

## Steps to Becoming a Science Teacher

### Step #1

Find out if teaching is for you; volunteer, substitute teach, or visit a science class at your local middle or high school.

### Step #2

Verify subject-matter competence through the science department of your local university. Take courses or required tests as needed.

### Step #3

Decide what type of credential program is best for you. Depending on your educational level (high school student, college student, career changer), take the proper course work as directed by your school or college and enroll in a teacher preparation program or intern program.

### Step #4

Locate financial aid resources by logging on to the TEACH California Web site.

## Where can I get additional information?

For additional information about each of these steps or more information about what it takes to teach science in California, visit the TEACH California Web site at [www.teachcalifornia.org](http://www.teachcalifornia.org)

Make the **difference**  
of a lifetime.  
**Teach.**



[www.teachcalifornia.org](http://www.teachcalifornia.org)



This brochure and other free teacher recruitment materials may be ordered online. Log on to [www.teachcalifornia.org](http://www.teachcalifornia.org), click on "Resources," then "Outreach Materials." Your order will be shipped within two weeks.



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# TEACH Science

A guide to becoming a  
**science teacher**  
in California



# California Needs Science Teachers

Over the next decade California will need 195,000 teachers to take on the challenging yet rewarding job of teaching our state's youths. According to the California Department of Education, more than 2,000 science teachers were needed in 2007–08.

Science teachers have the unique opportunity to inspire students to take an interest in science—a field that can lead to wondrous events, such as the ability to find new sources of fuel or to develop life-saving vaccines and medications. In addition, students' success in science depends largely on the knowledge and skills of their teachers more than any other single factor.

In elementary school, students are introduced to facts, concepts, principles, and theories of physical, life, and earth sciences. During middle school, teachers concentrate on more advanced science concepts, principles, and theories, such as the study of earth science in sixth grade; life sciences in seventh; and physical science in eighth. The understanding of science is an essential skill set.

If you are interested and ready for a challenging career, take the next step—TEACH!

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a credential?

A teaching credential is a license to teach in public schools from kindergarten through grade twelve. The credential is granted after an individual completes all the requirements and a teacher preparation program recommends him or her to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), the state teacher licensing agency. Only certain individuals (those who possess out-of-state teaching credentials, have taught at regionally accredited private schools, or are National Board-Certified Teachers) can apply directly for a credential from the CTC.

### Why do I need to get a credential if I already have many years of experience in science?

Teaching is a profession and requires knowledge beyond subject matter. Although many individuals are familiar with science and confident in their abilities, successful teaching requires an understanding of instructional

methods. These skills and others are taught in teacher preparation programs.

### What is the purpose of a teacher preparation program?

Teacher preparation focuses on learning how to teach. Teacher preparation programs are organized to develop the skills needed for teaching in classrooms and include course work in such areas as instructional methods, curriculum development, and classroom management.



### What is subject-matter competency?

Subject-matter competence is knowledge of what is taught. This requirement is met either by completing specific examinations or by completing specific preparation programs in the academic subject area at a California college or university.

### Do I need a degree in science to teach this subject?

Knowledge of science is needed to teach the subject. Usually, advanced course work or certification is needed, along with introductory computer science courses. If your degree is in a subject other than science, you can satisfy the subject-matter competence requirement by passing specific exams.

### Is there just one type of science credential?

There are three general types of science credentials: foundation, specialized credentials in specific subject areas (biological science, chemistry, geosciences, and physics) and credentials in these same subject areas.

Requirements for the three types differ, as does the subject matter that can be taught. The foundation credential holder may teach only introductory science, not integrated science or the subject specific classes (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, or Earth Science), the holder of a specialized credential may not teach general, introductory, or integrated science courses and the subject area credential holder can teach all classes in their subject area.

### Are there exam requirements for becoming a science teacher?

No specific exam requirements exist for teaching science; however, the basic skills and subject matter competency requirements can be fulfilled by successfully passing certain exams.

### What is a blended teacher preparation program?

The blended program is designed for individuals without a bachelor's degree. The programs often begin in the junior year and may be completed in five semesters. A program includes a curriculum sequence that "blends" science and education courses and student teaching experiences and seminars.

### I need to work while fulfilling the requirements for a credential. Is there a program that will work for me?

Alternative certification programs target individuals who have related work experiences and subject-matter preparation or who are seeking a career change and have to work. These programs are structured so that the student teaches during the day (and gets paid for teaching) while taking classes at night, during weekends, or during school breaks. The intern program is one type of alternative certification program.

### What is the average salary of a teacher in California?

According to the California Department of Education, the average salary for California's public school teachers, 2006–07, was \$63,640 and the minimum salary for a beginning teacher was over \$34,000 (*Fact Book 2008*). Teachers' salaries are established by each school district. More information regarding teacher salary schedules and benefits and additional salary incentives can be obtained by contacting school districts directly.