

# A SCIENTIST just like me



**Professor Karen Aplin**  
**Atmospheric and space scientist**

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**Hi there! I am Professor Karen Aplin –  
An atmospheric and space scientist**

## **Where do I work?**

I currently work at the University of Bristol Faculty of Engineering. I have also worked at a government space science laboratory.



## **What did I like doing when I was at school?**

I used to read a lot and I was interested in the natural world; things like watching clouds and stars in the sky, and bugs in the garden.

## **What do I like doing in my spare time?**

I still like clouds and stars, and I have a wildlife camera in my garden! I also play double bass in an orchestra and enjoy walking and running.

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## What do I do as an atmospheric and space scientist?

I find out about space and Earth's weather and I also teach university students. I work on making gadgets to measure things that are both useful to people and help us understand the world better. In the teaching part of my job, I train students in how to design, make and test spacecraft and scientific gadgets.



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

The gadgets that I make help us understand the atmosphere on Earth and other planets. The information from them could help with space exploration, weather forecasting and reducing pollution.

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## What I like about my job



It is very varied and always interesting. I still love to find out new things about the world. I get to meet and work with smart and enthusiastic colleagues and students. There are also opportunities to travel and work in lots of different places.

## Challenges I have faced

I have had asthma my whole life and have had times when I wasn't too well, which made me less confident. I also went to a girls' secondary school where science was not very fashionable. I have become a more determined person because of these difficulties.

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If you want to be an atmospheric or space scientist, you need:

- ✦ to **be curious about the world** around you and how things work (not necessarily space, but it helps!)
- ✦ to have an ability **to work with other people in a team**
- ✦ to **like maths and science** at school, but don't forget that writing and communicating are also very important
- ✦ to have **an interest in solving problems**, and not getting put off when things don't work first time



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## Discussion time

- ✦ Would you like to be an atmospheric or space scientist like Professor Karen Aplin?

### Why? Why not?

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



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## Free supporting resources for atmospheric and space science

[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. Six articles relate to space and one of these is inspired by research carried out by Prof. Karen Aplin. See:

- [There is lightning at the edge of the Solar System](#)

[City Science Stars](#) – links science activities space (ages 9-11)

[Science at Work](#) – see 'Gene Cernan' and 'Meet two space scientists'

[Science Fun at Home](#) – see 'World Space Week'

[Air Pollution Research](#) resources allow primary age children to learn about air pollutants

Created by the Primary Science Teaching Trust

