

Name:

Tapoka Mkandawire

Job:

PhD Student, Wellcome Sanger Institute

What do I do?

I study how bacteria in our guts “talk” to a parasitic whip worm that can infect us- if we can understand the messages the bacteria send we may be able to beat the disease. I get to travel to Africa and South America to collect samples for my research and grow bacteria and worms in the lab.

Me in 3 (three words to describe me)

- Persevering
- Friendly
- Open to new ideas

Fascinating facts about me

I love trying new food, my favourite colour is pink and if I could have any pet it would be a hedgehog! I love being outdoors doing photography.



Skills I use in my job:



Observation – I have to look at tiny bacteria and worms under a microscope



Organisation – I need to be organised in my job so I make lists of all the tasks I need to do

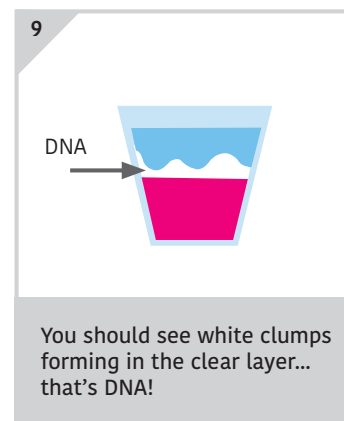
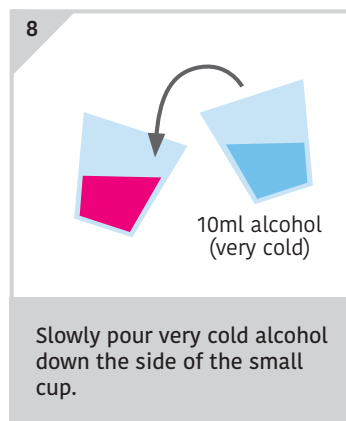
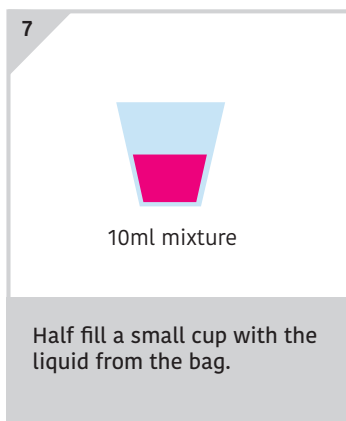
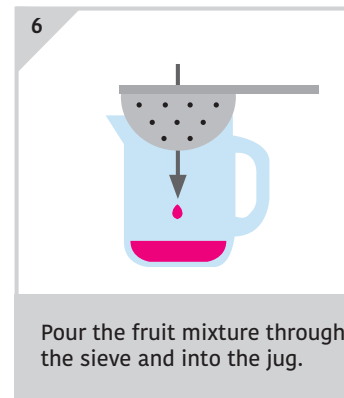
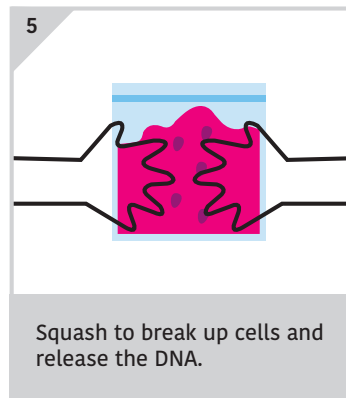
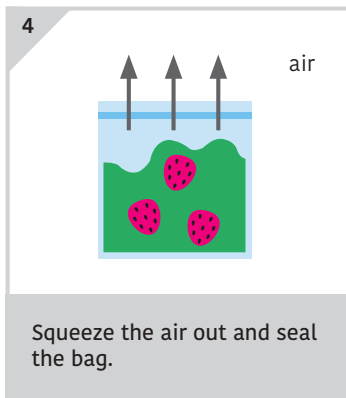
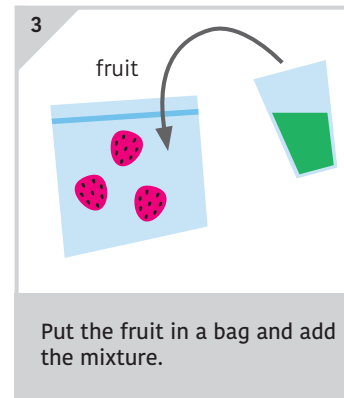
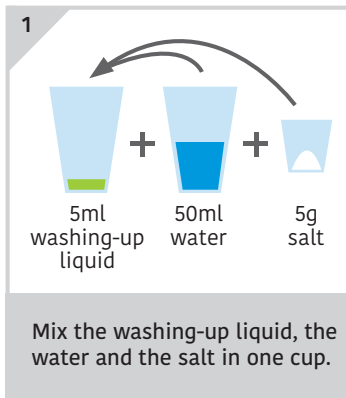


Communication – When I have done a project, I write it up in a journal so I can tell others about my research findings



Teamwork – I work with other scientists around the world, it is important that we can all work together to contribute to a project





Can you extract DNA from Fruit?

To study bacteria and worms, I have to extract their DNA. Every living thing on the planet has DNA and it is quite easy to get it out using some basic household items: Salt, water, washing up liquid and alcohol!

Make sure you get an adult to help you.

Alternatively...

Use hand sanitiser

If you cannot use alcohol in this experiment at home or school, hand sanitiser (70% alcohol) is just as effective.

See how it's done here:

www.yourgenome.org/activities/extracting-dna-from-fruit