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A range of activities to be run with children and young people, from under 5s to around age 14

britishscienceweek.org



# Welcome to the British Science Week 2026 taster pack!

e're here to get you excited for the upcoming celebrations taking place from 6 to 15 March 2026.

British Science Week is a ten-day celebration of all things science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). During British Science Week, we encourage everyone to take part in activities, host events and celebrate the science in our everyday lives.

# Who can use this pack?

We hope that you — whether you're a teacher or other member of school staff, a community group leader, a parent/carer, or an event organiser — will find this pack of ideas, activities and tips useful.

We've brought together resources suitable for children under 5, right up to young people aged 14, or those working at this level, into this one, easy-to-use taster pack. Feel free to adapt any and all of the activities for your audience.









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# Primary school age

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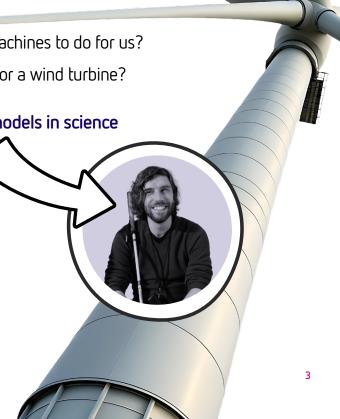
# Secondary school age

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# This year's theme

Each year there is a new theme for British Science Week and for 2026 it's 'Curiosity: what's your question?'

This theme is all about putting children and young people in the driver's seat, and encouraging them to find answers to the most pressing questions they have about the world.

Almost every question has STEM behind it. Whether it relates to traditional science topics, or it's about music, sport, architecture - any interest in fact!

Here are some ways you can introduce the theme to students in a fun, imaginative way to get them excited about the Week:

# Curious about our poster competition?

This year's poster competition is going to be a special one; you'll be taking your curiosity to a new level, by trying to imagine (or visualise) the future!

In 2026, we'll be working with scientists who are thinking about what being a child might be like in the future. Look out for the full competition brief, plus details of how to enter, in the main British Science Week Activity Packs!

Talk to students about the types of questions they might want to explore. Do they have pets at home? Perhaps they're interested in animal behaviour. If they like to play video games, they could get curious about how they're designed. There are

If you work in a school or with a community group,

lots of links between

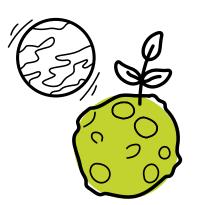
food and the climate

– how eco-friendly is

their favourite snack?

invite a special guest to share their own experience of how curiosity has shaped their life. Are there any STEM professionals local to you, or museums to visit? Maybe someone working in healthcare could talk about how curiosity helps them provide the best care.







# **CREST Awards**

Did you know your pupils and students can turn curiosity into achievement and be recognised through certificates from the British Science Association?

REST Awards is a scheme run by the British Science Association that brings STEM to life for young people aged 3-19 of all abilities through hands-on challenges and exciting projects.

CREST provides teachers and home educators with adaptable projects for young people that are aligned to the national curriculum, and can be run throughout the year. Why not give them a go in the lead up to British Science Week?

CREST challenges and projects are hands-on, student-led investigations that allow children and young people to develop STEM skills, communication and teamwork, and discover how STEM is relevant to their lives.

At primary level, pupils who complete at least six activities can earn a Star or SuperStar CREST Award, recognised with a certificate. The Award is given for participation and engagement with the activities and there is no need to submit pupils' work at this level.

Discovery Awards are typically completed by students aged 10-14 and they can be run at both primary and secondary level. Students earn a Discovery Award by taking part in a five-hour group project. Discovery projects are perfect to run during one school day, but they can also be spread out across a week or term.

At secondary level, teachers or parents/carers can submit young people's project work for a CREST Award on the students' behalf. This requires between 10 and 70 hours of project work depending on the level. Bronze projects can be teacherassessed, while Silver and Gold are sent to expert, external assessors. On completion, the students receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award, recognised with a certificate.

# What impact does CREST have?

We have found that there is around a 50/50 split of boys and girls completing CREST Awards, helping to smash the stereotype of science being 'for boys', and driving towards a more representative future STEM workforce.

