

Transcript of Soraya Merchant, Chemist

The coolest part about my job is... I use Chemistry to help protect our environment!

I work at an environmental lab, Maxxam, and my specific job title is analyst. I perform water-quality testing where I determine the answers for important questions such as: Is the water safe to drink? Is the ground water or earth beneath an industrial site contaminated with pollutants? A typical day for me starts out with generating a client-sample list which I prioritize based on due dates. Then I get my samples, and then I would use my instruments, and I would perform analysis on my samples. I get that data, and pass that data onto a senior analyst who checks this data for me.

When I was younger, I used to ask my parents a lot of questions, and I was limited to how many questions I could ask per day. So when I actually took Chemistry, it actually gave me the answers to a lot of questions that I wanted to know about, and this was a space, and observations that I saw. Say for instance, why is the sky blue? Why does that bike rust in the rain? So chemistry opened up that world for me where I could learn new stuff, apply theory that I was learning in Chemistry in everyday life. Today, some of my friends and family would be smiling because chemistry was not my strongest subject. It was actually, I got the lowest marks in chemistry, but I had a zeal for that subject. So my dad decided to get me a chemistry tutor, and he bridged that gap, he took learning to a different level. He was fun, he related the concepts and theories to me so that I could understand, and my marks went up. This only goes to show you that if you have the determination, and the will to do something, you can do it if you put your mind to it.

My advice for you is to make your dreams a reality. Put it into motion; seek advice from people who are already in the field; be determined; expect setbacks and stumbles, but get back up and keep moving!