

A SCIENTIST just like me



Dr Sheila Kanani MBE
Planetary Physicist

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Hi there! I am Dr Sheila Kanani – a planetary physicist



Where do I work?

I work for the Royal Astronomical Society, which is based in central London. However, I live on the northwest coast of England, near Blackpool.

What did I like doing when I was at school?

When I was at school I enjoyed science lessons, playing hockey and playing the saxophone. Not all at the same time of course!

What do I like doing in my spare time?

In my spare time, I like walking on the beach, gazing up at the stars, reading and playing with my two children.

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What do I do as a planetary physicist?

Because I work in outreach, my job is really varied. I can be found teaching GCSE Astronomy, giving a public talk, speaking on live TV or radio, writing a book about space or talking to school children about careers in the space industry. And more!



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

I work to make sure the astronomy and space industry is diverse and varied. That means I encourage anyone to join us! I believe anybody can be an astronomer or a space scientist if they want to be. I hope I am making the world a better place by inspiring people to love space!

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What I like about my job

I love that I meet lots of different people, from school children to astronauts! Everyone I meet is interesting and helps me see the world in a different way. I also love that my job is so varied. I use lots of different skills to do my job – from speaking to large audiences to designing educational posters – every day is different.

Challenges I have faced

I like smashing stereotypes and showing that science is for everyone. A scientist can be a small Indian woman like me. Sometimes this can cause people to disagree with me, which can make my job tough!



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If you want to work in outreach as a planetary physicist, you need:

- ✱ **to be proactive** – if you don't ask you won't get!
- ✱ **to enjoy talking to people** – you will meet lots of different people in this role, and it can be super fun getting to know them all
- ✱ **to try new things** – this job requires you to give everything a go, because every day is different
- ✱ **to enjoy storytelling** – telling stories makes factual information come alive



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Discussion time

- ✦ Would you like to be a Planetary Physicist like Dr Sheila Kanani ?

Why? Why not?

- ✦ What skills and interests do you already have that would help you become a Planetary Physicist?
- ✦ What new skills and knowledge would you need to develop?



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Dr Sheila Kanani is a STEM ambassador. Click [here](#) to access free STEM Ambassador support and resources.

Free supporting resources for space

Science At Work – see 'Gene Cernan' and 'Meet two space scientists'

Science Fun at Home – see 'World Space Week'

City Science Stars - practical science activities (for 9–11-year-old children), using links to football, other sports and space

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

- How to play planetary hide and seek
- Insight into Mars
- Ice giants at the end of the Solar System
- One of Saturn's moons could be a home for extra-terrestrial life

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