



NASA SpacePlace

October – November 2008 / Vol. 1, Issue 4

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!

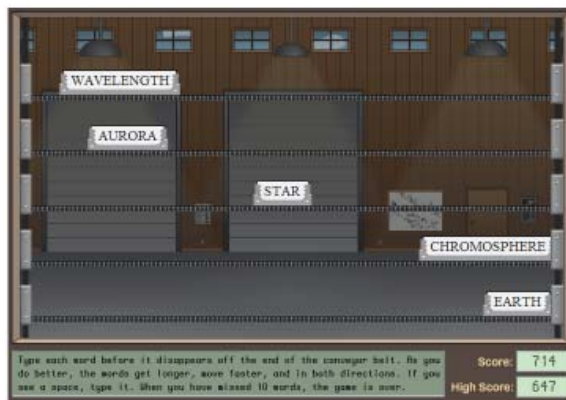
It's rich with
science, technology,
engineering, and
math content!

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.

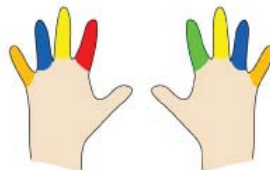
Here's the Latest on spaceplace.nasa.gov . . .



The NASA “**Sign Here!**” factory needs your help. They have received a big order of signs to be painted for the Spitzer Space Telescope project. This telescope has given us many spectacular images of the infrared universe. The Spitzer team wants to display these beautiful images, and they need signs to label their pictures. In the “Sign Here!” game, the player’s job is to “paint” the signs by typing the words as the “blanks” pass by on conveyor belts.

They start out slow, but as the player gets better, the words get longer, the signs speed up, and they pass by going in both directions.

The game ends when ten “unpainted” signs fall off the ends of the conveyor belts. The game includes a glossary explaining each term, plus an introduction to keyboarding! To start painting signs, visit spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/spitzer/signs.



Space Place en Español: ¡Emoticonstructora a tu servicio!

Many of the games and animations on the English side of the Space Place are translated for Space Place en Español. One example is “¡Emoticonstructora a tu servicio!” (Emoticonstructor at your service!) This interactive animation is intended to illustrate artificial evolution. Just as nature selects the organisms most adapted to survive in their particular environments, engineers can program a computer to design, test, and redesign parts that more and more closely approximate the engineers’ requirements.



In this demonstration, the participant uses the “Emoticonstructor” machine to design an “emoticon”—such as a smiley like this :^)—that most closely expresses a particular pre-selected emotion. See it work at spaceplace.nasa.gov/sp/kids/st5/emoticon.

Spotlight on “Amazing Facts”

We love amazing facts at The Space Place! So far we have collected nearly 40 of them for you and your students. Each “fact” is more than just one fact. Each is a self-contained web module with an easy-to-read and clearly and colorfully illustrated explanation of such topics as weather on other planets, how hurricanes form, or how a



solid substance that is 99% air can catch comet dust. Do you know the answer to why is the sky blue? or what is a laser? If you find these hard to explain, we can help. Come to spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/amazing_facts.shtml for answers to these and many more questions.



For the Classroom

Looking for pictures related to teaching topics to post in the classroom? The Space Place has a whole collection for you at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/educators/teachers_images.shtml. Each is a high-resolution color image sized for printing on 8.5 x 11-inch paper, with simple captions in large letters that can be read from a distance. Each category has a page of thumbnail images from which to select. These are the categories:

- Solar system
- Earth: Geography and mapping, oceans, volcanoes, weather
- Earth's Moon
- Astronauts
- Stars, galaxies, and nebulae
- Rockets, Space Shuttles, International Space Station, Rovers

Also for classroom display, we have individual .pdf (Adobe Reader) pages of our Space Place calendar. Each month lists around 12 days that call for observation or celebration, with links to the Space Place pages that will fit the theme of the day. Download this month's calendar at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/calendar.shtml.

Celebrate Special Days

October 6: World Habitat Day

What makes this world habitable? The Eco-Sphere® gives us a simple example of the delicate balance of nature that makes Earth friendly to all its diverse life forms.

Visit spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/earth/wordfind, and in Spanish at spaceplace.nasa.gov/sp/kids/earth/wordfind.



October 9: National Poetry Day

Be inspired by reading some Cosmic Poetry at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/cosmic_poetry.shtml. Then try writing a poem of your own about space.

October 13: Columbus Day

We have come a long way from the navigation tools used by Columbus. Do this activity in your classroom and find out how the Global Positioning System (GPS) really works at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/educators/teachers_page2.shtml#gps.

November 4: Use Your Common Sense Day

Unlike most trivia games, you can do well at the Trivia Game on The Space Place if you just use common sense. You can also learn a lot. Check it out at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/trivia/trivia.shtml.

November 16-22: National Geography Awareness Week

The best way to learn how to read a topographical map is to make one. Here's an easy and fun way to make a topo map using clay and dental floss. Go to spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/srtm_makemap.shtml.

November 23-29: National Game and Puzzle Week

Scrambled picture games, word games, board games, quiz games, memory games . . . you will find them all at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/games.shtml.

How do you use The Space Place?

Please let us know how you use spaceplace.nasa.gov. In appreciation for your feedback, we will send you our "Wild World of Weather Adventure" board game. Send your ideas to spaceplace@jpl.nasa.gov. And please share this newsletter freely!

