

## WHY DO WE EXPLORE?

THIS ACTIVITY IS ADAPTED FROM NASA'S *DESTINATION: MARS* ACTIVITY GUIDE

### Background Information

Students do not always realize that the steps in future exploration are built on a tradition of exploration that is as old as humans. This lesson is intended to introduce the concept of exploration through the seven traditional reasons that express why humans have always been explorers. Social scientists know that everyone, no matter how young or old, is constantly exploring the world and how it works. Space exploration, including the possible mission to Mars, has opened up a whole new world for us to explore. It is essential that students understand the traditional reasons why humans are reaching beyond the Earth to Mars and why continued exploration is important. Students will be able to make informed decisions regarding exploration and the future of humans in space only if they understand that our future as explorers holds its foundations in our past and in our very nature.

### Objective

Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to:

- review the seven traditional reasons why people explore.
- write a summary of their reason why humans explore.
- illustrate their exploration summaries.
- relate the reasons for exploration to the mission to Mars.

### Instructional Time

45 Minutes

### Materials

Large piece of butcher paper/art paper

Set of large cut letters E-X-P-L-O-R-E

Tall sentence strips/sturdy pieces of paper cut to fit the poster (one per team)

E-X-P-L-O-R-E paragraphs one per group

*The Exploration of Mars* background information sheet

Tape

Pencils

Markers

Student pages, *Why Do We Explore?*

## WHY DO WE EXPLORE?

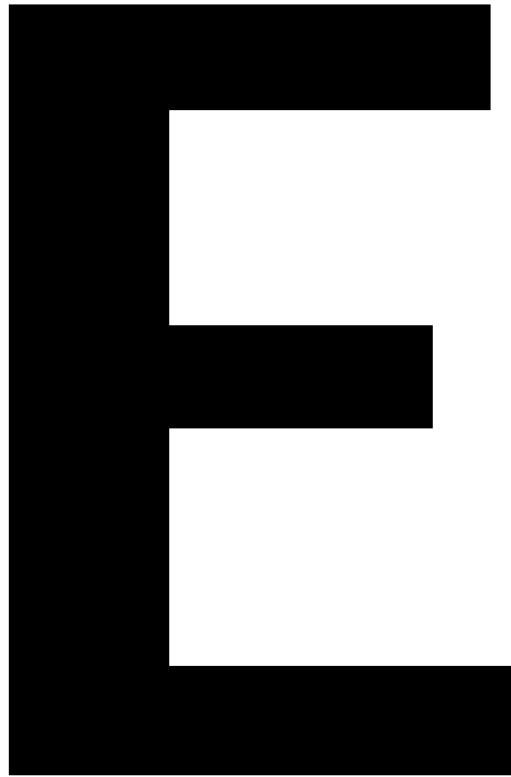
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### Procedure

1. Read background and additional resource materials as necessary.
2. Make the poster by placing letters vertically on large butcher paper, spelling E-X-P-L-O-R-E. Laminate it if possible for reuse.
3. Duplicate the handouts
4. Prepare for seven teams.
5. Divide the students into seven teams.
6. Explain to the students that all humans are explorers including each of them.
7. Give each team a set of materials and the handout for their team.
8. Read the introductions on the top of the student pages to the students.
9. Have the students read about the traditional reason for explorations given to their team.
10. Have the students write a sentence that best explains or summarizes their team's reason for exploring. The team's sentence must begin with the letter assigned to the team.
11. Ask each team to draw an illustration for their sentence.
12. Have each team copy their sentence and illustration on a sentence strip.
13. Instruct each member of the team to copy the team's sentence and illustration on the paper provided.
14. The members of the team will place their sentence strip on the large poster and explain their sentence and illustration to the rest of the class.
15. Each student will copy the other teams' sentences onto their own paper so that they each will have a mini poster when the exercise is completed. The mini posters can be used for closure, extensions, writing prompts, review sheets for testing, and/or making other connections to Mars exploration.
16. Lead a discussion that connects the historical reasons for exploration with the desire to explore Mars using spacecraft, landers, robotic craft and humans.

