

Meteorologist

What is a meteorologist?



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Have you ever tried to predict the weather? Meteorologists do just that, using science, special instruments and computer models to study and forecast the weather. Remember the last hurricane season? Meteorologists' predictions and storm-tracking helped save both lives and property. You might have seen meteorologists on television or heard them on the radio, but not all meteorologists are in broadcasting. Most work for government agencies, private companies or non-profit institutions.

If I want to study or have a career in meteorology, what classes should I take in middle or high school?

Take as many Earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and computer science courses as you can. English is also important since meteorologists, in particular, need to write clearly and communicate their findings to others on a regular basis. You might also find it helpful to take a course in public speaking. Find out what after-school organizations your school has that can help you with a career as a meteorologist, such as Science Clubs. You might also volunteer to build and monitor a weather station for your school.

At the university level, what courses should I take?

To become a meteorologist, college students need to follow the course of study recommended by the atmospheric science departments in their colleges and universities. While these vary, most schools of higher education require that their students take (in addition to their general education requirements) an array of courses in geoscience, mathematics, chemistry and physics, plus courses that prepare students for their specialty areas.

What are the educational requirements for becoming a professional meteorologist?

A bachelor's degree in meteorology or in a closely related field with courses in meteorology is the minimum educational requirement. In addition to a bachelor's degree, most jobs in the meteorology field require a graduate degree. Broadcast meteorologist can find jobs with a B.S. degree. As in any profession, the best jobs go to the most qualified applicants. Students thinking about a career in meteorology should consider getting an advanced degree.

Where do meteorologists work?

Jobs in meteorology are available in government agencies, private companies, and non-profit and academic institutions.

Government agencies, among which the largest employer is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), hire meteorologists for research and development. Television and radio stations, as well as airports, hire meteorologists as part of the private sector. Meteorologists in academia work in both colleges and universities.

Where can I find more information on meteorology?

- Geoscience Careers: www.earthscienceworld.org/careers/index.html
 - US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov/oco/ocos051.htm
 - Careers in Earth Science (NASA) Kids: earth.nasa.gov/archive/career/meteorologist.html
 - Atmospheric Science Data Center, Meteorologist: eosweb.larc.nasa.gov/EDDOCS/meteorol.html
 - Geoscience Salary Information (AGI): www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/currents
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