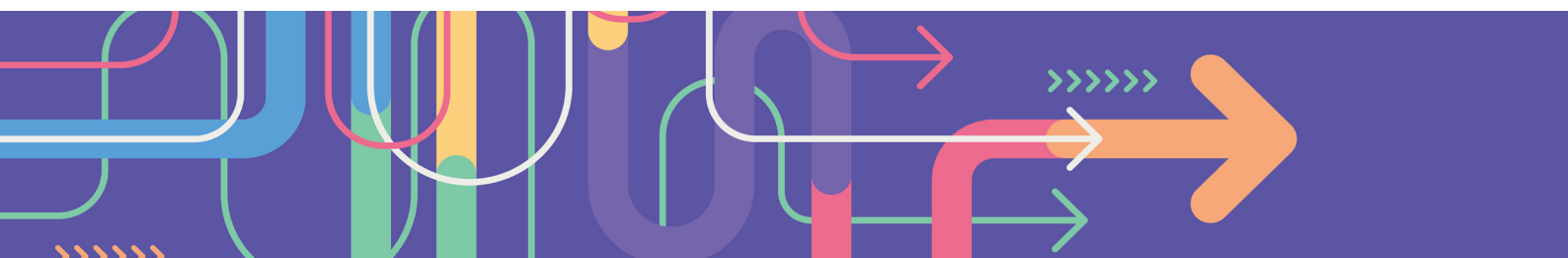




August 2024

Newsletter



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Upcoming Events

Marking and Moderation Workshops

- Physics & Psychology - Friday 16 August
- Nutrition & Chemistry - Friday 23 August
- Biology - Friday 30 August

See page 4 for more details.

7-10 Design and Assess Differentiated Tasks

Monday 19 August 2024

See page 4 for more details.

Effective Learning in Primary Science

Friday 6 September 2024

See page 4 for more details.

Members Networking & Nibbles

Wednesday 4 September 2024

See page 5 for more details.

Webinar: Navigating the Decon and Design Task at Stage I and II - Teaching and Assessment

Friday 13 September 2024

See page 5 for more details.

Early Career Teachers Conference

Program now available. See page 6 for more details.



@SASTAInc



@sascienceteachers



@SAScience

South Australian Science Teachers Association Inc.

Association member of the Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA)

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Newsletter copy deadlines 2024

(Advertising deadlines one week earlier)

Edition	Deadline
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November	18 October
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Advertising rates & booking form available online at www.sasta.asn.au

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Congratulations to Sarah Finney and Alexandra Fowler, who have recently been appointed to the SASTA Board to fill the remaining casual vacancies.

We look to working with them and keep an eye out in the next edition for a short profile!

Have you seen the new membership counter on the SASTA home page? We're so excited to have so many members as a part of our science community this year!

MEMBERSHIP STATS



158

Personal members



83

Early Career teachers



139

Corporate Member schools



1391

Corporate members



1632

Total members

From the President

Hello SASTA crew!



Welcome to the August edition of our newsletter. Hope you've all been well. We're over halfway through the year now, but SASTA is far from winding down its activities.

There are some exciting

competitions for students: Oliphant Science Awards, Mary Anning Art Prize and results from the Premier's Reading Challenge - STEM Challenge. We've also got the Early Career Teachers Conference coming up in October, and the STEM Conference in November.

This year's STEM Conference will be a collaborative effort between SASTA, MASA, EdTechSA, and DATTA-SA. Primary educators will also find something to enjoy at this year's conference, as we expand the program to include opportunities for them.

Reminder to log into the SASTA Members Area to stay in the loop with blog posts, resources, and events. Plus, if you haven't yet, check out our SASTA merch!

Finally, I would like to formally welcome our new SASTA Patron, Professor Craig Simmons, Chief Scientist for South Australia. Professor Craig Simmons is a leading groundwater scientist, and has worked in many roles across Australia, the US, UK, Europe, and China. SASTA is excited to have Professor Craig Simmons on board, supporting our initiatives and events across the state. Keep an eye out for an article in the next edition of the Journal from Professor Simmons!

As always, stay curious! Science is everywhere, and that should be reason enough to ask all the questions. For example, my hairdresser is constantly fielding questions from me about chemicals, ratios, how to know which hair type can take what, etc. It's a tough gig doing my hair!

