

1. Exploring Mars

This week's lesson is about the latest US space mission to Mars and the experiments currently being carried out on the surface of the planet by the NASA rover, *Curiosity*.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm on the subject of the planet Mars – what does it make your students think of? Do they know what human-made vehicle is currently exploring the surface of Mars? Do they think it is important for human beings to be able to explore other planets?
2. Hand out Worksheet A and give your students as much time as they need to read through it, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary.
3. Divide your students into pairs, then hand out Worksheet B and ask them to complete the crossword.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Keeping your students in their pairs, ask them to turn over their copies of Worksheets A and B or to temporarily hand them back to you. Then hand out Worksheet C and ask the students to complete Exercise 2, which contains the text from Worksheet A with twelve incorrect words that they have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are four other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all in grammar, spelling, or vocabulary, and that no correction requires them to write any additional words.
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. landed 2. detailed 3. carry 4. parachute 5. wheels 6. journey
7. surface 8. spacecraft 9. mobile 10. climate 11. remote 12. followers

If the sentences have been completed correctly, *Earth* and *Jupiter* will read from top to bottom.

Exercise 2

2. remote 3. launched 4. on 5. per 8. beam 9. analyze 10. of
11. successfully 12. advanced 13. seen 15. fascinating 16. on

Words in bold that are correct: 1. operating 6. laboratory 7. sophisticated 14. provide

2. Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/msl/>

The official NASA *Curiosity* website. Includes mission and rover information, facts, news, pictures, videos, and “fun.” Accessible to Intermediate level.

<http://www.space.com/17171-mars-rover-curiosity-self-portrait-gale-crater.html>

From the SPACE.com website, a “self-portrait” picture of *Curiosity*. The page also includes video footage of the surface of Mars. Accessible to Intermediate level.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwinFP8_qIM

An animation of the Mars mission from NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Accessible to Intermediate level.

<http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2012/08/curiositys-secrets/>

If you’d like to know more about the rover itself, this is a detailed article from *Wired* about some of the vehicle’s technical features. Challenging for Intermediate level.