

## No geeks allowed

### 1 QUICK QUIZ

Answer the questions and then compare your answers in class.

- |                       |                            |                           |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Science is for ... | 2. Science is ...          | 3. I use science ...      |
| a) ... girls.         | a) ... interesting.        | a) ... all the time.      |
| b) ... boys.          | b) ... boring.             | b) ... quite often.       |
| c) ... geeks.         | c) ... ok, but not for me. | c) ... very occasionally. |

### 2 WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

public transport	powerful	exhibition	wireless device
work	organization	colds	invention
infections	properties	discover	measures
			geeks

1. Match the words from the article with the definitions. The paragraph number will help you find the correct word.

- a) People that other people think are boring or strange because they are only interested in computers. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 1)
- b) A public show where interesting things are put for people to go and look at them. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 1)
- c) Finds out the size or amount of something. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 3)
- d) A group of people who have a shared purpose or interest. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 4)
- e) A machine, tool, or system that someone has made for the first time. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 5)
- f) To find out something that you did not know before. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 5)
- g) To operate or function. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 6)
- h) A machine that uses electronic signals to communicate. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 8)
- i) Very strong. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 8)
- j) Buses, trains, etc. that everyone can use. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 9)
- k) Qualities or features. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 11)
- l) Minor illnesses that block your nose and make you cough. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 12)
- m) Illnesses that are caused by bacteria or by a virus. \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 12)

2. Translate these science-related words from the article into your language and look up their meanings.

special words	in my language
acid	
biology	
black hole	
chemist	
gravity	
pH balance	
physics	
research	
science	
scientist	
space	

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### NO GEEKS ALLOWED

by Talitha Linehan

1 "When I was younger, I hated science. I thought scientists were geeks," says **Aisling Judge**, now 16, who won 5,000 euros when she was 14 at Ireland's BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (YSTE).

2 But like many kids, Aisling grew up thinking science was boring. Now she knows that science is an important part of everyone's life. Without science, we wouldn't have computers, phones, the Internet or any of the medicine that saves lives every day.

3 In her science lessons, Aisling learned about the pH balance, which measures how much acid is in food. She decided to use this to make something that changes colour to show when food is bad. Aisling couldn't believe it when she won first prize at the YSTE. "I felt like a movie star!" she says.

4 Since then, Aisling has been working with an organization which helps kids to become interested in science. "I try to teach kids that science is about real life in the real world. Every kid with a Nintendo is using science. They just don't know it."

5 The winner of the 2005 BT YSTE was 18-year-old **Patrick Collison**, from south-western Ireland. Patrick's invention was a new computer-programming language called Croma. Patrick told us, "Computer projects allow us to make many new things. There's still so much to discover."

6 **Everything is physics**  
How does the universe work? What's a black hole? The science that answers these questions is physics. 18-year-old **Lin Fei** from Canada, won a gold medal at the 2006 International Physics Olympiads (IPHO) in Singapore. Now, Lin studies physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

7 **Tell us why physics is so fascinating.**  
"I couldn't stop thinking about black holes when I was younger. A black hole is a place in time and space where gravity is so strong that nothing gets out – not even light. Physics is the only subject that really helps us understand the universe. Physics is so interesting because *everything* is physics!"

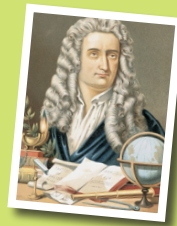
8 **The future is bright**  
As a kid, 19-year-old **Andrew Nowell** loved building with Lego. Now Andrew, from England, is inventing

computer systems that could change the future! In 2006, Andrew won \$18,000 for his project, a handheld wireless device that can control a computer. Andrew's project could help make handheld computers much more powerful and change the way people use them.