Dina Matheson
SASTA President



STEM CONFERENCE

YEARS R-12 →

FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024
UNISA MAWSON LAKES

Harnessing STEM: Empowering Innovators →

Call for Workshops

We are excited to announce that this year's STEM Conference will be bigger and better than ever! We're expanding the event to include both primary and secondary years teachers in collaboration with the following associations:

- Design and Technology Teachers Association (DATTA - SA)
- EdTech SA
- Mathematical Association of South Australia (MASA)
- South Australian Science Teachers Association (SASTA)

This year's theme, "Harnessing STEM: Empowering Innovators," focuses on the potential of STEM to nurture hope, foster positivity, and build thriving communities.

The year's Conference will include specialised workshops for both Primary and Secondary Teachers. You have the option to submit the traditional hour-long workshop or a 30-minute workshop (which will be held in the last time slot of the day)

Submit your presentation by Sunday 22 September. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/STEMConference24>

Professional Learning for Term 3 & 4 2024

Marking and Moderation Workshops

Education Development Centre
9.00 am – 3.00 pm

These workshops will provide an opportunity for teachers to discuss assessment and the application of the performance standards to samples of work, as well having invaluable professional input with their own student samples. An opportunity to readjust marking standards prior to final moderation.

Physics

Friday 16 August

Presented by Michael Smith

Psychology

Friday 16 August

Presented by Carolyn Pinchbeck & Emma Beukema

Nutrition

Friday 23 August

Presented by Elizabeth Arthur & Lisa Cibich

Chemistry

Friday 23 August

Presented by Glen Arthur

Biology

Friday 30 August

Presented by Dr Kathy Adams

7-10 Design and Assess Differentiated Task

Monday 19 August | 9.00 am – 3.00 pm
Education Development Centre

Presenter: Jason Greenslade, Curriculum Leader Science, Westminster School

This session will only focus on Australian Curriculum 7-10 Science courses – these are so critical for making sure we are retaining students in Science in the senior years. It is essential that we equip students in these year levels with confidence and the skills needed to explain, analyse and be critical.

Effective Learning in Primary Science

Friday 6 September | 9.00 am – 3.00 pm
Education Development Centre

Presenter: Katrina Elliott, Mark Oliphant College

In this workshop primary teachers will develop a deeper understanding of Australian Curriculum V9.0.

Bring your creative mindset, engage in playfulness, using your imagination and intuition in learning. Learn the new core concepts for Science as a Human Endeavour and Science Inquiry strands through interweaving with Science Understanding strand. Using a conceptual progression within each strand and Key Ideas to design multiage classroom learning in science.

Design learning for students piquing curiosity, boosting metacognition and self-regulation.

Collectively we will consider: How to design tasks which move from surface to deep, to transfer of learning which stretches students to think in non-routine and unfamiliar contexts.

Years 7-10 Design Investigations: Time to play

Friday 1 November | 9.00 am – 3.00 pm
Westminster School

Presenter: Vera Dunaiski and Brayden Pullen, Westminster School

A hands-on practical session trialling different ideas for investigations suitable AC for 9.0 from Years 7 -10.

The workshop will involve guidelines on supporting students to deconstruct and design appropriate investigations. Participants will have the opportunity to trial and adapt methods designed around investigations such as:

- Flow rates of liquids
- Rope making
- Aerobic Respiration
- Fermentation
- Motion of objects
- Rates of chemical reactions

Leading in Science Workshop

Friday 15 November | 9.00 am – 3.00 pm
Westminster School

Presenter: Jason Greenslade, Curriculum Leader Science, Westminster School

This session is intended for people who are current science department leaders or aspire to be one! Come along and network with other like-minded individuals whilst learning some new skills which might help you either in your current role, in the future or to further enhance the learning and teaching at your school.

Some topics covered will include:

- Leading learning and teaching – some ways to organise work and processes in a modern science faculty
- Working consistently – tasks, pedagogy and process
- Managing staff performance in learning and teaching
- Review processes + processes for improvement

SACE Chemistry Design Investigations: Time to play

Friday 22 November | 9.00 am – 3.00 pm
Westminster School

Presenter: Vera Dunaiski, Westminster School

A hands-on practical session trialling different ideas for investigations suitable for Stage 1 and 2 Chemistry. The workshop will involve guidelines on supporting students to deconstruct and design appropriate investigations.

Participants will have the opportunity to trial and adapt methods designed around investigations such as:

- Nitrogen fertiliser retention in soils
- Kc values and concentration of reactants
- Properties of biopolymers
- Use of natural resins as adhesives
- Water disinfection
- Acid effects on shark teeth or marine shells
- Effectiveness of soaps and detergents
- Making and testing biodiesel

Members Events for Term 3 2024

Networking and Nibbles

Wednesday 4 September | 4.00pm - 5.30pm
Brickmakers Arms

We are excited to invite you to an exclusive afternoon of great conversation, networking, and refreshments.

