

National Science Appreciation Day

March 26 is National Science Appreciation Day, and it's the perfect opportunity to consider the ways humanity has benefitted from research, innovation, and technology. Why March 26? Because on that day in 1953, medical researcher and virologist Jonas Salk announced he had succeeded in testing a vaccine for polio, a highly contagious virus that attacks the nervous systems. Medical advancements and scientific achievements like Salk's polio vaccine have saved billions of lives, increased human life expectancy, and improved quality of life for people across the globe.

Here are some activities you can do this National Science Appreciation Day to celebrate. Don't forget to download our National Science Appreciation Day bundle too!

Study a Scientist

Choose a scientist, research, or inventor whose work has benefited humankind. Research their life, career, and achievements, then do one of the following:

- Write a short biography about them
- Create a mockup of a social media profile for them. What would they post about? Who would they follow? What profile picture and cover photo would they want to use? And don't forget to write their bio!
- Make a collage, scrapbook, or vision board related to their field of science – be sure to consider what might have kept them inspired in their work and how they might have felt about the problem they were trying to solve.
- Design trading cards for them. Look at examples baseball cards or cards from trading card games like Magic: The Gathering and think about what stats or other elements you should include. Bonus points for snappy flavor text!

Make a Timeline

Timelines are a great way to develop a sense of how important events relate to each other and help you visualize how earlier developments influence later ones. All you need to do is:

- Decide the topic your timeline will cover. This can be broad (such as "Life-Saving Innovations and Discoveries" or more narrow (like "Natural Disaster Prevention and Risk Mitigation Innovations Throughout History").
- Determine the time period you'll cover
- Identify important events. Make sure you include:
 - Date
 - A brief description
 - Major contributors
 - Significance in history
- Organize your events chronologically
- Choose your format – you can make a paper timeline or a digital timeline with tools like [Canva](#), [Venngage](#), or [Tiki-Toki](#).
- Design your timeline and get creative! Add pictures, illustrations, or graphics for some extra flair.

Make an Infographic

Select a scientific advancement – you can use our list or pick a different one – research it, and create a poster or infographic about it. Make note of details, including important dates, names of scientists, researchers, and other key players, what problem it aimed to solve, and how it has impacted humanity. Consider what design choices, like layout, color, graphics, and other visual elements you'll want to include. Look at examples of [other infographics](#) for inspiration!

Be an Innovator

Identify a global problem that impacts human longevity or quality of life and brainstorm ways that science, technology, or engineering could address that problem. You could design and draw a picture or schematic of your innovation, write a description of it, or you could even build a 3D prototype of it. Examples might include a new type of water filtration system, an earthquake resistant building, or an improved prosthetic limb.

Write a Memoir

Write about a way that science has improved your life or the life of someone you love. This could be medicine you take to stay healthy, a life-saving medical procedure a family member has had, a feature in your car that has kept you safe in an accident, or something else entirely. Keep in mind that memoirs are meant to be personal and reflective, so do your best to describe your feelings and build an emotional connection with your reader.

Breaking News

Imagine you are a news reporter and your job is to announce a major scientific breakthrough – maybe you've gone back in time and are reporting on an event that's already happened, like the eradication of smallpox, or maybe you're in the future reporting on an event that has yet to happen, like a vaccine for HIV. Write a script, put on a costume, and record yourself at the news desk or on the scene. Pay close attention to the 5 Ws of journalism:

- *Who* is involved in your story?
- *What* is the main topic you're reporting?
- *Where* does your story take place?
- *When* does your story take place?
- *Why* are you reporting on the story, and *why* is it important to the viewer?

Photo Essay

Our world is filled with items, tools, and products that use science to make our lives safer. Think about which things you use or encounter in your everyday life and take pictures of them. Things to keep in mind:

- **Your photos should tell a story** – this could be a narrative (like a daily snapshot of how science impacts your life from morning to night) or something more thematic (like a photo retrospective of innovations you're most grateful for). Knowing what kind of story you want to tell will determine what sort of photos you should focus on.
- **Take more photos than you think you need** – aim for at least 100 photos so you have plenty to choose from when finalizing your narrative. Make sure you capture a variety of subjects and change up your angles and lighting to keep things interesting.

- **Edit judiciously** – as you select the photos to include in your photo essay, think critically not just about whether your photos fit your narrative, but whether they are good quality photos as well. It's equally important that your photo essay be visually compelling.
- After you've selected your favorite photos, you may want to write captions for some or all of them. Thoughtful captions are key to a well-crafted photo essay! Keep your captions brief and don't describe the obvious – instead, use your captions to provide context a viewer might not get from just looking at an image.

Creative writing

Use your imagination and write a short story, flash fiction, or journal entry related to science and its impact on human lives. Here are some prompts to get you started:

- You've got a time machine and you can travel to any time in the past, bringing one piece of technology with you to help mankind. When and where would you go and what would you bring? What kind of reactions do you get from the people you encounter?
- Write a journal entry from the perspective of a kid your age during the polio epidemic in the 1950s. How do you feel about the new vaccine developed by Jonas Salk? Do you know anyone affected by polio? What is life like before and after the vaccine?
- Imagine you live in a small town in the early 1900s before modern sanitation. People are getting sick from contaminated water. One day, scientists introduce a new system for clean drinking water. Describe how life changes in your town.
- You are a lab assistant in Alexander Fleming's laboratory in 1928 when he accidentally discovers penicillin. Write a letter to a friend describing what happened and why you think this discovery might change the world.
- It's 1895, and a doctor has just invited you to see the brand-new invention called the X-ray machine. You watch as someone's hand is scanned, and for the first time, you can see their bones. Write about your experience and how people around you react.

Other Resources Around the Web

[ScienceSaves](#), a hub for all things National Science Appreciation Day

[The Living Century by Steven Johnson](#) from the Pulitzer Center

[Twice as long – life expectancy around the world](#) from Our World in Data

[How we conquered the deadly smallpox virus](#), a Ted-Ed from Simona Zompi

[The Secret Life Of Scientists & Engineers](#), a video series from PBS Learning Media