JOB DESCRIPTION: Planetary Geologist

Introduction

Planetary geologists, sometimes called astrogeologists or exogeologists, study the geology of celestial bodies such as planets, as the name implies. They ask the questions; what is the moon made of? What about Saturn, Jupiter and the ever-mysterious Pluto? Planetary geologists study how these and other space bodies were formed.

By analyzing photos of planets, moons, asteroids and comets, planetary geologists can begin to understand their history, climate and topography. Some planetary geologists work with actual specimens gathered from space missions.

Most planetary geologists are professors at universities. They conduct research and teach courses. Others work for government agencies such as NASA. Still other planetary geologists work for private research institutions. Planetary geologists can spend time working in their offices, in front of computers and in space laboratories. The amount of time spent in each location varies with the type of research being done.

However, they also study asteroids, comets, meteorites, moons and other types of celestial bodies. The internal structure of planets, the atmospheres, planetary surfaces, mapping, the nature of volcanoes and what we can learn from impact craters all make fascinating topics for a planetary geologist.

High School Preparation

Aspiring planetary geologists should take as much advanced math, physics, chemistry and biology as possible in high school. Particularly, courses in geology, hydrogeology, and the environmental sciences help, if offered at your school. Mastery of English, drama and public speaking help you develop essential communications skills. Prepare well for the ACT and SAT scores, since these are unavoidable requirements for admission to college. Good test scores improve your chances of getting into the college(s) of your choice.

Degree Options

Most entry-level planetary geologists need at least a Bachelor's Degree. Most geoscientists need a master's degree, according to ChaCha.com, because the best career prospects for planetary geologists exist for the ones with master's degrees. A Ph.D. suits your requirements if you plan to do high-level research or move into college level teaching positions. Planetary geologists applying for these teacher and research positions face more competition than applicants for positions that require only a Bachelor's or Master's Degree.

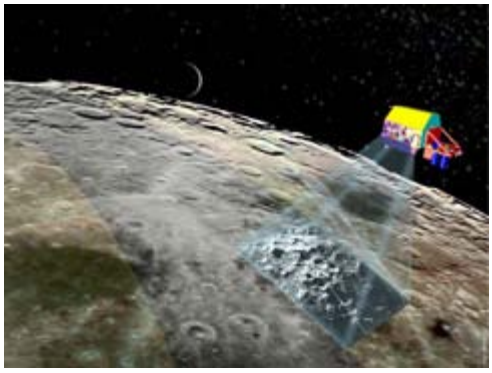
Science Coursework

Among the courses you take while getting your planetary geology degree(s) include mineralogy, petrology, hydrogeology and structural geology, according to University.com. Computer skills are important for aspiring planetary geologists. Graduates with computer experience hold an advantage. Prospective planetary geologists who come to the employment marketplace with

experience in computer modeling, data analysis/integration, digital mapping, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or Global Positioning System (GPS) have great prospects, according to the BLS.

Communications Coursework

Geoscientists often work in teams with other environmental scientists and engineers. Because of this, interpersonal skills are required, as well as oral and written communication skills. Planetary geologists must write highly technical reports, prepare involved research proposals and present their research face-to-face in a variety of settings. Good science skills alone are not enough to sustain a career in geoscience. You must communicate your findings effectively if you hope to move to the next step in your career.



Links to more Planetary Geologist Information click below:

Education Requirements for a Planetary Geologist Career | eHow.com
http://www.ehow.com/info_7918014_education-requirements-planetary-geologist-career.html#ixzz1UOmVmNR5

Links to more Reference Information click below:

http://www.geologyshop.co.uk/planet~1.htm

http://www.ask.com/wiki/Planetary_geology

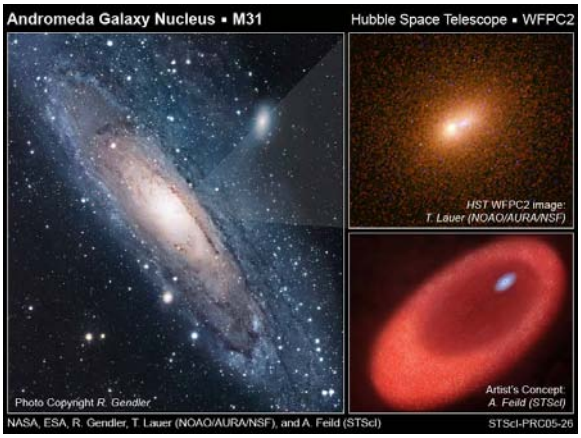
Classroom Project: Grade 4-5
http://www.growingyourfuture.com/civi/sites/default/files/out_of_this_world_jobs.pdf

http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource_id=1647

http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/archive/releases/2005/26/image/a/format/web_print/

http://rock.geosociety.org/pgd/

Factsheet Chandra Project



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