Three in five schools who run CREST are in challenging circumstances, and earning a CREST Award can be particularly beneficial for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Students eligible for free school meals who complete Silver CREST Awards see an improvement of two-thirds of a grade at GCSE science, and are 38% more likely to study STEM subjects at AS level.

Find out more in the CREST Impact Report (2021-22) \*\*





What types of projects are submitted?

REST projects can cover any STEM topic you can think of! Young people can design their own projects or they can choose an existing project to complete, running their own investigations based on an idea from our large resource library.

### crestawards.org/resource-library 💥.

Some projects from our resource library include:

- ➤ Warm or cold? \* a SuperStar challenge that has children thinking about what type of creatures dinosaurs were (typically completed by 7-11 year olds)
- What makes bread rise? ¾ an investigation into culinary science that secondary school students could complete for a Bronze Award
- ➤ Fruit juice or fizzy drinks? challenges older students to find out which is really the healthier beverage for a Gold Award

For inspiration on how students can turn curiosity into achievement, check out some of our case studies:

Poppy and her research into STEM career accessibility %

- Donnie and his frisbee machine
- ▲ A team from Wales and their Al glasses \*
- Students at Rugby High School on reproductive health ¾

### Tips for educators

British Science Week can provide a perfect opportunity to bring CREST to your lessons. To earn a Star or SuperStar Award, early years and primary school-aged pupils complete at least six activities that should take around 45mins — 1 hour each. Children could work on these activities through British Science Week, and be presented with their certificates at an end-of-Week assembly or presentation.

Discovery projects can also be easily incorporated into British Science Week. As group projects that take around five hours, they could be done in one day — a Discovery Day — or run across the Week.

Secondary school projects usually cannot be completed within a week, but part of British Science Week at your school could involve students coming up with ideas for their projects and kicking them off to be worked on across the school year.

CREST projects are designed to be student-led and inclusive, allowing children and young people to explore relevant, real-life STEM challenges through practical, handson investigation and discussion at their level. CREST can be done by anyone! You may like to adapt or scaffold the activities, depending on the needs of your students.

At primary level, children might like to record their results in a variety of ways. They could take photos, create videos or draw pictures of their learning. Where they have tested a number of ideas or variables, they could explore ordering or sorting as a way of presenting their findings.

Educators working with students with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) can select the level of Award that best suits their children or young people. Find out more on the SEND pages of the CREST website: crestawards.org/primary-early-years/supporting-students-send %.

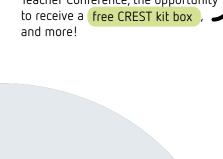
crestawards.org/secondaryfurther-education/supportingstudents-send \*\*.

# **Engage funding**

Funding for schools in challenging circumstances to help teachers run CREST Awards.

ngage, run by the British Science
Association, is a community of
teachers in schools in challenging
circumstances who share ideas,
access inspiring resources and
can apply for grants to help bring
STEM to life for all young people.

By joining the Engage community, you will have access to our Engage Teacher Conference, the opportunity to receive a free CREST kit box,





# Engage with CREST – funding for schools

Engage Grants are available to schools in challenging circumstances to help run and deliver CREST Awards.

Schools that have high numbers of pupils from backgrounds underrepresented in STEM are encouraged to apply for a grant of £350.

The Engage Grant is provided as £350, plus a voucher code to cover up to £350 CREST Award application fees when submitted online.

We also offer Simply CREST support, which just covers the cost of up to £350 CREST Award application fees, for schools that already have the equipment they need.

# How to apply

To apply, visit www.crestawards.
org/engage/funding % and fill
in the online application form.
The current round of grants
closes on 14 October 2025.





EARLY YEARS Suitable for children aged 3-5, but also works well for children up to 7 or those working at this level

# WHICH PEGS ARE THE BEST AT KEEPING WASHING

This activity is designed to get children thinking about the grip and strength of pegs made with different materials and using different mechanisms. The activity works best when run with small groups.

45 minutes



# Kit list

A length of washing line

Different types of clothes pegs

Socks

Sand, large marbles or pebbles to weigh socks down

If using sand, small cups for filling

Dustpan & brush



# Instructions

- Talk through the question and the idea of testing the pegs by adding sand, large marbles or pebbles to socks on a washing line.
- 2 Let the children think of other ways of testing the clothes pegs too.
- 3 If you're using pebbles of different sizes, number them and use them in the same order each time.
- Fix the washing line at a height the children can reach. Support them to add sand/marbles/pebbles to socks attached with different types of pegs until they fall, counting how many units of weight each peg can hold.
- Talk about what they have found out. Which pegs worked best?
- Children could show their findings by drawing a picture or poster.