9 Andrew, who's now studying engineering at Cambridge University, tells us how he thinks future inventions will change the world. "In our lifetime, there will be more and better robots. Computers will become a bigger part of our homes and lives. We'll have things like lights that turn on when we walk into a room. And we won't have to do things like cleaning any more. There'll be flying cars, but not many people will use them. The future is small electric cars and better public transport. We'll have more wireless power and Internet everywhere. Instead of mobile phones, we'll have phones that connect to the Internet so people can call each other for free."

#### Science superstars

Every teen we spoke to said their favourite scientists included **Albert Einstein** (1879–1955) and **Isaac Newton** (1643–1727). In 1999, the US magazine Time called Albert Einstein the "Person of the Century".



#### It's our world too!

11 Not long ago, most scientists were men. Today, many women and girls work in science. **Amanda Kortum**, 18, from the US state of Montana, won first prize for her antibacterial-properties project. Now Amanda studies biology at the University of Montana.

12 "People use the echinacea flower against colds. But nobody had tried to find out if it has antibacterial properties. I also looked at eucalyptus. I grew bacteria on special plates and put the echinacea and eucalyptus oils on the plates to see if the oils stopped the bacteria from growing. I found that both oils stop some bacteria – so both can help stop colds and other infections.

13 When I go to science competitions, I meet many other girls who are working on projects. I think boys and girls think about science differently. My way of doing things is just different.

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### 3 FIND THE INFORMATION

Find the second half of each sentence to complete the information from the article.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Aisling used to think that               | differently to boys.                                    |
| 2. Now she knows that                       | food is still good to eat.                              |
| 3. Aisling's invention checks whether       | drive small, electric cars.                             |
| 4. We all use                               | science is important.                                   |
| 5. Patrick's thinks there is                | science every day.                                      |
| 6. Lin Fei is interested in                 | scientists were geeks.                                  |
| 7. Andrew thinks that in the future we will | plants can help you when you have a cold.               |
| 8. Andrew has invented                      | still a lot to discover.                                |
| 9. Amanda's project showed that             | a handheld wireless device that can control a computer. |
| 10. Amanda thinks that girls do science     | black holes.  |

### 4 TEEN TALK

**Geek.** A *geek* is someone who other people think is boring or strange because they are only interested in computers. *Geeky* can also be used to describe something.

Do you know anyone who is a bit of a *geek*?

What things could you describe as *geeky*?

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(Tip: to get some ideas, type *geeky* into an Internet search engine.)


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### 5 DISCUSSION: A NEW INVENTION


Andrew talks about computers and robots in the home (paragraph 9).

If you could invent a robot for your home, what would it do? Write notes and, if possible, draw a diagram. Then present your ideas to the class.

*My robot can ...*



*This is important because ...*



### 6 WEBQUEST: SCIENCE SUPERSTARS “WALL OF FAME”

Choose one of the scientists from paragraph 10.

Find information about your scientist on the Internet. For example:

- When and where was he born?
- Where did he live and work?
- Why is he famous?
- When and where did he die?
- What did he look like?

Work in pairs or small groups and make posters or PowerPoint presentations about the scientist’s work and life.

### 7 CLASS VOTE: OUR FAVOURITE SCIENCE SUPERSTAR

Say who your favourite scientist is and why.

*My favourite scientist is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_*

Now vote to see who the class’s favourite scientist is.

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### KEY

**2**

1. a) geeks  
b) exhibition  
c) measures`  
d) organization  
e) invention  
f) discover  
g) work  
h) wireless device  
i) powerful  
j) public transport  
k) properties  
l) colds  
m) infections

**3**

1. Aisling used to think that scientists were geeks.
2. Now she knows that science is important.
3. Aisling's invention checks whether food is still good to eat.
4. We all use science every day.
5. Patrick thinks there is still a lot to discover.
6. Lin Fei is interested in black holes.
7. Andrew thinks that in the future we will drive small, electric cars.
8. Andrew has invented a handheld wireless device that can control a computer.
9. Amanda's project showed that plants can help you when you have a cold.
10. Amanda thinks that girls do science differently to boys.