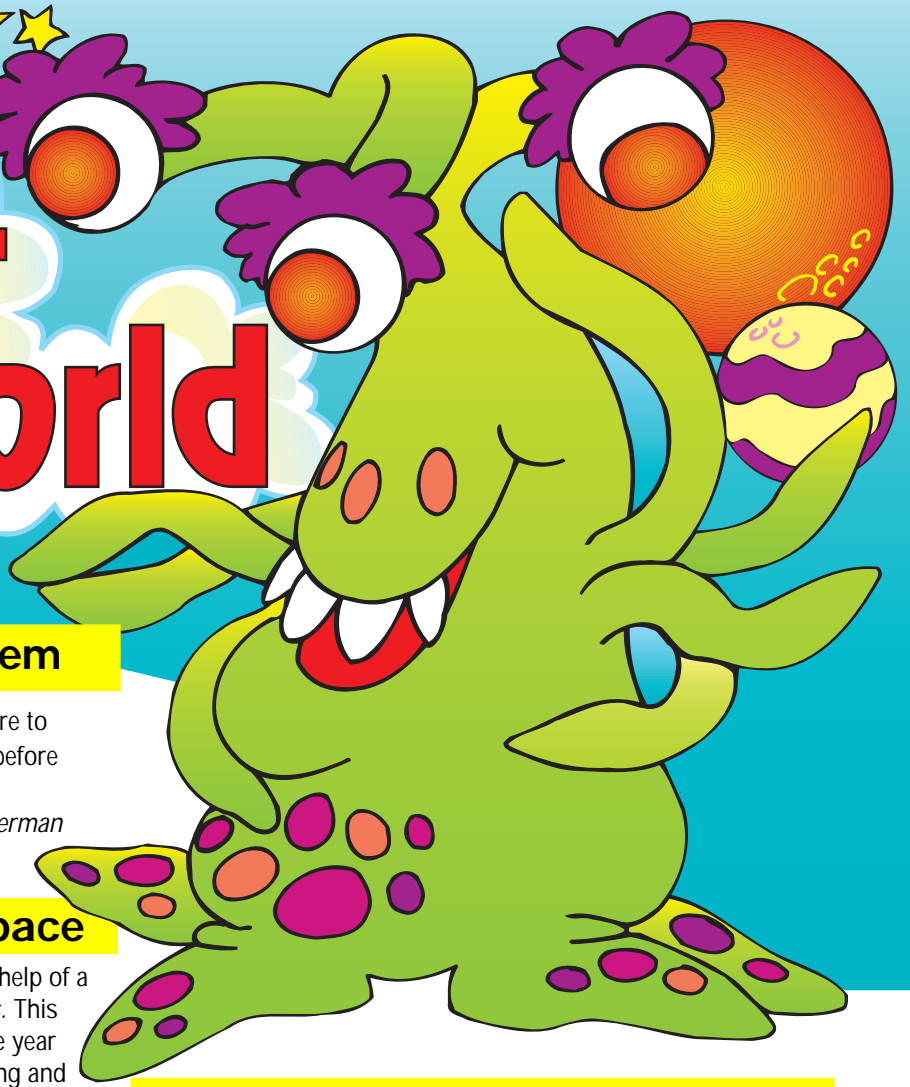


An Out-Of-This-World Adventure!



Exploring The Solar System

If you're planning a study of the solar system, be sure to consider these supplemental literature-based activities before preparing your youngsters for blastoff.

ideas contributed by Wendy Waterman

Postcards From Outer Space

Take a unique trip through the solar system with the help of a one-of-a-kind book entitled *Postcards From The Planets*. This story unfolds as Jessie and Kate depart into space in the year 2095. The twosome chronicle their experiences by writing and sending postcards to their relatives living on Earth. While the book's story line is fictional, the information about the planets has been thoroughly researched. (Available as a Big Book or in packets of six small books each, *Postcards From The Planets* may be purchased from RIGBY publishers by calling 1-800-822-8661.)

After each postcard has been read and discussed, ask your students to choose the solar system locations they would most like to visit. Pair the youngsters according to their preferences; then challenge each twosome to research its destination. To complete the project, have each pair create and complete a postcard like the ones featured in the book. Display the completed projects on a bulletin board entitled "Postcards From Outer Space!"

More About The Solar System

The Planets In Our Solar System by Franklyn M. Branley (published by Thomas Y. Crowell Junior Books) introduces the solar system and its nine planets. The author's simple text enables young readers and listeners to grasp basic facts about the solar system's celestial bodies. In addition directions for making two models of the solar system are given. One model shows the differences in the sizes of the planets. The second model can be displayed on a wall and shows the nine planets and their distances from the Sun. Another highly informative book about the solar system is *A Book About Planets And Stars* by Betty Polisar Reigot (published by Scholastic Inc.). Packed with information, this is another book worth considering for your solar system library.

Solar System Extravaganza

Showcase an eye-catching reproduction of the solar system on your playground using string, nine tubes (from paper products), and tagboard cutouts to represent the Sun and each of the nine planets. Label a tube for each planet. Cut string lengths using the chart below and wrap each length of string around the appropriate tube. Use a hole puncher to punch a hole in the left side of each planet cutout. Punch either one large hole or nine small holes in the right side of the Sun cutout. Assign each of nine student groups a planet; then distribute the tubes and planet cutouts to the appropriate groups. On the playground, position the Sun cutout in an open area. Seat the students (in their groups) near the Sun cutout. Then, in turn, have each group attach one end of its string to the Sun cutout and walk away from the Sun, gently rolling out the string on its tube. When the string's end is reached, the corresponding planet is attached. Continue in this fashion until all of the planets are displayed. Wow! What a solar system!

Planet	Distance From The Sun	String Length
Mercury	36 million miles	1 yard
Venus	67 million miles	approx. 2 yards
Earth	93 million miles	approx. 2.5 yards
Mars	142 million miles	approx. 4 yards
Jupiter	484 million miles	approx. 13.5 yards
Saturn	885 million miles	approx. 24.5 yards
Uranus	1,780 million miles	approx. 49.5 yards
Neptune	2,790 million miles	approx. 77.5 yards
Pluto	3,660 million miles	approx. 101.5 yards

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