What questions do they have now? Perhaps if washing dries faster on a windy day, or if some clothes dry more quickly than others. Talk about how you could find out!



# Watch out

- Remind children not to put the sand, marbles or pebbles in their mouths.
- Ensure the marbles and pebbles are large enough not to be choking hazards.
- Tie the line high enough that children can't run into it, but low enough that the socks don't have far to fall.
- Supervise children handling pegs with spring hinges to avoid fingers getting caught.
- Ensure children wash their hands after handling sand.



# Next steps

This activity is taken from Peggy Problem, one of the CREST Star for early years and primary challenges.

Try some of the other activities with your children! You can find out more about CREST Star and download the resources you need at: crestawards.org/ resource-library/primary/star 💥.

Have your children complete six activities to get an Award! If you want to run CREST Awards visit the website for advice on how to get started: crestawards. org/about-crest/how-to-run 💥.



# At home

Children can conduct versions of the experiment at home, perhaps outside to see if windy conditions put pegs to the test.



# Career options

Product designer - someone who thinks about things that we use and works out how to make them better.

### Skills unlocked

Observant, logical













EARLY YEARS Suitable for children aged 3-5, but also works well for children up to 7 or those working at this level







This activity is designed to get children thinking about the conditions plants need to grow, and whether or not those conditions exist in outer space! They'll compare cress seed growth on Earth and a Moon-like environment.

♦ 45 mins plus a week to let the seeds grow



# Kit list

Bowls of warm water and iced water

Tubs for planting

Soil

Cress seeds

Pipettes, squeezy bottles or another small watering device

Access to a freezer



# Instructions

- Ask the children to consider how the conditions on the Moon are different to the conditions on Earth. Use iced water and warm water to help the children 'feel' what differences in temperature are. Explain that the temperature on the Moon gets much hotter and much colder than it does on Earth. Do they think plants could grow there?
- Ask each child to fill a pot almost to the top with soil. They will scatter a few seeds on top, and cover them with a light layer of soil. The children will then water the tubs.
- Half of the pots should be stored in the freezer and the other half on a windowsill where the children can see them. Remember to water your seeds every few days.
- Do the children think the seeds will grow? What will they look like? Record their answers and revisit them when the seeds have developed into seedlings.

What questions do they have now? What do plants need to grow? Do all plants like to grow in the same sort of places? What do astronauts eat in space?



### Watch out

- Make sure children wash their hands after touching soil.
- > Ensure the children don't put seeds or soil in their mouths.
- Beware of any vegetable allergies.



# Next steps

This activity is taken from Earth and beyond 💥, a pack of CREST Star early years challenges.

Try some of the other activities with your children! You can find out more about CREST Star for early years and download the resources you need at: crestawards.org/resource-library/ primary/star/?Ages=3&pageIndex=1 💥.

Have your children complete six activities to get an Award! If you want to run CREST Awards, visit the website for advice on how to get started: crestawards.org/about-crest/how-to-run 💥.



# At home

Children could experiment more with growing seeds to find the ideal conditions. How much do they need to be watered?



# Career options

Vegetable farmer - someone who grows plants and crops for people and animals to eat.



This activity was developed in partnership with the Ogden Trust.



PRIMARY
Suitable for children
aged 5-7, but also
works well for children
works well for those
in early years or those
working at this level

# WHAT MAKES THE BEST HANKIE WHEN YOU HAVE A COLD?

This activity is designed to get children thinking about the strength and absorbency of materials, and deciding which would be best for a handkerchief.

45 minutes



# Kit list

A selection of materials that could be used as hankies:

- Cotton fabric
- Newspaper
- Crepe paper
- Cotton wool
- Greaseproof paper
- Tissues

### Plastic trays

### Beakers

Coloured water (with food dye or paint)

Pipettes, a squeezy bottle or measuring scoop to add drops of liquid to the materials

Paper towels to clean up





### Instructions

- 1 Introduce the question and ask the children if they have ever had a cold. What do they think makes a good hankie?
- 2 Give them a set of materials to test. Let them talk about which they think might be best and how they will find out.
- One at a time, put each material in the tray and drip coloured water onto it with the pipette, squeezy bottle or measuring scoop. Have the children observe the differences and share their ideas.
- When they have finished, agree on the winners and talk about why these were the best hankies.
- 5 To present their work the children could sort or order the materials into those that worked well, and those that didn't.

