

Being a Professional Mathematician

Role models in mathematics – worksheet

- 1) Did you have a role model in mathematics when you were young? Do you now?

Do your friends have role models in mathematics?

Did or do you have role models for other important aspects of your life, for example in sport or music?

Do people you know who are not mathematicians have role models in their fields?

Can you give examples of people who might be role models for young footballers, athletes, musicians, celebrities?

Can you suggest people who might be suitable role models for young mathematicians?

- 2) Listen to the case study interviews at www.BeingAMathematician.org where mathematicians Danny Brown, Nira Chamberlain, Rosemary Dyson, Sue Merchant, Mason Porter and Gwyneth Stallard talk about role models. Note that their personal experiences have been very different.

Do their comments suggest that role models are less important for white men than for others?

What do you conclude about the circumstances in which people benefit from role models?

Is the lack of female or black role models in mathematics a factor in the continuing imbalance in the profession?

If role models make a difference to members of minorities, why?

This worksheet was created by Tony Mann and Chris Good in 2012 for the project "Being a Professional Mathematician", supported by the MSOR Network, the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications and the Universities of Greenwich and Birmingham as part of the National HE STEM Programme. It is released under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike licence. The project materials are available at www.BeingAMathematician.org.



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