

Student Discussion Worksheet

Directions: After discussing the first two questions with your class, take a few minutes to brainstorm a STEM topic or field that interests you. Is there a class you took in STEM that you enjoyed? What personal hobbies do you have that might relate to STEM topics? Is there a STEM topic that has always interested you? Based on your interests, choose one scientist profile from *Science News*' list of [SN 10: Scientists to Watch for 2020](#), and one profile from the *Science News for Students* "[Cool Jobs](#)" collection to read. Then, answer questions No. 3–7 on your own. Make sure to discuss your answers to the last two questions with a partner.

Introduction

1. A profile is an article about a specific person. Why might a person have a profile written about them?
2. What key facts are commonly included in profiles? What information would you want to know about a person being profiled?

Comparing paths to success

3. What is the name of the scientist in the "Cool Jobs" profile you read, and what is their career? What about the SN 10 scientist?
4. How did the scientists get to where they are today? For each profile, make a list of events and key information that tell a story about how the scientist reached their current position. Keep the following points in mind when constructing your lists:

Does the scientist mention a moment of inspiration for their research/STEM journey?

Do they name a mentor or important person that helped them?

What education degrees and work experience do they have?

Have they collaborated with other scientists?

What highlights and challenges did they face and how did those help them reach where they are now?

What are their aspirations for the future?

What accomplishments do they mention?

5. Compare the two lists. What similarities do the scientists' pathways share, and how are the pathways different?

Finding your own path

6. Think about where you are on your own STEM journey. If you were to pursue the career of a scientist you read about in one of the profiles, what is the next step you might take?

7. Did this exercise give you new ideas about possible STEM pathways? Explain.

Optional: Construct a timeline or another visual representation of the STEM career pathway taken by one of the scientists you read about. Make sure to emphasize major events, experiences, challenges and other information that you noted in your previous answers.