

WORLD SPACE WEEK



By Chris Graham

Segment: Adult

Level: Pre- intermediate and intermediate

Materials: handout.

Lesson procedure

1. Introduction

Briefly introduce the topic of World Space Week, do any of the class know anything about it?

2. Reading and discussion activities

Give each student a copy of the reading text handout and divide the students into groups of four or five students.

Follow the three steps on the handout:

Step one

Before they read, in groups ask them to discuss these three questions and make some notes:

1. Have you ever heard of World Space Week?
2. What do you think it is?
3. What activities do you think happen in World Space Week?

Step two

Ask them to look briefly at the text and see how accurate their answers were. They can then discuss the text and their answers in their group.

Step three

In groups ask them to look at these five questions and discuss if they know some or all of the answers. Then they can read the text again to answer the questions. Some of the questions require them to think beyond the text. The answers are in *italics*.

1. World Space Week is held every two years, is this correct? *No, it is an annual event.*
2. What is the main aim of World Space Week in terms of space exploration? *To encourage public support for space exploration.*
3. World Space Week wants to encourage peaceful uses of space technology. Can you think of any non-peaceful uses of space technology? *Space-based missiles or spy satellites are possible answers.*
4. World Space Week is an international event – is it well-known in your country?
5. Which age range does World Space Week seem to be aimed at? *Teenagers and young adults.*



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2. Critical thinking activities – a discussion

1. Ask students in pairs to discuss how they feel about space research. They should consider whether it is a good use of money and resources or whether they think governments should spend the money in other ways such as on schools, transport infrastructure or hospitals. Encourage them to decide what the arguments for and against are. They can look at the text for ideas if they wish to, or they can research online.

Note: This could be a homework task instead.

2. Make small groups of like-minded students (those that agree with each other), and encourage them to prepare an argument for or against space research. They should also consider the counter arguments. Some students may have to pretend they agree or disagree as you need approximately equal numbers of students on each 'side'.
3. Ask the students to have the discussion itself, by sharing ideas, making arguments and making and managing counter arguments. If you have a class of ten students or less you can have one discussion with two groups of five, one for and one against. If you have a larger class you can have two or more parallel discussions. You will need to monitor all the discussions equally.
4. From your monitoring, you should assess the best arguments and at the end of the discussions you should explain why you thought they were the best. If appropriate you can declare a winning group.



*For more information and activities on World Space Week, please visit:
www.worldspaceweek.org*



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Reading Text

Step one

Before you read, in your groups discuss these three questions and make some notes:

1. Have you ever heard of World Space Week?
2. What do you think it is?
3. What activities do you think happen in World Space Week?

Step two

Look briefly at the text and see how accurate your answers were. Discuss the text and your answers in your group.

World Space Week

In December 1999, the United Nations announced that World Space Week would be held every year from 4-10 October. Each year there are almost 3,000 events in over eighty countries held during World Space Week.

The theme for 2017 is “Exploring New Worlds in Space” and it is hoped that more events than ever will be held to celebrate what the United Nations says are “the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition”.

These dates of 4-10 October were chosen to commemorate two events:

- October 4, 1957: the launching of the first satellite, Sputnik 1
- October 10, 1967: the signing of the ‘Treaty on Principles Governing the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space’. This agreement helps ensure space exploration is a peaceful activity.

Some of the aims of World Space Week are:

- to educate young people and adults about space science and the benefits we get from it
- to encourage the use of space for sustainable economic development
- to encourage public support for space exploration programmes
- to encourage young people to study the so-called STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and to explore aerospace careers
- to develop international co-operation on space projects
- to allow countries to display their peaceful uses of space and space technologies.



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Most of the events in the week are organised by space agencies, aerospace companies, schools, planetariums, museums and astronomy clubs around the world. Some of the events are large and complex, while others are much simpler.

For example for World Space Week 2017 in Estonia, scientists from Tartu Observatory will visit elementary and high schools to give a talk about astronomy and space; while in Tampa, USA, The Museum of Science and Industry will host an afternoon with former NASA astronaut Story Musgrave who'll be sharing his experiences from his four spacewalks.

A much larger event for 2017 will be in Port Harcourt, Nigeria with a three-day symposium to bring together space enthusiasts, students and young professionals to discuss the opportunities space programmes offer young people. Expected speakers include engineers and scientists from across Africa, some of whom worked on the Nigeria Edusat-1 satellite. There will also be workshops, films and classes including Lego robotics and telescope-making.

However, not everyone agrees that space exploration is a positive thing. Many people around the world believe that the money that is invested in space exploration and similar projects could be used more effectively, for example in building schools and hospitals, or on projects to support developing countries. World Space Week exists to help people understand the benefits of space science and the aerospace industries, but the arguments about the best use of these large amounts of money will probably continue.

Source: World Space Week - www.worldspaceweek.org

Step three

In groups look at these five questions and discuss if you know some or all of the answers.

Now read the text again to answer the questions. Some of the answers will need you to think outside of the text.

1. World Space Week is held every two years, is this correct?
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