

# Research Assessment #1

**Subject:** Astrobiology

**Source:**

- 1.) *"How to Become an Astrobiologist."* Lewis Dartnell. N.p., 04 Nov. 2016. Web. 17 Jan. 2017.
- 2.) *"What Degree Do I Need to Be an Astrobiologist?"* DegreeQuery.com. N.p., 15 Oct. 2014. Web. 17 Jan. 2017.

**Analysis:**

Astrobiologists in this field use various scientific techniques to search for the possibility of life outside our planet. The top space agencies, like NASA, are currently planning its current and future missions to better understand the field of astrobiology. For example, in the next few years, NASA is planning to send another rover to Mars to investigate Mars' biological past. In addition to this, astrobiologists have conducted a lot of studies on meteorites from Mars. This has allowed them to directly research a sample of Mars instead of relying on rovers. These scientists mainly look for carbonaceous matter, which is the building block of life. Furthermore, this field also does much research on Earth's biological processes to get a better understanding of what we should look for in extraterrestrial terrains.

Astrobiology is a field that encompasses multiple sciences. This includes physics, biology, chemistry, astronomy, ecology, geology, paleontology, and planetary science. As a result, individuals who are interested in pursuing this field can choose what science they want to major in. In order to be an astrobiologist one must obtain a bachelor's degree in a particular science and also a PhD in a related area of study. After successfully completing graduate school, the individual then would have to do a postdoctoral fellowship. During this time, they will be working alongside a well experienced professional. Looking at the educational requirements, people who want to be astrobiologists will be in school for a long period of time. Apart from educational requirements, you also must have a lot of experience. While in high school and college, those that are interested should do internships to gain a feel of what it is like in the actual workplace.

After completing all the educational/ training requirements, individuals have a choice of either doing research at an university or for the government, such as NASA. Competition in this field is high so individuals who want to pursue this career must be at the top of their game. All in all, this field is nothing short of wonderful. Astrobiologist have the freedom to research the things that they are most curious about. My mentor, who is a successful astrobiologist, told me that the uncertainty of what your are going to find is what keeps the job always exciting.