Connect: Whether you're a seasoned member or new to the community, this event is the perfect chance to expand your network and enrich your professional journey.

Indulge: Indulge in a selection of snacks and your first drink is on us!

Your Feedback Matters: We value your input and insights! Take this opportunity to weigh in with your feedback and suggestions. Is there anything our association can be doing better? Your opinions shape the future of our community.

We can't wait to celebrate with you and express our gratitude for your continued support and contributions to our science community. See you at the Members Networking and Nibbles event!

MEMBERS FREE Webinar: Navigating the Decon and Design Task at Stage I and II – Teaching and Assessment

Friday 13 September | 9.00am - 12.00pm
Online

Presenter: Jason Greenslade, Curriculum Leader Science, Westminster School

This webinar will be a condensed version of the all day workshop in which we examine introduction and assessment of the design and deconstruction task to Stage I and II scientists.

Some live moderation and marking will take place and it will be interactively streamed from the Westminster Digital Delivery Lab.

Perfect for those people who missed out on the workshop earlier in the year!

Early Career Teachers Conference

11 October 2024
Nazareth College



Program now available!

SASTA is committed to providing opportunities for Early Career Teachers to network and learn with and from each other. In addition, we seek to provide you with access to expert education practitioners and leaders to ensure you have every opportunity to understand and succeed in this important profession.

This one-day conference provides graduates and teachers in the first few years of their career with an opportunity to share and reflect on their professional identity, professional practice, wellbeing, and to develop connections with other early career educators.

The Conference will include specialised workshops for both Primary and Secondary Teachers.

We have again included the 'Share-a-thon', where each presenter will share a strategy or tool during a 10-minute presentation and delegates will rotate around the room. We received great feedback from this format last year!

More details and full the program can be found here: www.sasta.asn.au/professional_learning/early_career_teachers_conference



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Science Agency

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Partner with a volunteer industry professional to inspire your students with real-world science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Individually
matched

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experiences

FREE to join, apply now!

csiro.au/STEM-Professionals-in-Schools



Supported by the Australian Government Department of Education



Early Career Teachers Conference Program

Session 1

Transition from Provisional to Full Registration, Adrian Dilger & Belinda Radcliffe, Catholic Education South Australia

Engagement

Wellbeing

Curriculum Focus

Practical Lessons

Session 2

2.1 Fostering Engagement: Strategies to Minimise Classroom Disruption

Michael Lincoln,
Catholic Education
South Australia

2.2 Building Resilience: Mental Health and Wellness Strategies for Early Career Teachers

Emily White & Michaela Parker,
Westminster School

2.3 Survival lesson planning

Lara Lang, Australian
Science & Mathematics
School

2.4 Can hands on science and assessment coexist in the junior/primary classroom?

Sarah Todd,
Coromandel Valley
Primary School

Session 3

3.1 All my students dislike science...27 strategies for engagement

Lara Lang, Australian
Science & Mathematics
School

3.2 Effective behaviour management and engagement strategies in the modern classroom

Andrew Lim

3.3 Earth is an Apple

Abby MacPherson,
Seaview High School
& Rebecca Mumford,
Greenhill Living

S2.4 Practical Design for Middle School Students

Sarah Wheeler,
Wilderness School

Session 4

4.1 Innovating the Classroom: Effective classroom tips to gamification & immersive assessment

Ross Riach, Trinity
College

4.2 Wellbeing for Learning

Dina Matheson,
Specialised Assistance
School for Youth (SASY)

4.3 AI in Science Classrooms

Jarrod Johnson,
Pulteney Grammar
School

4.4 Running Practical Work Efficiently

Jason Greenslade,
Westminster School

Session 5

5.1 Tips for increasing engagement and safety in Science

Lara Golding,
Marryatville High
School

5.2 AI Hacks

Amanda Salha,
Westminster School

5.3 SA Curriculum: Science

Anthea Ponte & Denise Rule,
Department for
Education

5.4 Practical Lessons - Achieving the Best Outcomes

Jane Hosking, St Francis
de Sales College

Share-a-thon

An informal setting for multiple presenters to share innovative teaching ideas. Each presenter will share a strategy or tool during a 10-minute presentation and delegates will rotate around the room.

Premier's Reading Challenge: STEM Challenge

SASTA and the Oliphant Science Awards were once again proud to support the Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC) to support this year's STEM Reading and Design Challenge.



