

First Grade Space Explorers

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As states across the country begin to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), there will necessarily be a shift in the way teachers deliver instruction. It will no longer be enough to have students simply read a text and take notes from a lecture to rehash this information on multiple choice tests. Watching a video of a “science guy” will only be a supplemental resource and hopefully there will be some “science gals” too. The scientific method has become a stagnant one. Students will be expected to consider phenomena that occurs around them daily and then come up with ways to explore how to understand that phenomena. Student discussions will have to be more inquisitive as opposed to simply regurgitating facts that are given to them. Science will begin at those questions and discussions, and while having a hypothesis is a good thing still, the way students will be asked to prove a hypothesis will look very different. This unit has been designed for the first grade teacher to shrink the distances between the moon, the sun, and the Earth. Students will use NGSS Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) to explore solar and lunar mechanics. They will gather and analyze data through observation. They will make models to examine patterns. Students will need to integrate mathematics skills, reading of informative texts, artistic technique, and writing skills in order to learn about the Earth and its place in the universe. They will make reasoned arguments and design investigations to build an understanding of Bright Days/Dark Nights.