

# Scientist Identities in Conservation Leadership

There is a misconception that only certain people can be scientists. When asked to draw a scientist, many students draw an older white man in a lab coat. Research also suggests that students are more likely to enter a career when they have role models who they identify with. This activity is designed to get students to recognize that scientists are a diverse group of people from around the world. Scientists do all different types of work, and in this activity, students will explore profiles of scientists who are also conservation leaders and learn about what inspired them to become scientists. They will then reflect on what inspires them and what they have in common with the scientists.

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## Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast aspects of scientists' identities, including their motivation to become researchers and their influences
- Reflect on their own identities, including what they have in common with scientists

## Materials:

- [Conservation Leadership Biographies](#)
- Scientist Identity Worksheet
  - [PDF worksheet](#)
  - [Editable worksheet](#)

## Process:

- 1) Share the following prompt with students and ask them to reflect individually. They should record their reflections in a notebook or blank document.
  - a) What are the characteristics of a scientist?
- 2) After students have reflected, engage students in a whole class discussion where they share their responses. Keep a running list of their answers that students can refer back to at the end of this activity when they reflect back on what they've learned.
- 3) Repeat this process with the following prompts:
  - a) How does someone become a scientist?
  - b) What types of people become scientists? Can anyone become a scientist?
- 4) Inform students that they will now be getting to know a scientist better. Break them into small groups, and give each group one scientist from the Conservation Leadership Biographies document. Since there are six scientists included, six or twelve groups would work best.
- 5) Ask them to read the scientist profile fully. After reading, they should discuss the answers to the questions in Part One on the Scientist Identity Worksheet. Each individual in the group should fill out their own copy of the worksheet. These questions highlight the scientists' stories, including their inspiration to become scientists and what advice they have for young people interested in careers in science.

- 6) Students will now be the expert on their scientist. Form new groups that each contain at least one student from each of the original profile groups, so that every scientist is represented in these new groups. Each student should introduce their scientist to the rest of the group and share out the answers to their questions in Part One.
- 7) Once each student has shared out their Part One answers, students should discuss the questions for Part Two on the Scientist Identity Worksheet. They should discuss the questions as a group, but each individual student should write their own answers to the questions. These questions allow students to identify common trends among the scientists.
- 8) Students should now work individually on Part Three of the Scientist Identity Worksheet. In this section, they should reflect on their own thinking about what they've learned so far in this activity. They will be asked to identify which scientist(s) inspired them the most and explain why. They will also discuss what they think they have in common with the scientists listed.
- 9) If time allows, students can work in pairs to discuss their reflections.

#### Extension Activity:

- If students want more information about their scientists, they can find their profiles on the [Conservation Leadership Programme website](#). Students can extend their learning by reading other parts of their scientists' interviews. Additionally, students can extend the activity by exploring profiles of other scientists found on the [Graduate Scholarship Program website](#).