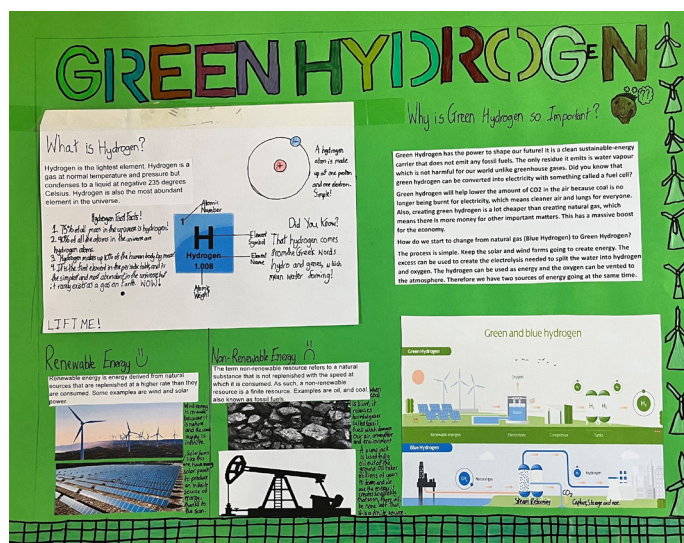
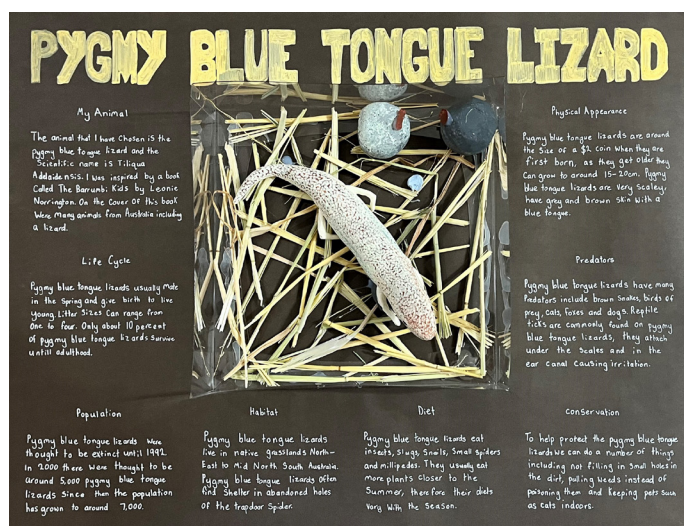
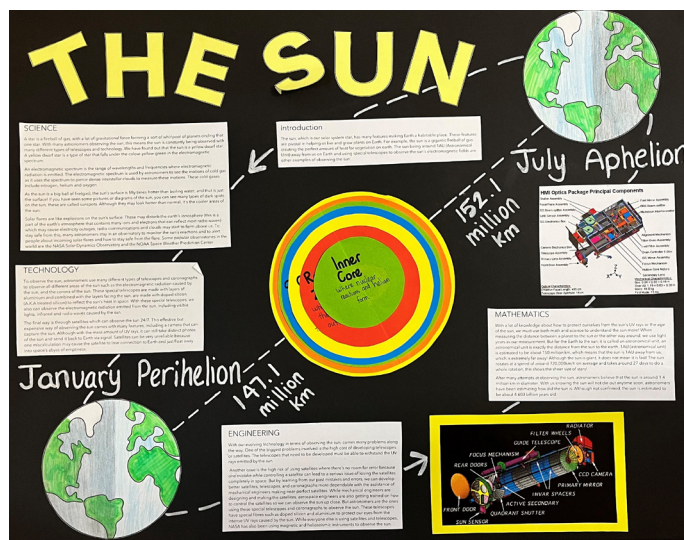
The challenge encourages students to read about Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) in the lead up to National Science Week. Students were asked to draw, invent, or design in response to reading from a wide range of science-themed books from the Premier's Reading Challenge booklist.

Since the Premier's Reading Challenge STEM competition began in 2017 with reading books about science, the sub-categories of Space and Nature have been added. Along with Green Hydrogen, in recognition of the ground-breaking work South Australia is undertaking in the sustainable energy arena.

The competition received an overwhelming response with a total of 4,592 entries submitted from across the state, which is a 38% increase from last year! From this pool of talent, the judges carefully handpicked 46 exceptional entries across various age groups.

This year SASTA was delighted to share the inspirational work of the 12 winners and 34 runners-up at Science Alive!

This competition continues to grow due to the many schools, teachers and students who have contributed with such enthusiasm to this initiative, along with the project partners who have helped make it possible.



Questacon

Engineering is Elementary



Are you looking for an exciting, hands-on way to achieve assessable, cross-curricular learning outcomes?

