

Six Unbelievable

Find out about some careers you may not know actually existed.

Ever thought about training to be a tiger dentist or a crisp inspector? As National Careers Week – a time to help young people find out about which jobs they might like – comes to a close, here's a rundown of some weird and wonderful careers that you've probably never considered.

Cryptozoologist

Does the Loch Ness Monster really exist? What about Bigfoot? Experts say they don't but cryptozoologists would love to prove them wrong. A cryptozoologist is someone who is interested in cryptids – animals whose existence hasn't been confirmed but that people claim to have seen. Cryptozoologists often go on expeditions to areas where there have been sightings. Once there, the scientists will gather evidence and try to spot a cryptid in the wild. To become a cryptozoologist, most people study biology and zoology (the area of biology that studies the animal kingdom). The ambition of a cryptozoologist is to prove that their cryptid is real. It might sound unlikely but the Komodo dragon, the giant panda, the megamouth shark and the okapi all used to be cryptids before they were confirmed as real.



Waterslide designer

Have you ever hurtled down a water slide and wondered who designed it? You were probably having too much fun to think about it, but behind any good water park is a team of engineers and architects.

A waterslide designer has usually studied engineering at university and must make sure that the ride will be safe as well as exciting. Sometimes they will use computers to simulate what the waterslide experience will be like.

Unlike roller coasters, waterslides don't have seatbelts so designers must ensure that

everyone using the slide moves at just the right speed, goes in the correct direction and lands in a safe spot so they don't fly off the side and get injured.

There are water parks all around the world, so designers often get to travel for their work. And of course, once the ride is built, they have to test it out – a lot.

Waterslide designer Emily Colombo told CBC News in Canada, "I think that our team probably does the most watersliding of anyone in the world. It's a pretty great perk of the role!"

Jobs

Food forager

A food forager is someone who picks food and plants in the wild. Ingredients including berries, herbs and wild mushrooms can

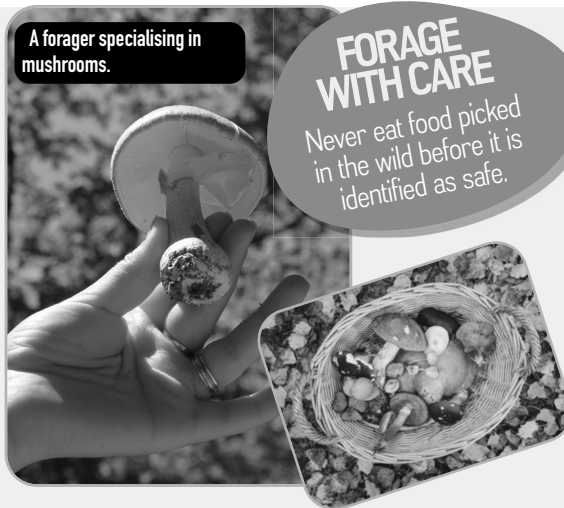
attract big prices from chefs. To become a forager you should start small. Research simple and safe ingredients that can be found in your area. After you have some experience of foraging you can try hunting out more hard-to-find ingredients that could be sold to restaurants.

Some experienced food foragers choose to specialise in a particular food. For example, some become expert mushroom hunters. There is an element of danger, though. Picking the wrong plant or vegetable can have dangerous consequences. For example, some mushrooms are poisonous.

A forager specialising in mushrooms.

FORAGE WITH CARE

Never eat food picked in the wild before it is identified as safe.



Crisp inspector

Fancy getting paid to eat crisps? This could be your ideal job. A crisp inspector usually works in a factory and ensures that the flavour is correct and that the crisp is not under- or overcooked. What's more, the inspector must check the crisps are the right shape, too.

Crisp inspectors need excellent taste buds and must be able to easily identify the five basic tastes of sweet, sour, bitter, salt and umami (a savoury taste you might recognise from eating Marmite). "You have your taste buds tested every three months to make sure they are still up to scratch," says Matt Cullingworth, sensory expert at Walkers.



Inspectors ensure crisps taste right.

Drone pilot

Drones can easily reach places that are unsafe or difficult for humans to get to. However, a drone is nothing without a pilot on the ground. A drone pilot flies these craft to take aerial pictures or video for a lot of different reasons. Professional drone pilots are expected to be interested in aviation (operating aircraft) as well as being good at maths and IT.

Emergency services often require drone pilots to help with things such as

traffic control, coastal surveillance and rescues. Drone pilots might also work to capture footage for anything from weddings to blockbuster films.



Wild beast dentist

Without their teeth, wild beasts, such as big cats are in big trouble. A veterinary dentist deals with any of their animal's teeth issues (perhaps a wobbly fang or a nasty-looking infection). In a recent interview, safari park vet Jen Quayle told the BBC that an operation on Kuzma, a tiger, involved a lot of preparation because the animal had to be wrapped in duvets and bubble-wrap mittens to keep it warm while it was under anaesthetic (a type of medicine used to temporarily stop a patient from feeling pain).

Veterinary dentists usually qualify as a vet first, then specialise in teeth. They might work with animals at a wildlife reserve, rescue centre or even a zoo, so there are lots of opportunities for travel. Most of these dentists won't just specialise in treating tigers, they will also operate on leopards, elephants and many other creatures.



A young wild boar with small tusks.

6th March 2021

1. What is the purpose of National Careers Week?

2. Match the job to the training or experience required.

Cryptozoologist

Interested in aviation. Good at Maths and IT.

Waterslide designer

Engineering

Food forager

Veterinarian with a specialism in teeth.

Tiger dentist

Research and experience

Drone pilot

Biology and zoology

3. What are two benefits of being a waterslide designer?

1. _____

2. _____

4. What sorts of things do food foragers collect in the wild?

5. What three things do crisp tasters have to check?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. **Find** and **copy a group of words** that suggests some people might think being a cryptozoologist is a difficult task.

2. Waterslides can be risky. Give **one piece of evidence** from the text that shows this.

3. Does Emily Colombo enjoy her job? How do you know?

4. Why should foragers research the plants they are hunting?

5. A crisp inspector's sense of taste is incredibly important.
Explain why this is true.

6. "...the animal had to be wrapped in duvets and bubble-wrap mittens to keep it warm while it was under anaesthetic."

This suggests that...

	Tick one
tigers need a lot of care when being treated.	
tigers are a danger to the veterinary dentists.	
tigers need a nap after their operation.	
operating on a tiger is very difficult.	

1. Look at the first paragraph.

What does the phrase "*weird and wonderful careers*" suggest about the jobs that have been included in this article?

2. "*Have you ever hurtled down a waterslide and wondered who designed it?*"

a) Why has the author started this paragraph with a question?

b) What does the word hurtled suggest about going down a waterslide?

3. Look at the paragraph with the subheading: *Food forager*.

Which alliterative phrase in the text suggests inexperienced foragers should look for foods that are quite common and not harmful?

4. Look at the paragraph with the subheading: *Crisp inspector*.

What does the phrase up to scratch mean?
