

Mars500: Would you go?

Language

Space vocabulary, Verb tenses, Listing pros and cons

Level

Elementary; (equivalent to CEF level A2)

Comment

This lesson is about a simulated mission to Mars that is currently taking place in Moscow. The lesson can be used in conjunction with the European Space Agency web site (listed at the end of these notes) where students watch a video tour of the spacecraft.

How to use the lesson

- 1 Write *Mars500* on the board. Ask you students what they can they tell you about it. If they don't know, what do they think the name might refer to? Explain that it's an experiment related to space travel that's currently taking place in Moscow. Give students copies of the worksheet and ask them to do exercise 1 in pairs or small groups. Check answers.
- 2 Students do exercise 2 which tests their knowledge of the planets. While they are doing the exercise, draw a sun on the left side of the board and then circles to represent the eight planets in a line from the sun. Check through the answers and write the planet names next to the circles on the board.
- 3 Go through the questions in exercise 3 as a whole class. Then tell students they're going to focus on the planet Mars. What can they tell you about the planet? Write any interesting facts on the board.
- 4 Ask students to read the article and find the answers to the three questions. Check answers.
- 5 Students try to answer as many of the questions in exercise 5 as they can without looking back at the article. They then look for the answers to the questions they couldn't answer. Check answers.
- 6 For exercise 6, students shouldn't look back at the article. Invite some students to read out their answers. Then ask them to check their answers by looking back at the article. This is quite a challenging task as it requires students to use past, present and future forms.
- 7 Exercise 7 is a discussion task. Students work in small groups to discuss the questions. Invite them to share their answers with the rest of the class.
- 8 Ask students to look at the title of the article. Would they go on a simulated mission to Mars? Encourage them to give their reasons. Then ask them to look at exercise 8 in which they look at the reasons for going or not going on a real mission to Mars. Students report back to the rest of the class on what they decided. How many students would like to go to Mars?
- 10 Visit the web sites listed at the bottom of the page to find out how the experiment is going. Students can also do this for homework. At the European Space Agency site they can also watch a video tour of the craft.

Answer key

1

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1 Earth | 3 Mars | 5 Neptune | 7 Uranus |
| 2 Jupiter | 4 Mercury | 6 Saturn | 8 Venus |

2

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune

3

- | | | | |
|--------|---------|----------|-----------|
| 1 Mars | 2 Earth | 3 Saturn | 4 Jupiter |
|--------|---------|----------|-----------|

4

- 1 six
- 2 because it's a good thing for science and for all of humankind
- 3 complete different tasks

5

- 1 False. It isn't a real mission.
- 2 True.
- 3 True.
- 4 False. They gave a press conference before entering the craft.
- 5 False. Only three of them will walk on Mars.
- 6 False. They're free to leave the experiment at any time.

6

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1 are sitting | 3 started | 5 will walk |
| 2 are taking part | 4 gave | 6 relax |

7, 8 Students' own answers.

Related websites

The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.

<http://www.esa.int/SPECIALS/Mars500/> (European Space Agency)

http://news.cnet.com/8301-11386_3-20001099-76.html

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science_and_environment/10197470.stm

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/science_and_environment/10233293.stm