

A SCIENTIST JUST LIKE ME



Telma G. Laurentino
Evolutionary Biologist

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Hi there! I am Telma Laurentino – an evolutionary biologist



Where do I work?

I work in the USA, at Berkeley University! I have worked in Portugal and Switzerland too. Scientists move around a lot so we can learn from different places!

What did I like doing when I was at school?

I always loved to read and to play outside with friends, touching the world around me and wonder about how nature works!

What do I like doing in my spare time?

I love to go outside, explore nature and photograph animals and plants. I also love crafting with natural materials like feathers, rocks and sticks. I have a huge collection!

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What do I do as an evolutionary biologist?



I study how different animals adapt to changes in the environment. For example, I measure differences in the colour of lizards that live in white desert sands. I search for differences in their genes which might have allowed them to survive in such an extreme environment.

How does what I do make the world a better place?

Knowing about nature allows us to protect it. Knowing how other species adapt to changes in their native habitat, teaches us about evolution and the consequences of altering or destroying habitats.

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What I like about my job

I love that I am constantly learning new skills needed to unveil nature's secrets, and that I get to study amazing places like the Amazon. I learn a lot from the local friends I make, and I get to teach others about evolution in our wonderful world!



Challenges I have faced

I have dyscalculia, so I need more practice than other people for the maths I need for laboratory work, to measure and calculate quantities, or when I am doing statistics on my nature data. Sometimes I can do it by myself, sometimes I ask help from my colleagues.

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If you want to be an evolutionary biologist, you need:

- ✿ **to be creative** and enjoy natural wonders and thinking about how and why living beings behave the way they do
- ✿ **to be curious** and to turn your ideas into testable scientific questions
- ✿ **to be a team player** as working with your colleagues really helps to find the best methods to study those questions in detail!



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Discussion time

- ✦ Would you like to be an evolutionary biologist like Telma Laurentino?

Why? Why not?



- ✦ What skills and interests do you already have that would help you become an evolutionary biologist?
- ✦ What new skills and knowledge would you need to develop?

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Free supporting resources for evolutionary biology

The Big Jurassic Classroom - resources and information to support teachers with using their local environments to inspire interest in the UK's geological history. The resources include exciting activities for learning about rocks, fossils and evolution.

I bet you didn't know... articles use cutting-edge science research as a context for learning. Teacher Guides describing the research and activities and investigations for children can be used as classroom presentations. See:

- Some mammals have unusual backbones
- Bees and caterpillars can change the evolution of plants
- Evolution of life in cities
- Miracle healing could come from the axolotl

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