What questions do they have now? They might like to think about why we often choose tissues that are thrown away after they've

been used.





- Mop up spills to avoid a slippery floor.
- Warn children not to squirt coloured water at each other.
- Test hankies on hands, not noses.
- Remind children not to share hankies.
- > Ensure children do not put the coloured liquid in their mouths.
- If you're using food dye to colour the liquid for this activity, it can stain children's hands.



# Next steps

This activity is taken from Sniffly Sneezes, one of the CREST Star for early years and primary challenges.

Try some of the other activities with your children! You can find out more about CREST Star and download the resources you need at: crestawards.org/resource-library/primary/star/%.

Complete six activities to get an Award! If you are an adult wanting to run CREST Awards, visit the website for advice on how to get started: crestawards.org/about-crest/how-to-run/%.



### At home

Try tests on materials to discover other qualities, perhaps to see which are the most waterproof.



# Career options

- Product designer someone who thinks about things that we use and works out how to make them better. They might think about how they look, how they are made or how easy they are to use.
- Health educator someone who teaches people about healthy behaviours that can help to prevent illnesses.











# HOW DO BOATS FLOAT?



This activity will get you designing and making a raft that floats. You'll test different models using water to see which can hold a crew of marbles.

45 minutes



# Kit list

Bowls or tanks of water

Square or A4 sheets of paper

Foil (optional alternative)

A set of marbles the same size

Sellotape, masking tape or other fasteners

Waterproof coverings for wooden desks or tables





- 1 What do you know about boats and how they float? What is a raft and how does it work?
- To carry out your investigation, your teacher will put you in groups and give you sheets of paper or foil. Can you design a raft that floats? Remember, you can only use one piece of paper or foil at a time.
- 3 Discuss your ideas with your group and think about which shapes might work, and how to carry out your experiments.
- 4 Make several rafts of different shapes and sizes by folding the paper or foil and securing the corners.
- 5 Place your raft in a bowl or tank of water and add marbles until it sinks. Count out the marbles and try again with a different model to see if it will hold more.

What questions do you have now? What's the best design for a raft? Why are boats different shapes and sizes?



# Watch out

Mop up water spills quickly and collect escaped marbles to avoid accidents.



# **Next steps**

This activity is taken from Crafty Rafts, one of the CREST SuperStar challenges.

Why not try some of the other challenges? You can find out more about CREST SuperStar and download the resources you need at: crestawards.org/resource-library/primary/superstar \*\*.

Complete six activities to get an Award! If you are an adult wanting to run CREST Awards, visit the website for advice on how to get started: crestawards.org/about-crest/how-to-run %.



### At home

Try designing and building rafts at home with other types of materials and in different shapes and sizes.



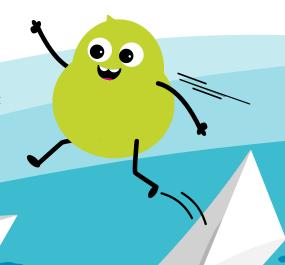
# Career options

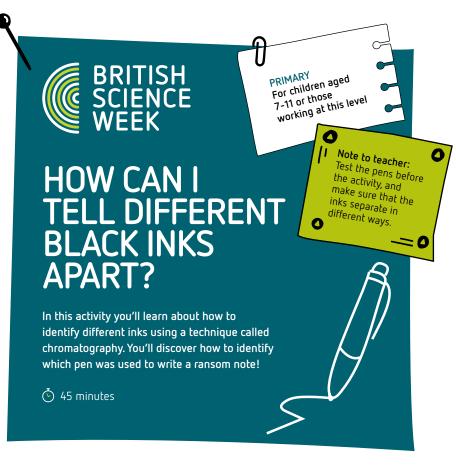
Marine engineer – someone who designs, builds and looks after boats, ships and submarines.



# Skills unlocked

Creative, resilient







# Next steps

This activity is taken from Investigating Ink, one of the CREST SuperStar challenges.

