



What's going on this week?

Last month, Nasa's £1.9 billion rover mission successfully landed on Mars after its seven-month, 290-million-mile journey from Earth. The rover, named Perseverance is packed with ground-breaking technology. The mission marks an ambitious first step in the effort to collect samples from Mars and return them to Earth. It is thought that life forms from Earth could temporarily survive a Mars-like atmosphere.

Main question:

Could you imagine living on another planet?

Listen, think, share

- Look at this week's poster. Do you know which planet it is? Explain that it is Mars. A new rover landed on the planet last month to help us to learn more about potential life that may have once existed on the planet and the potential of people living there in the future.
- How do you think you would feel if it was discovered that there was once life on another planet?
- Read through the information found on the assembly resource, which explains more about the Perseverance rover and its journey. Are you surprised about what it has achieved already? What do you think it might teach us about Mars?
- Does it surprise you that a rover is able to do so much and teach us so much without a crew making the journey alongside it?
- Watch this week's useful video, which shows the Perseverance rover landing on Mars. Talk about people's reactions to the event, why do you think they reacted the way they did? How did watching it make you feel?
- Some people believe that in the future, we may be able to live on other planets, such as Mars. Do you think this is likely? Is it something you would consider? Explain your reasons why.

Reflection

There are many planets in the Universe. Space exploration has given us the opportunity to learn about how life survives on our own planet and also the potential of life, from the past or in the future, on other planets.



KS1 Focus

Question:

What is a planet?

Listen, think, share

- Explain that this week we have been thinking about the rover, named Perseverance, landing on Mars. Mars is a planet. What do you think a planet is? Can you name any other planets?
- There are eight planets in our solar system, which orbit the Sun. What do we call our planet?
- Look at resource 1, which explains what a planet is and gives us more information about our planet, Earth. Do you know anything else about the planets in our solar system? What would you like to find out?
- Think about Earth. We live on planet Earth and we can see the Moon and the Sun. When do we see the Moon and the Sun? What else do we sometimes see in the sky e.g. stars, clouds, aeroplanes, planets?
- Explain that whether it is day or night, winter, spring, summer or autumn is all linked to our planet and what position it is in within the solar system!
- Focus on the picture of all of the planets. Can you point to the planet you think is the biggest? What do you think it is called? Do you know the name of the planet that is closest to the Sun? Which one is furthest away?
- Looking at the picture, which planet do you like best? Why?

Reflection

There are eight planets in our solar system, which all orbit the Sun. The planet we live on is Earth. It is the only known planet where life can be found!



KS2 Focus

Question:

What do we know about Mars?

Listen, think, share

- Write 'Mars' on the board. Mars is a planet in our solar system. What do you know about it? Record any suggestions.
- Nobody has actually been to Mars, but we still know quite a bit about it. How do you think we know about Mars even though nobody has been there?
- Explain that Mars is one of the most explored bodies in our solar system. It has been explored by spacecraft and robots.
- Look at resource 2, which shares more information about Mars. Does any of the information surprise you? Do you have any questions?
- Focus on how we know so much about Mars. Explain that it is the only planet where rovers have been sent to explore the surface. It is hoped the rover, Perseverance, will bring back samples from Mars to Earth, which will help us learn even more.
- How do you think learning more about Mars might impact the future? If you could, would you like to visit Mars? Why? Do you think space exploration is important? Do you think everyone will agree with you?

Reflection

After Earth, Mars is the most explored planet in our solar system and the only planet where rovers have been sent. We know lots about Mars but there is still more to discover in the future!



KS2 Follow-up Ideas

Option 1: Think about the recent success of the rover, Perseverance, landing on Mars.

- How do you feel about it?
- What questions would you like to ask?

Explain that Perseverance was sent by NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). Ask the children to write a letter to Nasa! They could use the following structure:

- Introduction – why are you writing? To find out more/to congratulate them on their recent mission?
- Paragraph 2 – share some information about Perseverance and how you feel about it.
- Paragraph 3 – what would you like to know?
- Conclusion

If possible, send your letters!

Option 2: Create some space art! Provide the children with black paper and chalks or pastels. Before they begin, plan their ideas:

- What will your space art include? Stars, planets, asteroids or will it be shapes, lines and colours?
- Will you try to evoke an emotion or a feeling through your art?
- How will you use the chalks/pastels? Firmly, gently, by blending, leaving sharp lines or a mixture?

Allow the children time to explore and create their picture. Once they have finished, share their picture with a partner.



KS1 Follow-up Ideas

Option 1: Ask the children to imagine they have travelled in a rocket to a new planet!

- What can you see?
- What is the ground like?
- What is the sky like?
- What can you hear?
- Are there any life forms?
- How do you feel? Are you scared, excited, nervous, happy?
- Would you like to live here, or will you travel home in your rocket?

Ask the children to draw a picture of their planet and write a sentence to describe it.

Option 2: Listen to 'The Planets' by Gustav Holst (YouTube). Focus on Mars, Bringer of War. As the children listen, ask them to think about:

- Is the music fast or slow?
- Is the music loud or soft?
- Can you describe the sounds you can hear?
- What instruments might make these sounds?
- How does the music make you feel?
- Do you like it?

Once you have finished listening, share responses before choosing another planet to listen to. Once you have used the questions above to discuss the new planet, ask the children to compare them.

- Which was your favourite and why?



This Week's Useful Websites

[This week's news story](#)

www.independent.co.uk/news/science/life-mars-earth-nasa-study-b1805425.html

This Week's Useful Videos

[Perseverance rover Mars landing](#)

<https://youtu.be/L6dx0pO5MSw>

This Week's Virtual Assembly

www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss

This Week's Useful Vocabulary

Ambitious – having a strong desire and determination for success and achievement.

Atmosphere – a planet's atmosphere is the layer of air and gas around it.

Crew – the crew of a ship, spacecraft, aircraft is the people who work on it.

Explore – if you explore a place, you find out what it is like.

Mission – an important assignment or task, especially one that involves travelling to another country.

Temporary – something temporary only lasts for a limited time; it is not permanent.