



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.

What does The Space Place say about comets? Like fossils of extinct animals, asteroids and comets contain clues about the past, telling us what the early solar system was like. But how do we study these small, distant objects? We send our trusty spacecraft to fly close to them, and, in the case of comets, land on them, sample them, and even orbit them.



What's new on spaceplace.nasa.gov ?



Very soon the whole thing will be new! The Space Place will have a brand new, sophisticated, high-tech look and feel when it blasts off in a few weeks. All the rich, fun, and readable content will still be there. The interface will be highly dynamic and interactive. We have reorganized, enhanced, and refreshed much of the content. You will find



more graphics and images, and a new navigation scheme for finding games, movies, and "extra-credit" content. Stay tuned!

Space Place en español

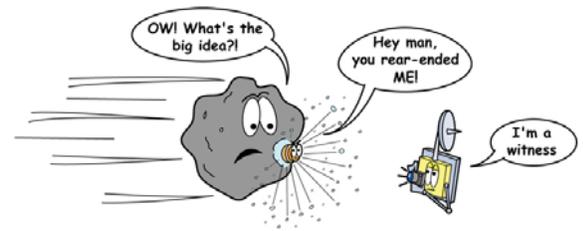


Now, back to comets and the solar system. "Tails of Wonder" is a graphical, interactive quiz game about comets and the amazing Stardust Mission. If the kids read about comets and the mission on the page, then they will be able to answer the questions in the quiz. Each correct answer brings the Stardust spacecraft a little bit closer to its target, Comet Wild 2. With exciting music and sparkling graphic effects, the game won't seem at all like a reading comprehension test!

"Tails of Wonder" in español is found at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/sp/kids/stardust>.

Spotlight on Comet Tempel 1

This comet has now been visited by two separate spacecraft, just a couple of years

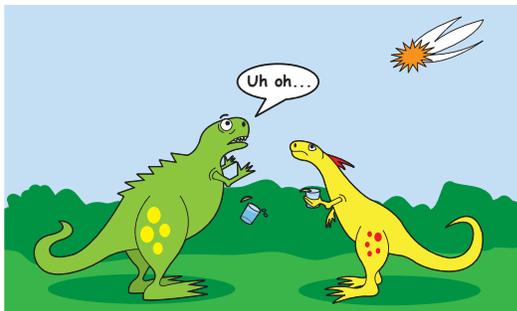


apart. the first visitor actually crashed into it — on purpose! Why? Entice kids to read about the cosmic car crash that made the comet confess many of its secrets at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/deepimpact/>.



For the classroom

“Cool, Curious Comets” is a fun two-page fact sheet you can print and distribute to your students. It briefly and clearly answers such questions as What are comets? Where do comets come from? What do they look like up close? What’s inside them? Why do they have tails? And has a comet ever crashed into Earth? Download this fun handout at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/educators/posters/#stardust>.



Out of school time

Word finds are always a fun and absorbing activity. The online comet word find puzzles on The space Place can be tailored to be easy, medium or hard. The puzzles are also available in Spanish.



Mark your calendar . . .

March 2, 1904: Dr. Seuss was born. If you like reading Dr. Seuss stories, you will like “Ode to Aerogel,” the strange, smoke-like solid substance used by the Stardust mission to capture comet dust. Go to <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/stardust/aerogel.shtml> to read—listen to—this story in Seuss-like verse.



March 12, 1912: Girl Scouts was founded. Girls can find ideas and help in earning badges at our Girl Scout pages, <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/girlscouts/>, where we match requirements from the Girl Scout handbooks to Space Place activities that may help girls to meet them.

March 29, 1807: Asteroid Vesta discovered.



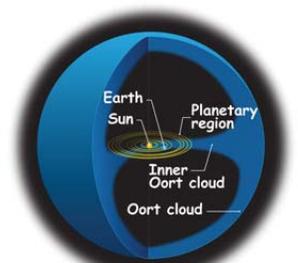
This year, the Dawn spacecraft will arrive at asteroid Vesta and actually go into orbit around it. Read about Professor Starr’s Dream Trip and how a little technology has made his dream come true.

<http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/story-books>.

April 22: Earth Day. This may be a good day to learn about greenhouse gases by making some out of yummy gumdrops. go to <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/tes/gumdrops/>.

April 24: National Astronomy Day. Check out Dr. Marc’s podcasts at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/educators/podcast/>. Pick a topic to listen to in class, or by yourself to give you some ideas about how to mark this heavenly day.

April 28, 1900: Birthday of Jan Oort. If you look at the “Cool, Curious Comets” fun fact sheet mentioned above, you will see that a huge cloud of comets in the outer solar system is named for Oort, since he was the first to propose its existence.



Not to scale