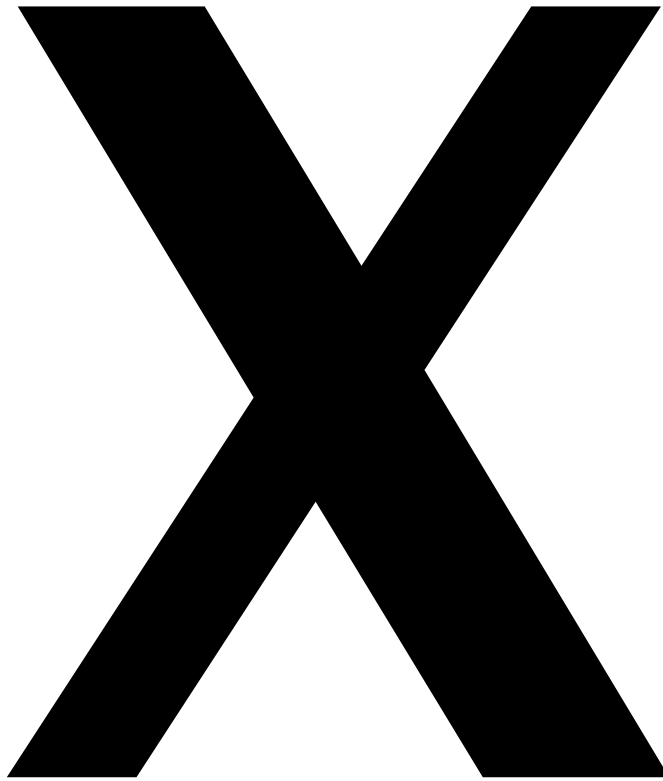
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TEACHER PAGE

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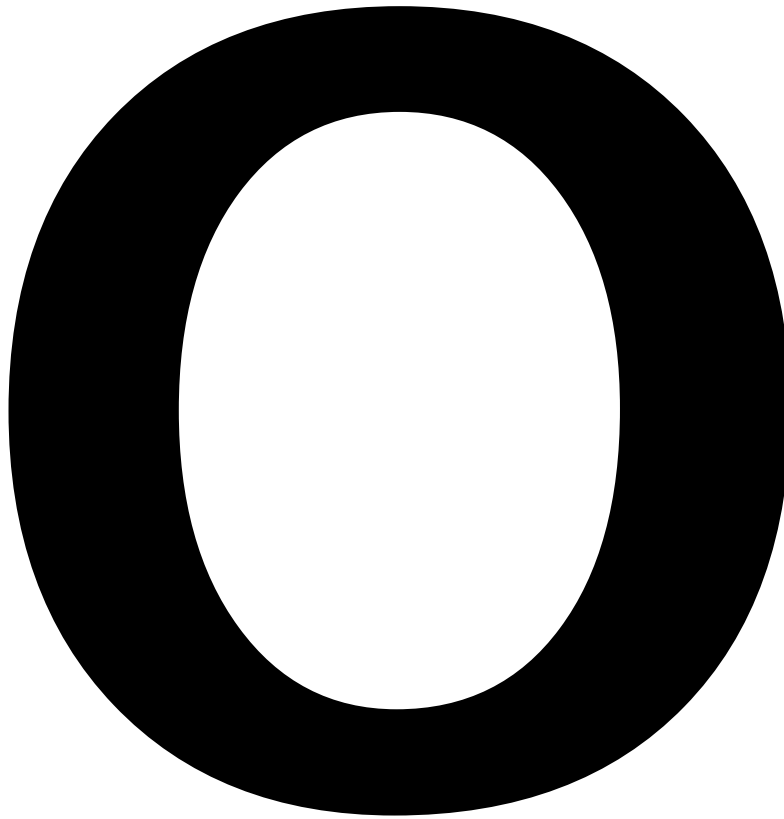
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**WHY DO WE EXPLORE?**

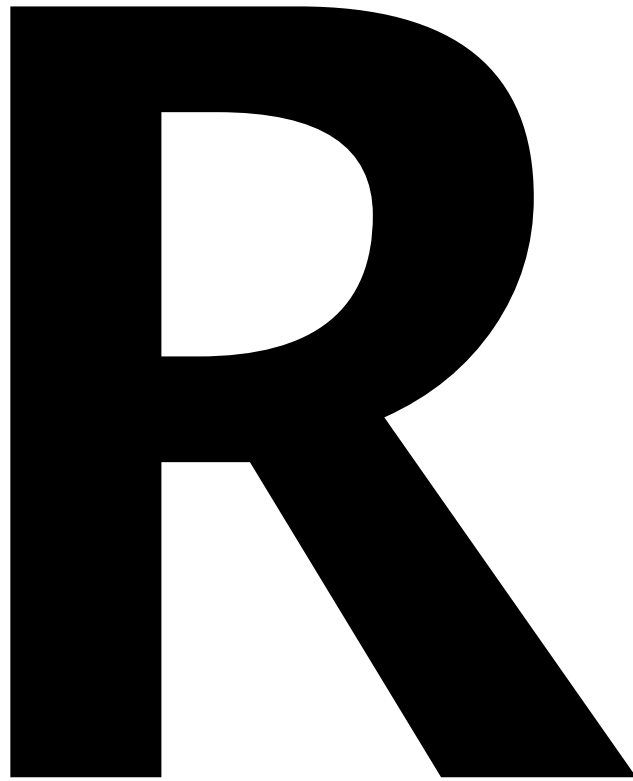
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TEACHER PAGE

