

# The silent art of leveling up: What I learned from my first crystals

Amy Sarjeant<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Bristol-Myers Squibb*

*amysarjeant@gmail.com*

Over the past decade or so, there has been an uptick in the gamification of everyday activities. From exercise routines to learning new languages, we are conditioned to expect points, rewards, and badges to signify our growing expertise. We can look back through a fitness app, for instance, and see markers of our steady progress; how the basic skills we learned in the beginning have developed into advanced technique. While it may seem that our scientific endeavors have not (yet) fallen victim to gamification, we can look back on our early work and see it for the skills-building exercise it was. My very first structure was a solid-state network material comprising only five crystallographically unique atoms,  $\text{CuTh}_2\text{Te}_6$ . The challenges in obtaining that structure gave me the experience to unlock the first badge of my crystallographic career (a PhD diploma?). From there I tackled ever more challenging structures. The first structure I solved in each new role saw me adding new skills and techniques, gaining experience (points?) along the way. This presentation will focus on what I learned from each "first" crystal as I leveled up as a crystallographer.