs do scientists do?
- What branch of science would you like to work in?
- Are you surprised by anything you found out about the scientist that you have read about?
- Are there any differences between the scientists you thought about and the scientists you read about?
- What would you like to know about these scientists?
- What questions are you going to ask them?