



## Our Earth and Other Planets Lessons

### Websites

#### General

##### [The Planetary Society](http://www.planetary.org/)

Offers extensive up-to-date information and pictures of the most current happenings in astronomy.

( <http://www.planetary.org/> )

##### [Astronomy Picture of the Day](http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html)

Each day a different picture from space is shown with an information sheet to go along with it.

( <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html> )

##### [StarChild](http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/StarChild.html)

This child-friendly NASA site offers an enormous amount of information about astronomy for children to explore independently.

( <http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/StarChild.html> )

##### [Science, Optics & You](http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/primer/java/scienceopticsu/powersof10/)

View the Milky Way at 10 million light years from the Earth. Then move through space towards the Earth in successive orders of magnitude until you reach the subatomic universe of electrons and protons.

( <http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/primer/java/scienceopticsu/powersof10/> )

#### Objects in Our Solar System

##### [Community Solar Systems](http://www.astc.org/resource/exhibits/dussault.htm)

Details community solar system walks across the country including Peoria, IL; Eugene, OR; Boston, MA; Gainesville, FL; and Washington, D.C.

( <http://www.astc.org/resource/exhibits/dussault.htm> )

##### [NASA- Solar System Walk](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/glenn/events/solrwalk.html)

Details solar system walk in Cleveland, OH.

( <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/glenn/events/solrwalk.html> )



**[Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics](#)**

This Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics site provides current sky information about visible planets and stars. Information is updated daily.  
( <http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/pao/skyreport/index.html> )

**[Space.com- NightSky](#)**

Scroll down to find out when different celestial objects are visible in the night sky.  
( <http://www.space.com/7718-skywatching-highlights-2010.html> )

**[NSSDC Catalog of Spaceborne Imaging](#)**

This National Space Science Data Center site contains detailed images of the planets taken from lunar probes. It also contains fact sheets about each planet.  
( <http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/imgcat/> )



## Our Earth and Other Planets Lessons

### Books

#### Planets

The list below includes books to encourage children to continue learning about our solar system, including planets, space, and space camp. Two books concern huge numbers and size.

#### **All About Space (Scholastic First Encyclopedia)**

By Sue Becklake. (2002, Scholastic Reference)

Perfect for elementary-school children, a reference book that includes a table of contents, glossary, index, and "How to Use This Book." Chapters include The Universe, The Solar System, Studying Space, and Space Travel. Each topic (e.g., the sun, Saturn, galaxy, astronomer, astronaut) is discussed in a two-page spread with full color illustrations, including many photographs.

#### **The Atlas of Space**

By Jack Challoner. (2003, Franklin Watts Ltd)

A comprehensive, illustrated reference guide for children that includes contents, glossary, index, and labeled maps and diagrams. Chapters include Watching the Sky, The Solar System, Deep Space, and Space Exploration.

#### **Blasting Off to Space Academy (Ultimate Field Trip 5)**

By Susan E. Goodman; photographs by Michael J. Doolittle. (2001, Atheneum)

Anecdotal storytelling and photos let readers join a group of kids who go to U.S. Space Academy for a week. They try on flight suits and the lives of training astronauts. They use NASA simulators and learn how to walk on the moon and how to work without gravity. Finally, they blast off on a mission of their own.

#### **Count to a Million**

By Jerry Pallotta; illustrated by Ray Bolster. (2003, Scholastic Inc.)

"If you can count to ten, you can count to one million. Welcome to the decimal system." With these words on an opening page that pictures Earth in space, this book clearly presents and illustrates counting by the power of ten to reach 1,000,000.



### **Is a Blue Whale the Biggest Thing There Is?**

By Robert E. Wells. (1993, Albert Whitman & Company)

With this book children think about some big things (like a blue whale), some bigger things (like Earth), and the biggest thing there is: the universe.

### **Night Sky (National Audubon Society First Field Guide)**

By Gary Mechler. (1999, Scholastic Reference)

Designed to help novices look at the night sky the way an astronomer does. The book is divided into four parts: What is Astronomy?, How to Look at the Sky, field guide, and reference.

Includes descriptions of objects in our solar system as well as numerous star maps.

### **One Small Square: The Night Sky**

By Donald M. Silver; illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne. (1998, McGraw-Hill)

Focuses on "one small square" of night sky around the constellation Orion. Discusses the stars' colors, the Great Orion Nebula, the Milky Way galaxy, planets, comets, and the moon.

### **Our Solar System (revised edition)**

By Seymour Simon. (2007, Collins)

With gorgeous full-color photographs and clear text, this book describes the planets, dwarf planets, dozens of moons, and thousands of asteroids, meteoroids, and comets that travel around our sun.

### **The Planet Hunter: The Story Behind What Happened to Pluto**

By Elizabeth Rusch; illustrated by Guy Francis. (2007, Rising Moon)

This colorful book describes how the research of Mike Brown led astronomers to rethink their definitions of planets and other objects in the solar system.

### **Postcards from Pluto: A Tour of the Solar System**

By Loreen Leedy. (2006, Holiday House)

Lively and colorful illustrations provide a fun introduction to the solar system. Fictitious postcards from each planet can give children a creative impetus for their own reports. Keep in mind that since the book was written, Pluto has been reclassified as a dwarf planet and additional moons have been discovered orbiting the outer planets.



**Seeing Earth from Space**

By Patricia Lauber. (1996, Scholastic Inc.)

Vivid photos of Earth from space give readers a chance to soar away from our planet and view it as astronauts do. Text about how scientists use data collected by satellites may exceed the interest of elementary-age children, but the color photos make the book worth having in the Science Center.

**The Storytelling Star: Tales of the Sun, Moon, and Stars**

By James Riordan; illustrated by Amanda Hall. (1999, Anova Books)

A collection of myths and legends from ancient cultures around the world, including the Incas, Aztecs, Ancient Greeks, Chinese, and Native Americans. This book was particularly popular with the children of the Science Companion authors who were asked to read a handful of books about the solar system.