



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.

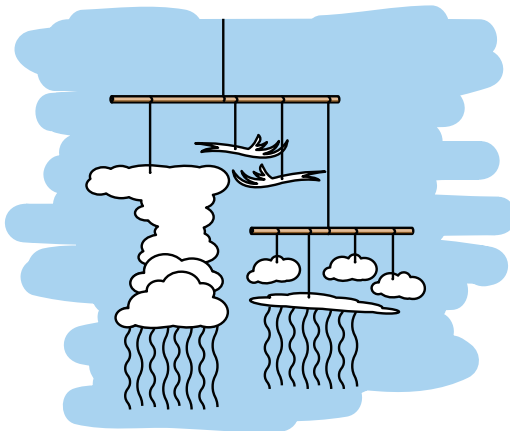
It's colorful!
It's dynamic!
It's fun!

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 . . .



It's fun to make a mobile. A mobile is visual art that actually does something besides just sit there. Our new cloud mobile (spaceplace.jpl.nasa.gov/en/kids/clouds) interprets nature's beautiful shapes and their movements, as well as the relative altitudes in the sky of the various types of clouds.

The clouds are cut from large Styrofoam takeout containers. Patterns (as a .pdf file) make cumulonimbus, cirrus, cumulus, and nimbostratus clouds. Or, kids can make their own cloud shapes. Our cumulonimbus and nimbostratus clouds have "rain" falling from them. The "rain" is made from inexpensive Mylar shred, commonly used for lining gift baskets and available at craft stores.

It is a great project for kids working together, each making his or her own mobile, but helping each other during the balancing process. Everyone will end up with a work of art that they and their parents can enjoy for a long time.



Space Place en Español

¡Rescate del agujero negro! (spaceplace.nasa.gov/sp/kids/blackhole) is even more fun and challenging than its English counterpart, "Black Hole Rescue!" At least such may be the case for Spanish learners.

A very cool mechanical arm drops letter tiles in willy-nilly order into a swirling abyss, where they circle inexorably toward the gaping maw of the black hole. Players, in their panic to "rescue" the letters in proper order to spell the displayed word, must still be mindful of those pesky little accent marks. If the needed letter is "á" but instead the player selects "a," the word will be wrong. ¡Ay caramba! They must then unselect letters in backwards order and fix the error—all before the tiles reach the black hole in the center and are never seen or heard from again.

Spotlight on the "Fact of the Day"

The "Celebrate Special Days" section of this newsletter hints at some of the interesting connections that you, as an educator, can make between today's date and a topic



the students can learn about by reading or by doing a project or by playing a game. Every day The Space Place website (upper right on home page) offers up a different fact, with a link to one of the Space Place modules.

For example, March 2 is the birthday of Theodore Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, in 1904. Dr. Seuss had a gift for stories and rhyme that many a would-be children's writer have tried to emulate. Our writer at The Space Place is no exception, so our celebration of Dr. Seuss includes a reading of our own "Ode to Aerogel" (spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/stardust/aerogel.shtml), aerogel being the smoke-like, yet solid, material used by NASA's Stardust Mission to trap and bring home samples of a comet.



For the Classroom



We have previously told you about our Space Place image gallery, with downloadable captioned images to print in support of your science teaching units. Another resource is a page of downloadable posters, lithographs, postcards, and bookmarks at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/educators/posters. All are formatted so that they can be printed on 8½x11-inch paper. But, as a bonus, if you are able to have large prints made, we also have high-resolution .pdf files of the full-size posters, which are up to 25x33 inches. These are all high-quality NASA materials, with rich, young-student-oriented educational content—and many with classroom activities. Even the bookmarks and postcards, which are all two-sided and, when glued together, quite durable, feature gorgeous images and rich descriptions.

We hope you will take advantage!

Special Dates to Celebrate

February 2: Groundhog Day.

While everyone else consults the groundhog to find out how much longer winter will last, you can go have a "Wild Weather Adventure" at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/goes/wwa.

February 12, 1809: Charles Darwin's birth date.

Darwin figured out how living species evolve to survive in their environments. NASA engineers have used these same ideas to program computers to "evolve" optimum designs for some spacecraft parts. See how this works by playing with the Emoticonstructor at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/st5/emoticon.

February 25: Quiet Day.

Make a "super sound cone" and discover quiet sounds you couldn't hear before. You must be quiet yourself to hear them though! Instructions at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/tmo-dact.shtml.



March 8: Daylight Saving Time begins—again.

Imagine what it was like when an Earth day was only six hours long. Daylight Saving Time would not have helped much. Learn all about it at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/phone-drmarc/2003_march.shtml.

March 22: Goof-off Day.

Give in to it. The Space Place Games page at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/games.shtml has plenty of ways to have fun goofing off (and learning stuff too, but don't tell anybody!)

March 29, 1807: Asteroid Vesta was discovered.

Vesta is the second largest asteroid in the asteroid belt. Read about Professor Starr's Dream Trip (spaceplace.jpl.nasa.gov/en/kids/nmp/starr), and how he will finally get to explore Vesta.

Did You Know . . .



. . . that 2009 is the International Year of Astronomy? Are you using Space Place activities to celebrate IYA events? Tell us how you are using the website for these events, and we may be able to support your event by sending you a supply of Space Place bookmarks, stickers, and other materials. E-mail your request to spaceplace@jpl.nasa.gov.