## WHY DO WE EXPLORE?

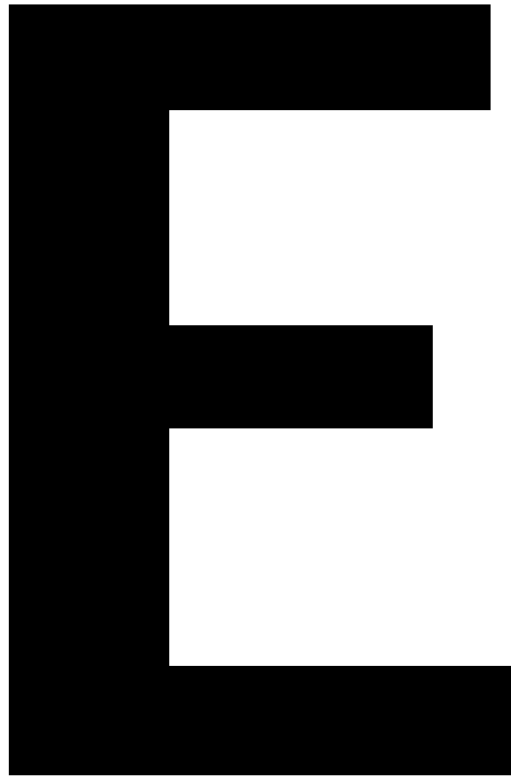
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A large, bold, black letter 'R' is centered on the page. The letter is a simple, sans-serif font with a thick stroke. It consists of a vertical stem on the left, a curved top that extends to the right, and a diagonal leg that descends from the bottom of the curve to the right.



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## **WHY DO WE EXPLORE?**

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### **REASONS FOR EXPLORATION**

#### **YOUR TEAM HAS THE LETTER "E" FOR THE POSTER**

People are curious about everything. We learn something new every day. If you get bored, you automatically look for something to do. That is the way we are. WE like to learn new things. WE also like to understand things and how they work. From the time you were born, you have been finding out how things work by exploring them. Curiosity makes us Explorers.

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#### **YOUR TEAM HAS THE LETTER "X" FOR THE POSTER**

Exploration looks ahead, not behind. We don't want to be stuck in the past. WE want to move ahead. Exploration gives us the sense that anything is possible. Exploration leads to knowledge and understanding, and that means you make the world a better place. People have always tried to leave the world a better place for future generations. Exploration is one way we can do that. It is a gift that people of the past give people of the future. (You may use X or some other letter to start your sentence.)

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#### **YOUR TEAM HAS THE LETTER "P" FOR THE POSTER**

Leaders in space are leaders in the world. The countries that join together to go to Mars and beyond will find new ways of working together and sharing their successes. Working together on major projects in space will help make nations on Earth more peaceful. Anytime you have to work with someone, you learn about them and yourself. Working together with common goals helps people understand each other. It is very hard to go to war with people you understand. Working together also makes us more creative.

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#### **YOUR TEAM HAS THE LETTER "L" FOR THE POSTER**

New places can be helpful to us because they have raw materials and natural resources. If we are going to explore new worlds, it can help our economy. Space exploration creates jobs and technology that make our world better. New worlds and new planets might have raw materials that are almost used up on Earth. We could also look for new, cleaner energy sources in space that might help protect our environment. Looking at Earth from space will give us a new view of our world and how to protect it.

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### REASONS FOR EXPLORATION

#### **YOUR TEAM HAS THE LETTER "O" FOR THE POSTER**

Exploration helps us understand our place in the universe. Where does the Earth, the third planet from the sun, fit into things? Are people alone in the universe? Could there be life out there? If there are other life forms, what can we learn from them? What will they learn from us? Finding life in the universe could be the greatest discovery of all time.

