Citizen Science at Home

Primary Audience: Any
Adult assistance recommended for children under 14

Video: Watch the video Science Now: You can Contribute to Scientific Research

Introduction:
Watch the video above. Did you know that you don’t have to be a trained scientist to participate in cutting-edge scientific research? There are a number of tools out there to get started in Citizen Science. And the time commitment can be as short or as long as you’d like. For some projects, you might be helping to gather data. For others, you can help to analyze or categorize data. Some even make it into a game!

Below, you will find stories to read about citizen scientists who have made a real impact on scientific research. Read and watch these stories to see that science is truly for EVERYONE! Then, continue to Part 2 to begin your citizen science journey.

Part 1: Learn about Citizen Scientists
Materials:
- Computer or phone with internet access

Instructions:
1. Use the links below to investigate one or more examples of citizen scientists.
2. Based on what you learned, reflect on the following questions on your own or in a group: Who can be a citizen scientist? What sorts of things can citizen scientists study? What do citizen scientists gain from their participation in citizen science? What does the world gain from citizen scientists?

Videos about Citizen Scientists:
- Citizen Scientist Hanny van Arkel, a Dutch biology teacher, discovered an astronomical object while participating in the citizen science project Galaxy Zoo – and that object has now been named Hanny’s Voorwerp!
- Citizen Scientist Kirill Dudko, a teen from Donetsk, Ukraine, spotted an event never before seen on camera – a female elephant seal deep diving to catch a hagfish for dinner.
- The New York Botanical Garden harnesses citizen science with a team of retirees who track pollinators in their native plant garden.
- Citizen Scientist Sara Edmunds started participating in citizen science in 2013. Her experience in citizen science inspired her to pursue her Masters Degree in Biology.


Articles about Citizen Scientists:

- A group of seventh grade students in Cottonwood, California, participated in a citizen science program called the Mars Student Imaging Program and found a cave on Mars.
- In 2010, Citizen Scientists Chris and Helen Colvin from Ames, Iowa and Daniel Gebhardt from Mainz, Germany, are credited with the discovery of a rotating pulsar using citizen science project Einstein@Home.

Part 2: Be a Citizen Scientist

Materials:

- Computer or phone with internet access

Instructions: Use the resources below to find and participate in a citizen science project that speaks to you!

Citizen Science Resources:

- Try a new project every week! COSI posts Citizen Science of the Week projects on www.cosi.org/cosiconnects.
- Want to explore on your own? Try looking around on SciStarter, where you can filter citizen science projects by topic and location.
- Looking for all-online citizen science projects? Check out the activities on www.zooniverse.org.

Additional Resources: Reach out to the COSI Department of Science Content if you have any questions or comments, or if you want to share your citizen science story!