Why not try some of the other challenges? You can find out more about CREST SuperStar and download the resources you need at: crestawards.org/resourcelibrary/primary/superstar/ 💥.

Complete six activities to get an Award! If you are an adult wanting to run CREST Awards, visit the website for advice on how to get started: crestawards.org/about-crest/howto-run/ 💥.

# At home

You could continue experimenting with ink at home, using chromatography. Do different coloured inks and different types of pen give different results?

# Career options

- > Forensic scientist someone who looks at and prepares traces of evidence that can be used in police investigations and court cases.
- > Food scientist someone who tests samples of food products to make sure they're safe and of a good quality.



Hard-working, committed



# Kit list

Absorbent white paper i.e. filter paper or kitchen towel

4 different watersoluble black pens (not biros), each labelled with a different suspect's name

Ransom note (written on absorbent paper by the teacher before the activity, using one of the pens)

Beakers

**Pipettes** 

Scissors

Plain paper



# Instructions

- Your teacher will put you into groups and show you a ransom note written in black pen. You will be given four black pens used by different suspects - can you work out which suspect wrote the note?
- 2 Test the different black pens by cutting four strips of absorbent paper and drawing a spot of ink on each. Place the paper strips over a beaker and then add a drop or two of water to the ink.
- 3 Look carefully at the affect the water has on the different black inks. What do you notice?
- Your teacher will give your group a strip from the ransom note to test. Observe what happens to the ink the culprit used. Can you solve the crime?

What questions do you have now? Do you think it's possible to separate the colours in other things in the same way?



### Watch out

- Use plastic beakers for this activity.
- Any spills should be cleaned up quickly to avoid accidents.
- Avoid using permanent marker pens.





What questions do you have now? Who owns machine learning? Who is responsible if there's a problem?



# Next steps

This activity can be put towards a Discovery CREST Award. Find the full activity in the CREST Discovery Machines of the Future resources: crestawards.org/resources/crest-discovery-machines-of-the-future %.



# Career options

As Al becomes more and more prevalent in society and in our lives, lots of new jobs will spring up around it. Understanding Al and machine learning is and will be a very important skill for future careers. Examples of jobs include:

- Machine learning engineer someone who builds and maintains the systems that allow machines to learn from data. They often work as part of a data science team.
- Data scientist someone who analyses complex sets of data to find meaningful results. They can use this information to solve problems and make decisions.





# C Kit list

# Jobs card sheet print out On page 14

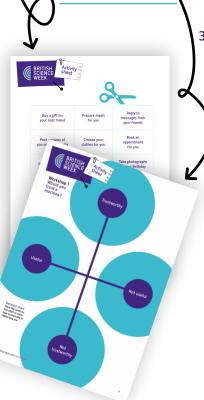
Decision chart print out
On page 15

Scissors



# Instructions

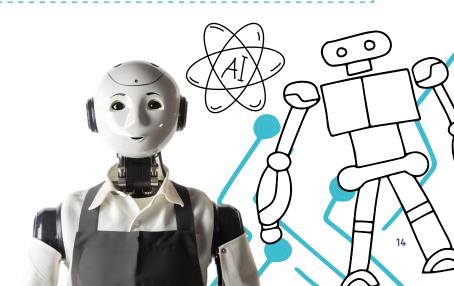
- 1 After you have been put into groups, cut out the cards on the jobs card sheet.
- 2 Read each example and discuss with your group:
  - How useful or not would a machine that does this be?
  - > How much would you trust a machine to do this?
- Based on your discussion, place the cards on the decision chart. When you have placed all the cards on the decision chart, discuss in your group:
  - Are they spread evenly around the chart?
  - Are there any patterns with the types of things you think are useful and not useful?
  - Are there any patterns with the types of things that lots of people trust or would not trust a machine to do?
  - For the things that you would not trust a machine to do, is there anything that would change your mind?

