

IMPACTS AND POLLUTION

Activity IP07

Theme

Student Sheet. This is the story of a scientist and their work on a day to day basis.

Objectives

To give students an insight into the work of scientists and perhaps challenge misconceptions that may exist.

Curricular Strands

SESE, Science—Science and environment, recognise the contribution of scientists to society

English—Reading, reading for pleasure and information

Skills

Reading for information, questioning

Time

15-30 minutes

What do scientists do?

AN INTERVIEW WITH AN EPA SCIENTIST



IMPACTS AND POLLUTION

Activity IP07

Continued →

So what do scientists do?

Scientist Dermot Berry visited the Holy Spirit School, Ballymun, where he was interviewed about his job by Paula and Jessica, who are both fifth class pupils and Green Schools Committee members.

1. Who do you work for?

The Environmental Protection Agency or EPA

2. What is the EPA?

The EPA is a body or organisation that works to protect the environment, by monitoring and regulating things like air, water and noise.

3. What is your job called?

I work as a field technician. I used to work as a lab technician but after a year at the EPA I changed job and now I collect the samples for the laboratory.



4. Did you like science and environment studies in school?

Yes I did. Science in secondary school was great!

5. What did you study in college?

I studied chemistry at Waterford Institute of Technology.

6. Describe a typical day for you at work?

I travel a lot, collecting water samples from near factories and landfills or dumps to check if the water is being polluted. I also collect water samples from lakes, rivers and estuaries. The industries and landfills I sample are all in the Leinster region, but the lake and river samples are from all over Ireland.



IMPACTS AND POLLUTION

Activity IP07

Continued →

7. What do you like most and least about your job?

I really enjoy being out in the boat taking samples in rivers such as the Shannon, but there can be a lot of driving from place to place!

8. Do you prefer working indoors in the lab or outdoors?

Being outdoors is great.

9. What equipment do you use?

I use a long pole with a cup at the end to take the water samples and I use a special hand-held meter with a probe attached by a wire. If you put the probe into the water sample, the meter shows how much dissolved oxygen is in the water. Fish and other living things need oxygen in the water to survive.



10. If you get a sample from a river or lake and it is badly polluted, what happens next?

I would take the sample back to the laboratory, where it would be tested. The local authority would be notified and they would try to find out who was responsible for causing the pollution.

11. In your own experience do you think people in Ireland care about their environment?

I think people are becoming more aware of the importance of lakes and rivers and value them more as part of the environment. Water quality is improving.



IMPACTS AND POLLUTION

Activity IP07

Continued →

12. We are on the Green Schools Committee in our school. We just received our green flag last year. Do you have any advice on caring for the environment for us?

Trying to reduce, re-use and recycle waste is important and is something that everyone can do.

13. What made you interested in the environment?

We are surrounded by beautiful landscape in Ireland, by beautiful hills, lakes and forests. Looking at the scenery around our country probably got me interested in the environment. One example is Lough Veagh in Donegal, which I visit to take samples.

14. What would you do if you saw someone polluting a lake or river?

I'd go over and ask them what they were putting into the water and ask them to stop. Depending on what happened I would contact the local authority or the Gardaí or a colleague in the EPA who would investigate further.

