

# Let's talk significant people in chemistry

## Ross Cundy and Verity Jones consider how we can bring significant scientists to life in our teaching and learning

Gaining knowledge about the amazing work of people in chemistry is a great way to get children engaged and enthusiastic about the field. We have found that just asking children to 'find out' about someone to develop knowledge and or research skills can be a dry task. Creating a fact sheet isn't that much more exciting. However, when you ask children to bring their scientists to life using digital technology, eyes widen and classes tend to take notice.

The activity we present here takes a digital image of a chemist and allows the children to bring it to life and make them talk about their life and work. This relies on schools having access to tablets. We use the free app called *Talkr* (this app is available for iOS; other photo talk apps are available for iOS and Android). We

have found that *Talkr* is an easy-to-use app for children and teachers. As with any tech, we highly recommend testing out the app before the lesson to make sure you are familiar with it. In fact, we recommend making a talking chemist of your own on *Talkr* so you can use it as a model (as you will see below). If you need help, there are some really useful short clips on *YouTube* made by other teachers (see *Resources* below).

### The photo talk activity

#### Step 1: What's the purpose?

We find that quality learning needs a purpose, and the children need to know what that purpose is. Consider whether the knowledge children find about a significant chemist might be used in a school assembly, or perhaps be shared with another class or visitor. Once you have shared the purpose, show your own talking image on the app. It might be useful to use the face of someone familiar to the children – perhaps a sportsperson, politician or member of staff! Seeing the app in action helps the children visualise what their end product will be. This modelling is also useful if you want to show the expectation in quality, content and length.

#### Step 2: Find me a chemist

In pairs or small groups, challenge the class to find out about a chemist. You may want to provide pre-prepared information sheets or a list of names for children to use as search terms.



Digital images of chemists Rosalind Franklin (top) and Patricia Bath brought to life on the *Talkr* app

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