



My starting point as a beginning science teacher.

This is the first science assignment of the PGCE course. It requires you to describe and explain your ideas and experiences of science, and the teaching and learning of science, before you begin the PGCE. The assignment will provide a good basis for the thinking you will be doing during the rest of the year.

You will have experienced science education over a number of years and will have been influenced by your experiences, by your teachers and your peers. You will have developed a philosophy about science education from the perspective of a learner, but you may not have had the opportunity to articulate this before. As you learn to be a science teacher you will develop and modify these early beliefs, and your emerging philosophy will inform your practice as an effective science teacher.

The task

Work to the title '*My starting point as a new science teacher*' and aim to write about 1500 words, although there is no rigid word limit for this assignment. **You do not need to do any extra reading in preparation for this assignment; it is your own implicit views that are important at this stage.** Write in continuous prose about your personal philosophy. We suggest you include the following five general areas and use the prompts as a guide. However, you are encouraged to include any other relevant ideas too.

1. Describe your own science background.

What was your own experience of learning science at school and in higher education? How did your school value science as part of a broader curriculum? How were you taught science? How did this influence you? What do you feel about science and why do you think you feel like this? Have your feelings changed over time? Think about your science specialism and why it appealed to you. How do you feel about teaching all three sciences?

2. What is Science?

What does the concept of *science* mean to you? What is the purpose of science? What separates science from other disciplines? How does science blend with other disciplines? What do scientists do? How does science progress? Should all pupils have to learn science?

3. What is effective science teaching?

Why do we teach science? How do we teach science? When do we teach science? What does good science teaching involve? What are the challenges of teaching science? What is 'best practice' in science teaching?

4. Learning about science

How do pupils learn in science lessons? What does effective learning involve? Do pupils learn science in the same ways as they learn other subjects? Why do some children find science a difficult subject?

5. Reflection

Reflect on the writing of this assignment. How did you feel about being asked to do it? Why do you think you were asked to do it? How did you set about your writing? Was it easy or difficult and why? Have you learned anything from doing it.

Reviewing your assignment

Your personal tutor will read your reflections to help them to understand your starting point and how they might help you to develop on the PGCE course.

They will reply to you with ideas for further reflection and development. They might consider:

- The range and depth of the views expressed
- The presentation and structure of the assignment
- The technical accuracy and clarity of your writing
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Submission date: Email an electronic version using the file 'surname_first name_starting point assignment 2024' (for example Hancock_Joanne_starting point assignment 2024) to Joanne Hancock (joanne.hancock@nottingham.ac.uk) before **9am on Monday 8th September 2025**.

You may also find it useful to bring a copy with you during the first week of the course (further details will be given nearer the time).