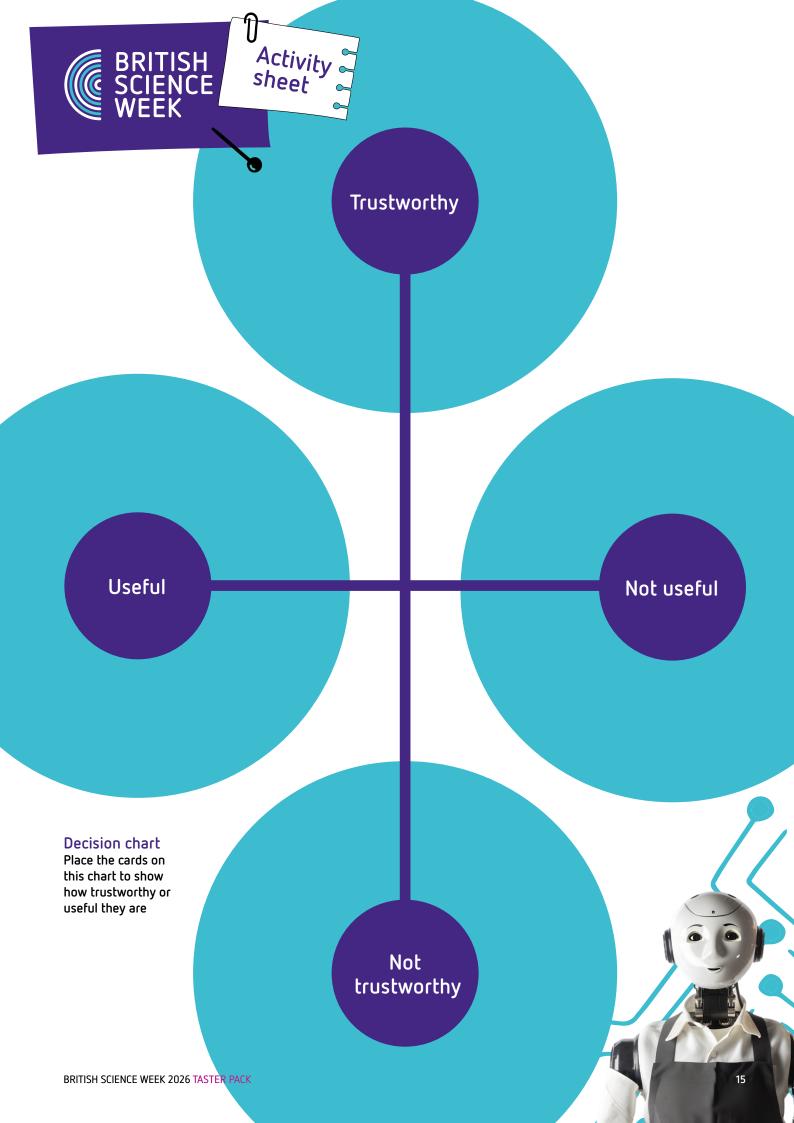


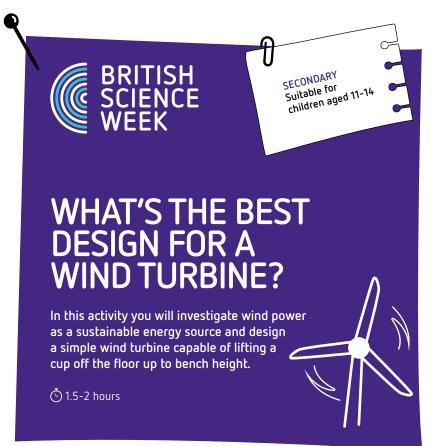




Buy a gift for your best friend	Prepare meals for you	Reply to messages from your friends
Post pictures of you on social media	Choose your clothes for you	Book an appointment for you
Prescribe medical treatment for you	Drive a car	Take photographs at your birthday party
Teach you a foreign language	Give you driving lessons	Referee a football game
Mark a school test	Order for you in a restaurant	Decorate your bedroom









# Kit list

Scrap card

Sellotape

Masking tape

Blu tack

Split pins

Pencils

Scissors

String

Paper/plastic cup

Weights (gram weights or pennies)

Hairdryer set to cold (to simulate wind)

Access to an Internet-connected device/books on sustainable energy for research



# Instructions

- 1 Carry out some research into wind power and if it's affordable. Start to think about how wind turbines work.
- 2 Consider the things you use electricity for each day, and the different ways electricity is generated.
- 3 Design a wind turbine that uses wind (from a hairdryer set to cold) as power to lift a cup off the floor.
- 4 Think about the design of the blades, how to attach the blades to a shaft and how to attach your machine to the desk.
- 5 Test your machine then adjust the size, number, shape, thickness and angle of the blades and test again. Record what works and what could be improved. Ensure fair testing, e.g. check the hairdryer is a fixed distance away from the blades each time.

