



# NASA SpacePlace

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## News and Notes for formal and informal educators

The Space Place is a NASA website for elementary school-aged kids, their teachers, and their parents.

It's colorful!  
It's dynamic!  
It's fun!

It's rich with  
science, technology,  
engineering, and  
math content!

It's informal.  
It's meaty.  
It's easy to read and  
understand.  
It's also in Spanish.  
And it's free!

It has 130 (and  
counting) separate  
modules for kids,  
including hands-on  
projects, interactive  
games, animated  
cartoons, and  
amazing facts about  
space and Earth  
science and  
technology.

## Here's the Latest on [spaceplace.nasa.gov](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov) . . .



*I'm Lucy Nell, astronomer.  
I love the sky at night.  
I long to see through dark and  
dust, to see with special sight.*



Lucy has always wondered whether the Universe has any other planets like Earth with people on them. She decides to become an astronomer so she can work on a special telescope, the Spitzer Space Telescope, to help find out. The story of Lucy and her adventures with NASA is on The Space Place. You can read it as an animated page-turning book or a .pdf book you can print. It's 24 pages of rhyming adventures and colorful pictures at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/spitzer/lucy](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/spitzer/lucy).

## Space Place en Español

As long as it's still summer, Spanish speakers or learners might as well "¡Vence al calor!" (Beat the heat) at The Space Place en Español ([spaceplace.nasa.gov/sp/kids/st8/thermal\\_loop](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/sp/kids/st8/thermal_loop)). This game, along with many others, duplicates its English counterpart. Players try to beat the rising liquid in the thermometer as they match up letter scrambles with heat-energy-related words. Meanwhile, they are learning about conduction, convection, and radiation—the three ways heat energy gets around.

## Spotlight on "Games"

If our Web statistics are any indication, the games are the most popular pages on The Space Place. Checking the Games

menu page ([spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/games.shtml](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/games.shtml)), you'll find everything from an online weather "board game" to an evolve-it-yourself artificial selection game. Word and picture puzzles are fun to do and reinforce concepts introduced in the simple and clear articles that accompany them. The activities reinforce language arts, math, spatial and analytical reasoning, all while filling the brain with fun and fascinating facts and concepts. Some examples:

**Vec→Touring** (also in Spanish): Drive your car to the secret launch pad in time for the launch. For directions, all you have to go on are coordinates, one set at a time, for the next stop on the route. From your current coordinates, you must calculate the appropriate vector to the next coordinates, and program it into your car's computer.



**Mars Adventure**: You are about to blast off for Mars. First, you must choose some items to take along that will be helpful, either to eat, to entertain you, or to keep you healthy. After you pick ten items, the doors close, and your rocket blasts off. The success of your mission depends on how well your items perform their intended purpose *in space*.

## Summer or After-school Activity

Know any kids in the mood for art? On the Coloring Book page ([spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/coloring\\_book](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/coloring_book)), kids can do it the high-tech way with an online coloring book and electronic crayons or the low-tech way on printed .pdf pages with their own real crayons.

## For the Classroom



Space scientists and engineers design instruments to measure conditions in harsh, alien environments on other planets and moons. First, how do they know what to measure if they don't know what's there? Second, how do they design the instrument to withstand whatever punishing conditions it finds? In the activity called "Designing for the Barely Imaginable" ([spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/educators/teachers\\_page2.shtml#alienworld](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/educators/teachers_page2.shtml#alienworld)), middle-school students can get really creative. They conjure up their own alien world. They then pose questions about their "Planet X" that they would like to answer, decide what kinds of sensors might be needed, then design and "conduct" a space mission to find the answers.

Planetary scientific instruments are introduced, categorized by which sense (hearing, seeing, smelling, etc.) they most closely emulate. The activity introduces the basic physical concepts of both remote and on-site sensors and calls upon the students' language arts, analytic, and social skills by cooperating in small groups and sharing with the whole class.

## Help for Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts

The Space Place can be a big help for scouts working on Badges, Achievements, and Electives. Many of the site's activities can be directly mapped to specific scouting requirements to fulfill or partially fulfill them. To help with this mapping, The Space Place has a matrix for Cubs at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/cubscouts](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/cubscouts) and for Junior, Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/girlscouts](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/girlscouts).



The Cub Scout Matrix was recently updated. It has been reviewed and approved by the Boy Scouts of America, and can be relied upon to qualify as fulfillment or partial fulfillment (as noted in the matrix) for the listed Achievement or Elective.

## Celebrate Special Days

Each day brings a new reason to celebrate. Here are a few important dates coming up, with suggestions on how to observe them at The Space Place.

### August 8: The Date to Create!

Go to our Projects page ([spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/projects.shtml](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/projects.shtml)) and create something fun, beautiful, or yummy—or all three.

### August 21: Poets' Day

Read Cosmic Poems at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/cosmic\\_poetry.shtml](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/cosmic_poetry.shtml). Then write some new ones.

### August 28: Dream Day

Martin Luther King gave his famous and powerful "I have a dream" speech in 1963. On Space Place Live! ([spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/live](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/live)), NASA scientists and engineers describe how they made their dreams reality.

### September 10: Swap Ideas Day

If you keep swapping out "emoticons" [symbols like this smiley :^)], the Emoticonstructor ([spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/st5/emoticon](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/st5/emoticon)) will eventually "evolve" you a face to match your emotion.

### September 13: Positive Thinking Day

Do the "Ions in Action" experiment to give yourself a positive charge! See [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/balloon.shtml](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/balloon.shtml).

### September 16: Hurricane Katrina National Day of Remembrance

Learn how hurricanes form, and see a video of Katrina's formation from space at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/goes/hurricanes](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/goes/hurricanes).

## How do you use The Space Place?

Please let us know how you use [spaceplace.nasa.gov](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov). Share this newsletter with others, and share your ideas with us. Send them to [spaceplace@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:spaceplace@jpl.nasa.gov). We may include your idea in our next newsletter!