

Why aren't there more women in science?



- 1- Read the first paragraph of the article and find 4 facts about women in science.

According to the campaigning group, WISE (women in science and engineering), in the UK, only 12.8% of jobs in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) are held by women. Similarly, the proportion of boys studying science at school leaving age is still much higher than girls, especially Physics, where 1 it's about 78%. 2This continues at university, 3where 52% of male undergraduates take a science degree, compared with 40% of women. The situation is not dissimilar in the United States, where only 1/5 of physics degrees are awarded to women. But why is this?

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.

- 2- Make a list of possible reasons why there are fewer women studying and working in science than men.

I think there are fewer women in science than men because...

- 3- Now read the rest of the article. Which is the main idea in each paragraph?

It seems that girls are often put off early by an assumption that girls don't do science, especially chemistry and physics. The scientists in films and on TV are usually men (though 4 this does now appear to be changing), and when

female scientists do make it onto TV, there is still often a focus on 5 their looks, rather than their science. Research by the University of Cardiff analysed 51 newspaper interviews with scientists, and found that half of the profiles of women referred to their looks, compared with 21% of the male profiles.

Main idea:

Women may have what is known as an 'internal bias', causing them to under-value their own abilities or intelligence. Research has shown that if women are told that men do better in maths tests than women, this can affect their score negatively.

Main idea:

And there is certainly also some external bias. A study carried out by the American Institute of Physics, looking at 15,00 physicists from 130 different countries, found that almost always the female scientists received less money, less space to work in and fewer opportunities to travel. Another study showed that both male and female professors were more likely to give the job to a male candidate than a female one, when given the same curriculum vitae, with a male or female name attached. They also planned to pay the 'male' candidate more.

Main idea:

Finally, childcare may also be an issue. Probably because fewer women work in science, there is often some difficulty in taking time out to have children, or in working flexible hours to fit around their needs.

Main idea:

4- Read the following statements. Are they true (T) or false (F)?

- There are much more boys than girls studying science and Physics.
- Women tend to believe in their abilities to work or study science.
- When female scientists appear on TV, there's usually more focus on their look rather than on their work.
- Males are more likely to be given a job even if they have a similar curriculum vitae than a woman.
- Most male scientists leave their jobs when they become parents so as to take care of their children.