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#### **YOUR TEAM HAS THE LETTER "R" FOR THE POSTER**

Exploration opens up new lands. Our country was once called the "New World" because the people of Europe found it when they thought only an ocean existed here. Europeans moved to the "New World," called it America, and we became our own country. We know no new lands exist on Earth to be discovered, so we look to other planets in our solar system. We might find a place to establish small colonies. Another home for humans might be made on a few bodies on our solar system, though it would take many years and a huge effort.

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#### **YOUR TEAM HAS THE LETTER "E" FOR THE POSTER**

We love adventure and when we explore new places, it is the best kind of adventure. Landing on another planet is a video game isn't nearly as exciting as landing there in person. Americans love adventure. From the time of the first colonies in America, we have spread across this great land and have loved the fun of finding new things. We have landed on our own Moon and sent spacecraft to the far reaches of the solar system. When humans explore, we make the universe our classroom for learning.

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Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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### MISSION BACKGROUND—THE EXPLORATION OF MARS

SPACECRAFT	COUNTRY	LAUNCH	PURPOSE	RESULT
MARS 1	USSR	1962	FLY-BY	NO DATA SENT
MARINER 3	USA	1964	FLY-BY	LOST DURING LAUNCH
MARINER 4	USA	1964	FLY-BY	SENT 21 PHOTOS
ZOND 2	USSR	1964	FLY-BY	SENT NO DATA
MARINER 6	USA	1969	FLY-BY	SENT 75 PHOTOS
MARINER 7	USA	1969	FLY-BY	SENT 126 PHOTOS
MARINER 8	USA	1971	ORBITER	LOST DURING LAUNCH
MARS 2	USSR	1971	ORBITER/LANDER	SENT NO USEFUL DATA
MARS 3	USSR	1971	ORBITER/LANDER	SENT MINIMAL DATA
MARINER 9	USA	1971	ORBITER	SENT 7,329 PHOTOS
MARS 4	USSR	1973	ORBITER	LOST IN SPACE
MARS 5	USSR	1973	ORBITER	SENT SOME DATA
MARS 6	USSR	1973	ORBITER/LANDER	SENT MINIMAL DATA
MARS 7	USSR	1973	ORBITER/LANDER	SENT MINIMAL DATA
VIKING 1 & 2	USA	1975	ORBITER/LANDER	SENT 50,000 PHOTOS, SAMPLE ANALYSES, SEARCHED FOR LIFE
PHOBOS 1	USSR	1988	ORBITER/LANDER	LOST IN SPACE
PHOBOS 2	USSR	1988	ORBITER/LANDER	LOST NEAR PHOBOS, SENT SOME DATA
MARS OBSERVER	USA	1992	ORBITER	LOST NEAR MARS
SURVEYOR	USA	1996	ORBITER	DUE AT MARS 9/97
MARS '96	RUSSIA	1996	ORBITER/LANDER	LOST DURING LAUNCH
PATHFINDER	USA	1996	LANDER	DUE AT MARS 7/97

Orbiter and lander missions are being designed for launch in 1998, 2001, 2003 and 2005. These spacecraft are intended to map rock and mineral compositions from orbit, explore the south pole and the ancient highlands, collect rock samples and return them to Earth. Human explores will surely follow. The first people to walk on Mars are probably in school today.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Whether we know it or not, we are natural-born explorers. There are many reasons why we explore. From birth we learn about life and how it works by exploring. No one can be satisfied for very long without exploring. Whether you are talking to someone next to you or looking around the room, you are exploring!**

Directions:

1. You and your team members are helping to finish the EXPLORE poster on the wall.
2. Each team has a paragraph indicating one of the different reasons why humans explore.
3. At the beginning of the paragraph there is a letter designated for your team. You will use this letter to start a sentence that summarizes your team's reason for exploring.
4. Think of a sentence that describes the ideas from your paragraph. It has to begin with the letter listed on the top of your paragraph! Write the sentence on the sentence strip.
5. Now make an illustration to go with your sentence and put it on the sentence strip. Be colorful.
6. Each student should make a copy of your team's sentence and illustration on the paper provided.
7. Place your team's sentence and illustration on the poster and share them with the class.
8. Copy each team's sentence and illustration as they add them to the poster.

Team Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

