

# A scientist just like me



**Hella Péter**  
**Animal scientist**

# A SCIENTIST JUST LIKE ME

**Hi there! I am Hella Péter – An animal scientist**



## **Where do I work?**

I work in the Budongo Forest Reserve, in Uganda, where I study wild chimpanzees. When not in the forest, I teach people about how humans and animals behave.

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

I enjoyed a bit of everything! I always loved animals, so I liked sciences, but I also really liked learning languages and arts classes.

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

I still enjoy arts & crafts, and love knitting and crochet. Right now, I am learning how to sew my own clothes! I also read a lot, especially fantasy and sci-fi books.

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## What do I do as an animal scientist?

I watch chimpanzees during their daily lives, and record what they do – where they go, who they are with, what they eat, and so on. This way we can learn how they behave and why they do the things they do.



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

In many places, humans and animals live in the same areas. Knowing how animals behave can help us live together safely and peacefully. Knowing what things are important for animals, like food or water, can also help protect them from extinction.

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## What I like about my job

I really enjoy working outside, as I do not like sitting still for too long. I get to be creative, figuring out how to collect data and what gadgets to use. Following wild animals also means something new each day. They can always surprise us!



## Challenges I have faced

I was told being a scientist is not for someone with ADHD, and to go for an easier career. But my interest in animals helped me push through difficulties, and I now have a career where my creativity and curiosity is a strength.

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**If you want to be an animal scientist, you need:**

- ✿ **to be curious**, wanting to know why and how things work
- ✿ **to be interested in some kind of animal**, like birds, insects, monkeys, or even pets, such as dogs
- ✿ **a sense of humour** - working with animals can be boring or annoying sometimes, and it helps if you can laugh about it instead of getting mad
- ✿ **to be brave**, as you might work in forests or during the night



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## Discussion time

- ✦ Would you like to be an animal scientist like Hella Péter?

**Why? Why not?**



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

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## Free supporting resources for animal science

[Starters for Science](#) – see 'Animal camouflage'

[Science Fun at Home](#) – see 'Spider safari'

[Science for One](#) – see 'Foil' (ages 5-7), 'Coat-hanger' (ages 9-11)

[Earth Explorers](#) – See 'Going underground'

[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:

- Some mammals have unusual backbones
- Stripes and concealment
- What is happening to the bees
- Evolution of life in cities
- About biodiversity and trophic cascades

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