Apply now for our FREE *Engineering is Elementary* Professional Learning Workshop: **To Get to the Other Side: Designing Bridges**. All participants receive a FREE teaching resource kit with all the materials needed to immediately implement *Engineering is Elementary*, and join our national community of practice.

Our interactive workshops build teaching confidence and capability with the opportunity to:

- Gain hands-on experience with activities easily differentiated for K-10.
- Discuss how to implement activities using a variety of teaching strategies.
- Meet professional engineers and discuss different role-models.
- Empower students to create solutions for real world problems using the “Ask, Imagine, Plan, Create & Improve” steps.

Any questions? Email us at:
teachers@questacon.edu.au

For more information, check out:
<https://bit.ly/3VSJRhL>

Free Professional Learning Workshops in September!

**IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS
FROM 9 - 3 PM**

Northern Adelaide - 2 September

Underdale - 4 September

Apply here!



2024 Oliphant Science Awards

Student registrations for the 2024 Oliphant Science Awards (OSA) closed on 20 May, with electronic submissions for Citizen Science, Multimedia, Science Writing, Scientific Inquiry and reports for Programming, Apps & Robotics due in June

- 27 volunteers judged the Citizen Science, Multimedia, Science Writing and Scientific Inquiry entries (total 579 entries)

The Programming, Apps & Robotics Judging Day was held on Saturday 27 July at Trinity Gardens School. Students made appointments to meet with the judges to demonstrate their projects.

- 54 students made appointments to see 9 judges across the day



Programming, Apps & Robotics Judging Day at Trinity Gardens School



Chelsea Tran, St Thomas Catholic School, Goodwood, Crystal Investigation 5-6



Piper Binstead, Kangaroo Island Community Education, Models & Inventions 5-6



SASTA partnered with Science Alive! to host the Oliphant Science Awards onsite competition again this year. It was a very busy week for SASTA staff & OSA volunteers including:

- **Wednesday - Project delivery day**
 - 1502 onsite projects delivered
- **Thursday - Onsite judging & Sponsor judging**
 - 65 volunteers onsite to judge Crystal Investigation, Games, Models & Inventions, Photography and Poster entries
 - 40 sponsor prizes were awarded
 - Photographs taken of 194 winning entries
- **Friday - STEM Day Out at Science Alive!**
- **Saturday & Sunday - Science Alive!**

There were 4 SASTA staff onsite across 6 days and we did a total of 335,479 steps!!

At Open Day all Models & Inventions entries plus the winning entries for the other 9 categories were on display. We had iPads and TVs set up to view the electronic entries.

Hosting the Open Day at Science Alive! is a fantastic opportunity to showcase students' work and increase the awareness of the competition.

Students could find out if they were prize winners at Open Day, however they won't find out their place until the Presentation Ceremony on Friday 18 October. Prize winning students will receive an invitation to the Presentation Ceremony via their coordinator.

The Virtual Open Day on the OSA website will be released on Friday 16 August! This is such a great opportunity to celebrate the enormous effort students put into their projects and provide inspiration for future entries! The past 2 years of winning OSA entries can now be viewed on the Oliphant Science Awards website under the 'About' tab.



The Australian Institute of Physics joined us again this year, running a Come and Try activity with lasers and we had a palaeo-artist onsite as part of our Mary Anning display to help kids draw prehistoric life.

This year we added a few new elements to our display including floor decals to help kids choose which Oliphant Science Awards category would suit them best. And a chance for students to write their own story about Green Hydrogen to support the Premier's Reading Challenge: STEM Challenge display.



Thank you to our generous sponsors, volunteers, school coordinators, judges and committee members without whom the Oliphant Science Awards would not be possible!



This event also could not run without the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards team. Between us, we have 29 years of experience working on the Oliphant Science Awards!

Tegan - 7 years
Kate - 11 years
Rebecca - 9 years
Isabelle - 2 years
We look forward to working with you all again next year!



**Virtual Open Day live on
Friday 16 August
oliphantscienceawards.com.au**

Mary Anning Art Prize

The aim of the Mary Anning Art Prize is to have young South Australian artists create an original piece of artwork that tells us something about the prehistoric life of South Australia. It is essential, to be eligible, that the artwork explores an element of South Australia's rich and remarkable prehistoric past, and that the artist lives in South Australia. To explore and illustrate our own past is to better know who we are as South Australians, and to better understand our unique place in the history of life.

While all visual art-forms are eligible, each entry must be presented in the form of a single photograph of the artwork.

What makes a successful entry?

- Scientific accuracy, creativity, and originality
- The best art isn't just a picture, or a sculpture. It tells a story!

