

Teacher Guidance

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Introducing the activity

What is *I'm a Scientist*?

Read this first page to your students to brief them about the activity.

It may help to display the website (imascientist.org.uk)

I'm a Scientist, Get me out of here is an activity where you connect with real scientists online. We are taking part in the [Zone name]. The zone has three sections: Ask, Chat and Vote: Your votes decide which scientist wins a £500 prize.



Chat - As a class, we will have a 40 minute live-chat with some of the scientists. It's all text based, and you can ask the scientists any questions you like. You can see which scientists have signed up for your chat on your dashboard.



Ask - You can ask the scientists whatever you like, even if they weren't in your chat. Send your questions any time and we'll email you when you've been answered (as long as you've entered an email on your account). Questions and answers stay on the site so have a look around and see what others have asked.



Vote - You decide which scientist wins a £500 prize! Read how the scientists plan to spend it on their profiles and ask them a question about it, or ask about it in the live chat.

Look at the scientists' profiles, read the questions already in the zone and post your own. Remember, the scientists are competing for your vote – who deserves it most?! The winner will be announced on the final day, in a special live chat.

You can log in outside of school to send more questions to the scientists. There will be evening chats you can join with your family and friends. See your profile or ask your teacher for more information.

It's a competition for students too!

One student from each zone will win a £20 gift voucher for asking great questions. Scientists and moderators can nominate students throughout the activity.

How to book live chats

Teacher dashboard

The screenshot shows the Cells Zone Teacher Dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Ask?', 'Chat', and 'Vote' buttons, along with a user profile for 'CHRISTOPHER' and a 'LOGOUT' button. Below this is a 'MEET THE SCIENTISTS!' section featuring profiles of Tom, Natasha, Ildiko, Ester, Eoin, and Aaron. The main dashboard area is divided into sections: 'Welcome to your Dashboard!' with instructions on how to use the site; '1. Create Class for your students' with a 'CREATE CLASS' button; '2. Book your Live Chats' with a 'BOOK YOUR LIVE CHAT' button; and 'My students who have logged in:' showing a list of students and their questions. A 'Chat Bookings' table is also visible, showing scheduled chat sessions with columns for Zone, Date, Time, Duration, Class, Accepted Scientists, and Action.

Callouts:

- Create a class name and get logins for your student:** Points to the '1. Create Class for your students' section and the 'CREATE CLASS' button.
- Book your live chat:** Points to the '2. Book your Live Chats' section and the 'BOOK YOUR LIVE CHAT' button.
- Check who's logged in and what they've asked:** Points to the 'My students who have logged in:' section.
- Check your chat bookings and which scientists have signed up:** Points to the 'Chat Bookings' table.

Get students online

You can either print off a sheet of login details, or give students a registration URL

Live Chats

Live chats are consistently the most popular part of the activity– for students, for scientists, and even for teachers!

On your dashboard, use the Book Your Live Chat button to go to the booking page. After clicking Confirm Booking, you will get a confirmation email with the next steps.

Pre-Chat checklist

Before your first live chat, you will need to:

1. Book IT suite/provide internet access for students.
2. Ask your IT department to add the URLs on this page to your school network whitelist: imascientist.org.uk/url-whitelist/
3. Test the chat. Go to the staffroom chat imascientist.org.uk/staffroom between 9-5 any day during the Autumn term. It's a good idea to use a student account, on a student computer, for the test (especially if your computer has different security settings).

Teachers, book your Live Chat

Class:

Zone:

Select a Zone

Please check that the zone is correct for the class for which you are booking the session.

