

# The Red Planet

by John Lockyer

## Summary

Scientists think that Mars is the only planet in our solar system on which people might be able to live one day. Spacecraft exploring the planet have sent back valuable information, but there are still many problems that need to be solved before people could live there.

## Features of the Text

- Photographs and illustrations
- Captions and labels
- Fact boxes
- Glossary and index
- Newspaper articles
- Report

## Purpose

*The Red Planet* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** asking questions to deepen understanding;
- S** drawing conclusions from the text;
- S** gathering information from written and visual text;
- S** summarizing and restating information.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Asking questions to deepen understanding
- S** Drawing conclusions from the text

## Introducing the text

Make a three-column chart headed What we know, What we want to know, and What we have learned. Record the students' answers to the following questions in the first column.

- What do you know about Mars?
- Why do you think it is called the Red Planet?
- How do you think Mars is different from Earth? How is it the same?

Ask the students what they would like to know about Mars, and record their questions in the second column of the chart.

## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read to the end of page 5.

– What did people used to think about Mars? Why?

Discuss how and why these ideas changed. Read through the Mars file on page 5 together and share any other information the students know about Mars.

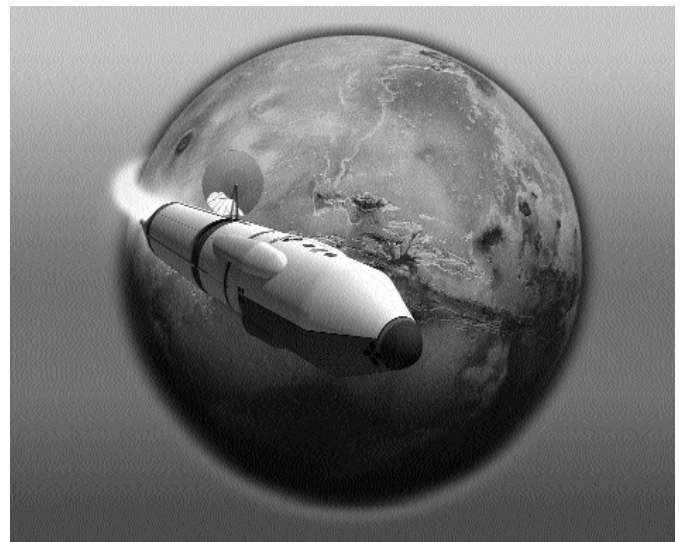
Ask the students to read to the end of page 11. After they have finished reading, have them work in pairs to list the physical features of Mars. Discuss their findings as a group.

Next, have the students list the problems that would need to be solved before people could live on Mars. They can now read the rest of the text. After they have finished reading, compare the students' ideas with those in the text.

Refer to the questions that were charted earlier. Encourage the students to answer them using evidence from the text.

Discuss the history of the exploration of Mars.

Finally, ask the students to review what they have learned about Mars and enter their responses in the third column of the chart. The chart can be displayed for future reference.



## Following Up

The students can:

- use the blackline master on page 33 to complete the timeline about Mars
- design a base where people could live on Mars, which provides oxygen, water, food, clothing, and transportation
- imagine they are living on Mars in 2020 and write a journal entry that describes the living conditions and how they feel about living on the planet.