Submissions are now open and close on Monday 28 October.



Entry categories:

- Reception to Year 2
- Year 3 to Year 5
- Year 6 to Year 8

Prizes

1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes will be awarded in each year group category.

Full details of the competition can be found on the SASTA website: www.sasta.asn.au

View the 2023 winning entries at: www.sasta.asn.au/student_activities/mary-anning-art-prize

BIOLOGY: LEVELS OF LIFE

Brian LeCornu and Tony Diercks

Biology: Levels of Life - Textbook

Printed version - \$64.95 e-book \$16.00

This textbook provides detailed coverage of all the content (Science Understanding) of the SACE Stage 2 Biology subject outline. It is divided into four topics, with each topic presented in chapters designed to make the material easy to follow. Each chapter concludes with a set of Study Questions. QR codes and hyperlinks connect to videos and scientific articles. The e-book is up-to-date for the 2025 school year.

A complimentary 15 month subscription to the e-book is available with every printed version.

Biology: Levels of Life - Workbook

Printed version - \$24.40 e-book \$9.50

Written specifically to complement the textbook, the workbook covers all Science Understandings of the Biology subject outline. It can be used in conjunction with the textbook, or on its own as an aid for understanding and revision. By completing answers to the workbook questions, students will develop their knowledge and understanding of biological principles and concepts. In the digital version, students can enter answers on their device (and save them).

A special version of the e-workbook that includes suggested answers is available for \$49.00.

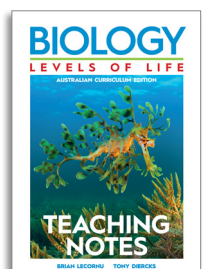
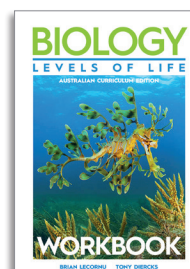
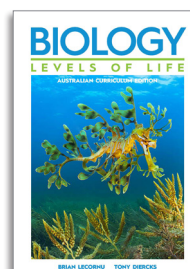
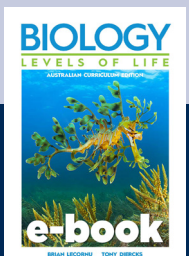
Biology: Levels of Life - Teaching Notes \$120.00

Teachers will find the Teaching Notes invaluable in ensuring that all Science Understandings are covered for each of the four topics. There are teaching tips throughout, as well as additional information. Answers to Workbook questions will assist teachers in explaining concepts to students. Spiral bound to lie flat on the desk, and printed on high-quality spill-resistant gloss paper.

**BOTH E-BOOKS
UPDATED FOR 2025**

The Biology: Levels of Life Textbook AND Workbook now available as **INTERACTIVE e-books!**

For full details visit the SASTA website.



Reflections from Retired Science Educators



Peter Walwyn

Imagine walking into a classroom where the only AV equipment available was a blackboard and some white chalk, and the only method of producing printed notes for a class of 35 secondary school students was using a spirit

duplicator. This was the scenario when I began my career teaching in New Zealand. I moved there at the start of 1980 for “a year’s experience and some travel”, only to stay there for 23 years. There was a lot of experience and not enough travel.

As a teacher of Science, I recall that there were more opportunities for classes to participate in some memorable experiments. It was not uncommon for classes to be involved in reducing “red lead” oxide (highly toxic), blood typing (students’ blood, of course), dissections, and all sorts of other unforgettable activities that are now considered dangerous in the classroom. There was no consideration of risk assessments beyond common sense, and “PPE” sometimes meant a bar of soap for washing your hands after the lesson.

At the end of each year, 3 hour written exams were the only yardstick against which the whole year’s work was measured. There was no online work and no internal assessment. If a student had a bad day, they could face the possibility of having to repeat the course – even from Year 10.

At the end of 2023 I decided that it was a good opportunity to retire from full-time teaching, though I still enjoy the contact in the classroom when I do any relief work.

Before I finished, I was happily using touchscreens instead of blackboards, all my lesson plans were online (thanks, SEQTA), and there was not a printed mark book in sight. I guess it is possible for an old dog to learn new tricks.

As a product of the advances in IT, the profession and the expectations placed on teachers and students have evolved hugely in the past 43 years. I admire and respect anyone who has chosen this career and I hope that they will find it as enjoyable and rewarding as I have.



