

Who Will Go To Mars? – All (35 minutes)



Introduction:

Send your students on a “WebQuest” to discover what characteristics and qualities a person must possess to be chosen as a crewmember for a journey to Mars. Information sources are listed on the following page to help them get started. Use this activity along with *Choose the Crew!*

A voyage to Mars from Earth and back again will take approximately 2.5 years (which is about the same amount of time that it took early explorers to sail around the world). During that time crewmembers will be isolated in small, confined spaces. The only humans they will have direct contact with will be each other. Contact with Earth will be limited. *How will we choose the crew that will travel to Mars?*

Crew selection for an interplanetary flight will be very important to the success of the mission. In addition to having the skills necessary to conduct research and build and/or repair a Mars base, the crew will have to get along with one another.

Objective:

The student will:

- consider and identify essential characteristics of, and criteria for becoming, an interplanetary traveler by generating a checklist in small groups.

Materials:

- Paper/pencil
- Computers with access to the Internet

Procedure:

Preparation:

As a member of a team of NASA space psychologists your assignment is to answer the question:

What characteristics and qualities must a person possess to be chosen as a crewmember for a journey to Mars?

- What should you look for in a leader, in a team member?
- If there is conflict, how will it be resolved?
- How will the qualities of each person mesh with the others?

Who Will Go To Mars? - All



It is your responsibility to determine which characteristics you are looking for in crewmembers and which characteristics might eliminate a person from being selected for a long duration space mission. Be prepared to present your findings to the NASA Life Sciences Development team.

Classroom Procedure:

1. Divide students into groups of 3 to 4.
2. As NASA space psychologists, have students determine the criteria that NASA will use in the astronaut crew selection process for interplanetary travel. Have them decide what qualities to look for and how many people the crew should include.
3. Have students generate a checklist of qualities they are looking for and a second checklist of those that would not be beneficial in a long duration journey. Make sure they understand that their checklists will be used to select a crew.

Resources:

1. Crew Selection and Space Psychology
www.marsacademy.com/crew/crew1.htm
2. Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications-Behavior and Performance
www.hq.nasa.gov/office/olmsa/lifesci/behavior.htm
3. Space Academy Selection and Training Astronauts
liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov/academy/astronauts/training.html
4. Visit our website for a complete list of resources
www.bscs.org/mars
5. Another good resource that you might find in the library is Bold Endeavors by Jack Stuster.

References:

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