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November 2004

Regulars

Pluschat

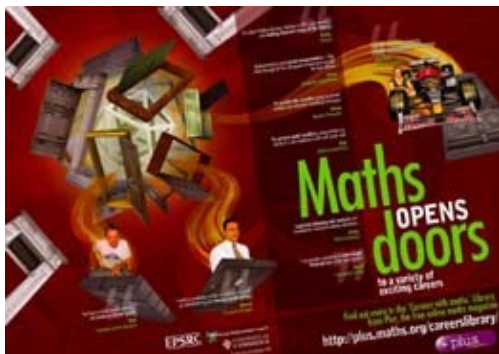


Careers in mathematics: A set of three posters from *Plus*

Regular *Plus* readers will know that the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research council recently gave us a grant to produce a set of posters about careers in maths. The posters have now been designed and printed, and copies have been sent to the maths departments of most secondary schools in the UK. The aims were to provide teachers with a resource that would support them in encouraging young people to make maths a part of their career plans, to publicise the wide range of careers available to those with post-compulsory maths education, and to brighten up maths classrooms across the UK.

If you would like copies of the posters, you can either download and print them yourself, or email us and ask for more. If you need quite a few you will have to pay for the postage; otherwise we should be able to provide them free. ([Click here for more information about how to get your own copy of the posters.](#))

Maths opens doors to a variety of exciting careers



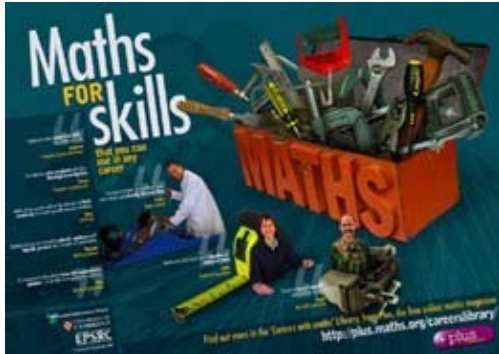
In each issue of *Plus* we run a career interview. Over and over again, interviewees tell us that while they were in school they had no real idea what sort of jobs a degree in a mathematical discipline might lead to. Here are some of the people we've met who use maths in their work:

- an architect who designs eco-friendly high-concept buildings;
- a city trader who analyses and manages risk;

- a freelance computer training specialist in Human Resources software;
- a medical statistician who makes sure that drugs work and are safe to use.

One of these has a PhD in maths; one had to struggle to get a D at A level. but what they all have in common is that they found their maths education a great help as they progressed up the career ladder.

Maths for skills that you can use in any career



There is a big difference between the *actual* career usefulness of mathematics, and the *perceived* career usefulness of mathematics. However, according to a recent survey by the Engineering and Technology Board, maths and computing graduates are the most employable and the very highest earners, and mathematical skills regularly top employers' wishlists. So even if the perception is that maths is a dry, rather abstract subject, the fact is that there are working mathematicians everywhere – they just tend to be called things like "defence analyst" or "actuary".

Maths makes a difference to your future career



As well as the most obvious mathematical careers, there are many other interesting career paths that involve studying mathematics or a related subject and going on to work in a job where mathematics plays a substantial role. There are also many jobs that need a basic level of mathematical ability and confidence, and in practically every job, success and promotion come more easily to the mathematically able.

If you have anything to say about this or any other topic that might be of interest to *Plus* readers, e-mail plus@maths.cam.ac.uk. Let us know if you are happy for your email and our response to be published in *Plus*. (We may edit emails before publication.)



Plus is part of the family of activities in the Millennium Mathematics Project, which also includes the NRICH and MOTIVATE sites.