MARS: THE RED PLANET

Level: Upper intermediate (equivalent to CEF level B2)

Age: Teenagers / Adults

Time: 60 minutes

Summary: This infographic lesson looks at interesting facts and figures about Mars.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; access to a projector or IWB to project the infographic from onestopenglish.

HOW TO USE THE LESSON

1 Tell students to look at exercise 1. Tell them to write the names of the planets individually, then check with a partner. Take the opportunity to remind them that Pluto is a dwarf planet. It was initially classified as a planet, but was excluded from the list of planets in 2006. Practise the pronunciation of each planet before moving on to the next exercise.

2 Ask students to read the infographic about Mars and then turn over their papers when they have finished. You could give students the infographic as a printed worksheet or display it on the board from onestopenglish. If you project the infographic from the website, give them enough time to read each section before removing the image. Students match each heading to its function. Ask them to check their answers with a partner. If you have time, you may like to ask them to brainstorm any of the information that they remember from each section. Students read the infographic again to check their answers.

3 Now ask them to look at exercise 3. Students work in pairs or small groups to find the vocabulary in the infographic. Alternatively, they could do this exercise individually and then check their answers with a partner. Write the answers on the board during feedback and work on the pronunciation of difficult sounds.

4 Ask students to look at exercise 4 and complete the sentences from memory. Ask them to check their answers using the infographic. Clarify the function of *although* and *despite*. (They are used to express contrasting or surprising information.)

5 Ask students to look at exercise 5. Ask them to make complex sentences using *despite* and *although*. Remind students that *despite* is followed by a subject and verb. Be prepared to give them more examples of *despite* and gerund forms if necessary.

6 Organize your class into small groups of three or four. You may want to demonstrate the activity first by asking a stronger student a discussion question to get some feedback. Students discuss the questions in small groups. Get whole class feedback when they have finished.

Key:

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

2
1 *Mars missions*
2 *Mars*
3 *Colonisation*
4 *Earth versus Mars*
5 *Life on Mars?*

3
1 *layer*
2 *homogeneous*
3 *similarity/ likeness*
4 *harsh*
5 *habitable*
6 *probes*
7 *launch*
8 *outperform*
9 *melt*
10 *thrive*

4
1 ***Despite*** *its likeness, Mars is a cold, dry, desert-like planet with a thin atmosphere.*
2 *The temperatures are so low that only Antarctica on Earth is comparable,* ***although*** *Mars is much colder.*

5
- *Colonisation of other planets is possible, although it would take centuries of extremely difficult work.*
- *Space exploration is important for the human race, despite it using up vast amounts of important finance.*
- *Mars has similar qualities to the Earth, although its extreme conditions would*

TEACHER'S NOTES

MARS: THE RED PLANET

make it practically impossible to live on.

- *Unmanned probes and robots are used for space exploration, despite the fact that humans could do a better job.*

6 *students' own answers*

RELATED WEBSITES

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

nasa.gov/topics/journeytomars/index.html

meteorite.unm.edu/site_media/pdf/BringingLife.pdf

smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/now-accepting-applications-for-mars-colonists-728711/

bbc.co.uk/science/space/solarsystem/sun_and_planets/mars

solarsystem.nasa.gov/planets/mars

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1 Name the eight planets in the Solar System.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2 Read the infographic on interesting facts and statistics about Mars. Turn it over when you've finished. With a partner, match each of the five headings below with its function.

Mars	*Earth versus Mars*	*Life on Mars*	*Mars missions*	*Colonisation*

1. The current exploration situation _____
2. Facts about the planet _____
3. How Mars could be made habitable _____
4. Comparing planetary statistics _____
5. The possibility of extra-terrestrial life _____

3 Find words in the infographic that mean:

1. to cover a surface _____
2. consisting of things that are similar _____
3. the quality of being similar to something _____ / _____
4. difficult to live in _____
5. able to support life _____
6. vehicles containing cameras and instruments _____
7. the act of sending a space vehicle into space _____
8. to do something better than someone or something else _____
9. to become liquid _____
10. to grow well _____

4 Complete the following sentences from the infographic.

1. _____ its likeness, Mars is a cold, dry, desert-like planet with a thin atmosphere.
2. The temperatures are so low that only Antarctica on Earth is comparable, _____ Mars is much colder.

MARS: THE RED PLANET

5 Make four complex sentences by joining sentences from group A with sentences from group B using the words from exercise 4 (*although* and *despite*).

A

- Colonisation of other planets is possible.
- Space exploration is important for the human race.
- Mars has similar qualities to the Earth.
- Unmanned probes and robots are used for space exploration.

B

- It uses up vast amounts of important finance.
- Its extreme conditions would make it practically impossible to live on.
- The fact (is) that humans could do a better job.
- It would take centuries of extremely difficult work.

6 Discuss the following questions in small groups.

- What reasons are there for colonising other planets?
- How probable is the colonisation of other planets? Discuss reasons for your answer.
- Would you go to live on another planet? Give possible reasons why / why not.
- What can we do on this planet to avoid having to colonise another in the future?

INFOGRAPHIC

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