

Science today

Secondary Lesson Plan



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Source

[What Happens When You?](#)

Learning area

Science

Level

Lower secondary (Years 7–8)

Context

This activity could be a part of a unit on 'What is science?' It has been taken from a unit in *What Happens When You?* called 'Science from the beginning'.

Purpose

To help students to recognise science as an activity that is as immediate as the daily news.

Description

Students collect and analyse articles about current science in the news. They learn about the nature of current science.

Duration

1 session plus some homework time.

Possible outcomes

In relation to *Science — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, this activity leads towards achievement of outcomes in the following strand:

- **Working scientifically**
 - Evaluating findings
 - Using science
 - Acting responsibly

Materials required

- a collection of articles from newspapers such as *The Weekend Australian* and magazines such as *New Scientist* and *Double Helix*
- radio and television program guides

Procedure

1 Gathering information

Over a period of a week or two students read news items about current science or the work of scientists. They use items they have collected or those made available by the teacher. They also make use of radio and TV guides to identify programs such as *Beyond 2000*, *Quantum*, *The Science Show* or other special documentaries which they listen to or watch.

Each student should view, listen to or read 5 programs or articles. For each they make an entry in a table with the column headings 'Article or program name', 'Date', 'Scientist(s) involved (name or type)', 'What's the program or article about?'

It is not important that the students understand all details of the science described. They are encouraged rather to identify topics (and findings) and to note who the scientists were and who they worked for.

2 The nature of today's science

Students bring their completed tables and any especially interesting articles to class. The class decides on a classification scheme for the articles so that they may be displayed on a noticeboard in an organised way.

One possible classification scheme is life sciences (other than medicine), medical sciences, physical sciences, environmental sciences. Discussion of any difficulties with the classification system in specific cases is useful in developing a clearer idea of the nature of science.

Students are allowed time to browse through the tables and articles supplied by their colleagues and a few students talk for one or two minutes about any articles or programs they found particularly interesting.

As a whole the class discusses the question 'Which are the areas of major activity and what are the important issues in science today?'

3 Summarising learning

Students write a 400-word article for a school or science magazine supplement, which summarises what they have learned during this activity. Students may choose a title for their article or use the title 'What is happening in science today?'

Related products

- [*What Happens When You?*](#) is one of a series of books on teaching science produced as part of the *Science Curriculum and Teaching project* (SCTP).
- *They Don't Tell the Truth About the Wind* (K–3 science program)
- [*There's an Emu in the Sky*](#) (Years 4–7)
- [*Could We? Should We?*](#) (Year 10)