

Discussion Prompts

After students have had a chance to review one or more of [the SN 10: Scientists to Watch](#) articles, Page 16, lead a classroom discussion based on the following questions:

- A recent [survey](#) found that more than 80 percent of U.S. adults cannot name a living scientist. Ask your students if they can name a living scientist (other than the one they just read about). The scientist might be a friend, family member or neighbor — or someone the student has read about or has seen on TV. Can the student describe this scientist's work? Does this scientist's research intersect with his or her personal life? In what way? What are some stereotypes of scientists? Do the scientists your students know fit these stereotypes? Why or why not? How do the scientists featured in the SN 10: Scientists to Watch fit with or depart from existing stereotypes? How has this discussion influenced what your students think about scientists?

[Science News for Students](#), our sister site for preteens and teens, has a special package of articles on [women in STEM](#). More than 150 women submitted pictures, videos and stories about their work. You can use this package to explore and challenge existing stereotypes, or to inspire female students interested in science, technology, engineering and math.

- Ask your students, based on their reading, to describe in their own words one of the SN 10: Scientists to Watch. What does the scientist study? What questions drive his or her work? What qualities does the scientist possess? Ask students to try to distinguish between the scientist's experiences, skills (either inherent or acquired) and personality traits. What qualities do students think are required for all good scientists? What qualities are more or less important, and which depend on the research area? Use [Blackline Master 2](#) if you'd like students to take notes before the discussion.
- After reading one or more of the articles, ask your students whether they are interested in pursuing a career in science. What might that career look like? What steps would they have to take to pursue the career (*many years of schooling, for example*)? What relationships would they have to build along the way (*working under a senior scientist, managing others in a lab environment*)? What types of tasks would they do on a daily basis (*data collection, writing papers*)? Is there a particular field students are most interested in? Are they more interested in data collection or data analysis? Experimentation or theoretical work? Basic research or applied? What would be their major strengths and biggest challenges within that domain? What aspects of the job would be most rewarding? Encourage students to brainstorm scientific careers other than academic researcher.

What is a Scientist?

Directions: Use the space below to take notes on the article you are reading.

1. Which scientist did you read about?
2. How would you describe this person? Consider making a list of qualities that the scientist possesses.
3. What question or questions drive the scientist?
4. What did you learn about this scientist's personal life?
5. What surprised you about this scientist?
6. What more do you want to learn about the scientist and his or her work?
7. What qualities do you share with this scientist?