Date:

Select a date

Start time:

Select a time

Class ability:

Select ability

CONFIRM BOOKING

Taking part in live chats

The screenshot shows a live chat interface titled "MEET THE SCIENTISTS!". On the left, a sidebar lists "@Anna" with a bio, "Students online" (student), "Suspended users", and "Session history". The main chat area shows a timeline of messages from "modem:", "Anna:", "testteacher:", and "student:". At the bottom, there is a text input field and a "SEND" button. Callout boxes point to specific features:

- Teachers have a mortarboard next to their name**: Points to the teacher's profile icon.
- Time left in chat**: Points to the "This chat will end in 26 minutes" timer.
- See messages you have been tagged in**: Points to the "@testteacher: 1" notification.
- See which students and scientists have logged in, and if any have been suspended**: Points to the sidebar list.
- Click reply to create a conversation thread**: Points to the "Reply" button on a message.
- Suspend students or scientists**: Points to the suspension icon (a person with a red X).
- Type messages here**: Points to the text input field.
- Trash any spam**: Points to the trash can icon.
- Tag scientists in your messages**: Points to the "@Anna" tag in a message.
- Pause the students sending messages**: Points to the "Pause" button in the sidebar.

Suggested lesson plans

There are many ways to use *I'm a Scientist*. We've put together three suggested lesson plans. We developed them in consultation with teachers and they have been extensively tested. Most teachers find them extremely helpful. These can be found online at imascientist.org.uk/resources-for-teachers

Format: Starter/activity/plenary

Suggested adaptations: For lower and higher ability groups

Timings: Designed for 50 mins

Purpose: Develop skills for Working Scientifically.

Lesson 1 – “You’re the Judges!”

Coming to it cold, students may just vote for the scientist with the nicest photo, or the best joke. This lesson plan gets students thinking about some of the deeper issues, while still giving them ownership of the criteria they come up with. It doesn't tell them what they should consider. There's no right or wrong answer, but all students should have thought about how we judge scientists by taking part. Do the exercise interactively using the web ranking system we have produced. We can share how other classes have ranked the criteria.

Lesson 2 – “Meet the Scientists”

This lesson encourages students to examine the scientists' profiles and think about what they might like to ask them. It's a chance for students to discuss the interesting things they've found and maybe do some extra research before their live chat.

Lesson 3 – “Live Chat”

Interaction with scientists and voting gives students practice at evaluating scientific information and making informed judgements from it. Giving students a real say about something gives them a reason to engage.

Supporting the Science Capital Teaching Approach

I'm a Scientist helps you to use the Science Capital Teaching Approach with your class. This approach is designed to support teachers in helping students find more meaning and relevance in science and, as a result, engage more with the subject.

The approach consists of three main pillars, all of which can be supported using the *I'm a Scientist* activity.

- 1. Personalising and localising:** Going beyond contextualising, to connect to the actual experiences, understandings, attitudes and interests of young people.
- 2. Eliciting-valuing-linking:** Inviting students to share knowledge, attitudes and experiences; recognising these as having value; and connecting this back to the science.
- 3. Building the dimensions of science capital:** Considering the eight dimensions when developing activities, lessons or programmes.

The ideas for the Science Capital Teaching Approach were co-developed and trialled over four years between UCL researchers and 43 secondary science teachers in England. Find more information at www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe-sciencecapital

Further activities

- Go through your chat transcript with your class
- Review questions asked by your students
- **Evening chats**
 - Evening chats are 7–8 pm on Thursdays throughout the activity
 - Remind students they can join these from home with their family and friends
- **Final day**
 - On the final day there is a live chat at 12–3 pm
 - At 3 pm the Zone Winner will be announced

We have asked teachers what tips they would give to a teacher taking part in *I'm a Scientist* for the first time.

Here are the most common answers:

1. Spend more time preparing students

Run lessons 1 and 2 before the live chat lesson to prepare students.

"We have just had our live chat. It was the best yet I think, because we had spent much more time on preliminary activities so we had loads of questions to ask."

2. Involve more students

3. Encourage students to be creative with their questions

There are better ways to use the activity than using the scientists as Googlers.

"Get the students to investigate the interests and subject of study of each scientist, so they can ask appropriate and useful questions."

Contact

If you need any help please email teachers@imascientist.org.uk or call 01225 326892.

For further information please visit: imascientist.org.uk/teachers