Bronte Nichols

A career as an Earth Science educator

.....The introduction of the Australian Curriculum, Earth and Environmental Science in 2018 replaced Geology in the senior curriculum. My last SACE Geology field trip was in 2017 to the Flinders Ranges

and thanks to Jim Gehling, my class was able to spend a whole day out on the Nilpena Fossil fields observing the various rock layers and fossils within. As one of the writers of this new curriculum I was keen to have a go at teaching the course but had to wait until 2022 to teach the Stage 2 course to the first group of Year 12 students at Adelaide Botanic High School. The Stage 2 2023 cohort was my last year teaching.



Sheryl Hoffmann

After 10 years working in the tertiary education sector, I moved into a secondary school as a laboratory

assistant. 18 months later, I moved to another school, where I ended up staying for 31 years. I worked up to Laboratory Manager and a salary that allowed me to retire, which I did at the end of January this year.

I’ve always seen my job as assisting teachers, so they could do the best for their students. To do this it was important to continuously learn and network with like-minded colleagues. I enjoyed many SASTA Annual Conferences and used 14 CONASTA’s to travel around Australia.....

Check the full article on the SASTA Blog:
www.sasta.asn.au/about_us/sasta_blog

Celebrating Primary Years Science Teachers

There are many teachers of science in Primary Schools, classroom teachers and science specialists. We asked a few primary teachers why they became teachers, what their day typically looks like and any advice they would give.

Andrew Harris, Pilgrim School

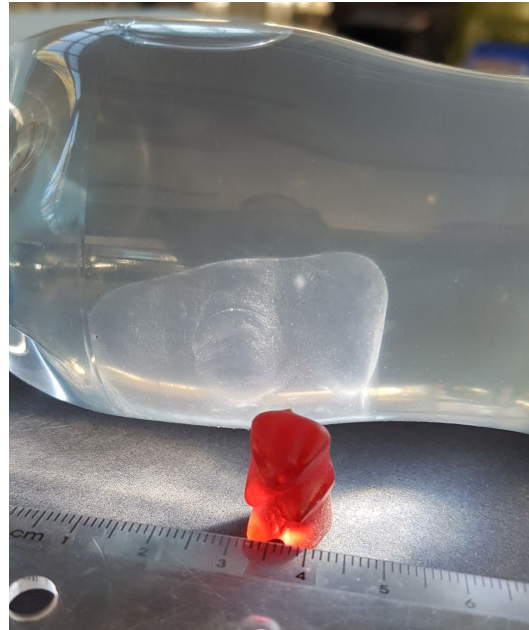
What inspired you to become a primary science teacher?

Prior to teaching, I obtained a BSc in Conservation and Park Management, and worked in a range of different habitat assessment and monitoring jobs. Science has always been something I've been very interested in, especially rocks, minerals, beetles, butterflies and birds. At each school I've worked at, if there was already a Science department then I tried to engage them with my classes in as many ways possible, and if there wasn't, then I worked to promote Science in the school and events like Science Week and the Oliphant Science Awards.

At my current school, I have developed a Science display with removable drawers and displays that teachers can take back to their classes based around the Australian Curriculum units. I find children of almost all ages have a real fascination for one or more areas of science as they move through primary and high school, and as teachers we are blessed with the amount of knowledge they come with through what they have picked up from YouTube (even if the "Science" is not 100 per cent accurate, it still generates great thinking and discussion).

What advice would you give fellow primary science teachers?

Have fun! Science already comes with the expectation of "magic" happening before our eyes, so make the most of feeding that passion. I love the quote that goes something like "when you conduct an experiment, you are really asking the world a question. And the world will always provide an answer, but it may not always be the one you expect, and will usually lead you to ask another question." Be open to going in different directions with plans and enjoy the adventure.



This picture is of an accidental discovery that turned into a great experiment. We had been applying heat to gummy bears, and a student said we should put one in some water to cool it off. For a joke, we dropped it into a bottle of water, which I then completely forgot about for 3 weeks! The result was a hard red gummy bear quadrupled in size and turned completely transparent without changing the colour of the water. It tasted revolting, by the way, but it certainly generated lots of discussion!

Aaron Lindsay, Brighton Primary School



What inspired you to become a primary science teacher?

I've always had an interest in science from a young age. Although I never pursued a career in science, I have grown to love

sharing my passion for science and inspiring young students to also develop their curiosity.

What does a typical day at school look like for you?

I'm a classroom based primary school teacher, so I am teaching most of the curriculum to my year 5 students. Science isn't a specialist subject at my site, so I like to assist other educators in their delivery of science to their classes and also coordinate the school in the Oliphant Science Awards.

What advice would you give fellow primary science teachers?

Follow your passion and remember that the spark in a child's mind to pursue science as a career starts from a young age.

Alexandra Fowler, Woomera Area School



What inspired you to become a primary science teacher?