What questions do you have now? Could your school rely solely on wind power? Where would be the best place for a wind turbine in your local area?



# △ Watch out

- Wear any necessary safety clothing e.g. goggles or gloves.
- > Ensure the hairdryer is set to cold.
- Clear away any trip hazards promptly.



# Next steps

This activity can be put towards a Discovery CREST Award. Find the full activity in the CREST resource library: crestawards.org/resources/crest-bronze-industrial-strategy-grand-challenges \*\*.



# Career options

Tackling the changing climate will be vital for the future of our planet, and there are lots of fulfilling careers you could pursue to find ways to reduce carbon emissions.

- Wind energy engineer someone who designs and maintains different types of technologies that harness the wind's power to create energy.
- Sustainability consultant someone who works with businesses to help them reduce their carbon footprint and operate in an eco-friendly way.



# Skills unlocked

Self-motivated, passionate





These pages could inspire secondary students

# SMASHING STEREOTYPES

Smashing Stereotypes is a campaign run by the British Science Association which aims to dispel stereotypes of who scientists are and what they look like, and about the jobs people associate with science.

We have a collection of around 60 stories from individuals and teams from a variety of different backgrounds that challenge these long-standing stereotypes, encouraging more young people, from all backgrounds, to see themselves as scientists.

With profiles of chefs, product designers, and fitness professionals, Smashing Stereotypes proves that science is for everyone, whatever your interests, background, or career path.

Smashing Stereotypes showcases the variety of careers on offer and highlights careers that you may not initially associate with STEM. The campaign also reinforces that there's no 'typical' route into a science role.





# MEET NIC VISION IMPAIRED ASTRONOMER

Making space science accessible for everyone

Growing up in Bendigo, Australia, Nic spent his childhood stargazing with his family at night.

Even though he's blind, his parents described the stars so well that he could picture them in his mind. He was fascinated by the universe and wanted to learn more about it.

Now, Nic is an astronomer! He's working to help everyone, no matter their abilities, to experience the stars and galaxies through touchable, tactile objects.

No one ever told Nic, "You're blind, so this will be too hard." Instead, his teachers and family helped him find creative ways to solve problems.

They worked together to make learning accessible, even if it meant coming up with unusual solutions.

There's always a way to make your dreams come true. You just have to get creative.

Check out Nic's full profile on the British Science Week website \*\*

SKILLS YOU COULD
LEARN FROM NIC:
Resilient,
creative,
curious



# MEET TENDAI PLANT-BASED FOOD ENTREPRENEUR

Nourishing people and the planet with sustainable, plant-based African meals

Tendai always loved cooking, but started his career in civil engineering, working as a construction package manager before moving into a design management role.

Despite enjoying his work in engineering, his passion for food didn't fade, so he launched Veafy, a plant-based African meal prep business.

Working in a culinary field might not seem like a STEM job — but it is! Cooking is chemistry, balancing flavours is science, and plant-based eating has so many nutritional benefits.

Tendai wanted Veafy to offer healthy meals, and this involves understanding nutrition, and ensuring meals have the right balance of what our bodies need.

Working in construction, Tendai noticed that there weren't many Black professionals in the industry. Through his platform as an entrepreneur, he wants to show others from diverse backgrounds that there are opportunities in entrepreneurship across STEM professions.

Check out Tendai's full profile on the British Science Week website \*\*

SKILLS YOU COULD LEARN FROM TENDAL: Committed, imaginative, hard working



# MEET PEARL PHYSICAL CLIMATE SCIENTIST

Transforming climate data into real-world impact

Pearl uses data to help companies understand the impact of their actions, like using too much water or energy or working in ways that harm nature.

Like so many people, she used to think science was only about engineering. But at school, she took part in loads of science activities.

She got involved in tech labs, built cool battle bots, and worked with bandsaws, realising it was so much more!

She's a changemaker and wants to see more women in STEM, just like her.

And her work doesn't just stop there. Pearl even organised panels at COP26, the world's biggest climate summit where world leaders make decisions about our planet!

Check out Pearl's full profile on the British Science Week website \*\*





# britishscienceweek.org









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