I honestly never wanted to be a teacher. The thing is I love sharing my knowledge and learning new things. Growing

up I believed that the reason my mum made me do my homework and not fake sickies was because she was a teacher and knew the tricks. It wasn't until much later in life I realised she understood the tricks and had good morals, especially around education. I did animal science and wanted to be vet. After seeing the workload of veterinary students, I quickly changed my mind. Instead I got really excited about an Education Officer job I applied for. I was a good candidate but did not win the position. The person who got the position had a teaching degree. So, I followed that path. I still didn't want to be in the classroom but during my student teaching I enjoyed getting to know the students. I'm trained as a high school teacher but for the past 9.5 years I've been at Woomera. We are a small remote school with only 2-3 teachers and over my time here we have never had more than 20 students. The only way for everyone to get NIT is by teaching all years. For the past year and a half, we have been largely a primary school (preschool to year 4) with only 1 high school student.

I love being the science teacher, exploring the world with kids at all levels. Its amazing how much we cover in a lesson. Being so small and being in a mixed aged class we are able to cover a lot of concept and delve into ideas. I love how the junior years have such open concepts and when working with older students you can explore topics much more deeply.

What advice would you give fellow primary science teachers?

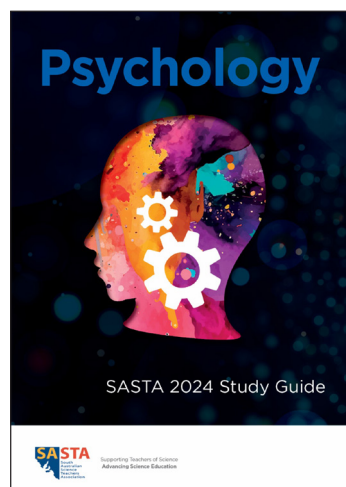
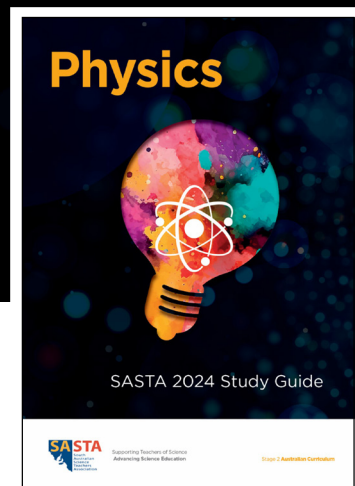
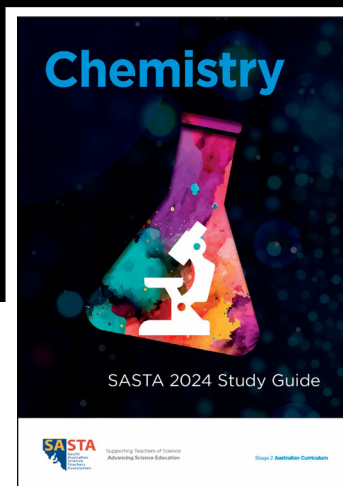
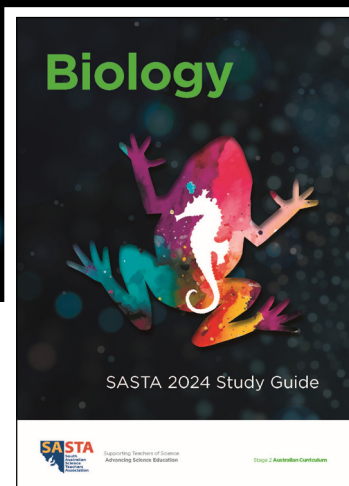
First and foremost, enjoy what you do! If you become bored or stressed change it. I love following teachable moments, we will stop a lesson and I will chase the wasp around the room for 5 minutes, then we will study and identify the wasp species before I release it. Keep jars or little tanks around to catch the creatures, teach kids we can't keep them but we can look and remind them of safety concerns (stings, bites, disease).

Secondly have a collection. This collection can be anything you're interested in that can be studied. For me my passion is animals so my collection includes things like bones, bone replicas, dead insects, random animal books, identification books (cost a fortune – second hand shops are God sends), picture books (wonderful wasps is great), and feathers. This is when craft jars are really useful.

And finally, focus on the achievement standards over the content descriptors. The descriptors are great for working out what you can teach but the achievement standards are what they have to show. Ecosystems can be as small as microorganisms, or as old as dinosaurs. Heat can be explored through little ovens or why we need hats and water at play times. Push and pull can be in the playground with swings and slides or in a lab with marbles and cars.

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