NEWS BREAK

Article: A desert confab aims for the stars

Section: BUSINESS, D1

Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, April 28, 2019, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will discuss whether they think human space colonization will happen and when. They'll debate whether they think humans were meant to travel and live on other planets. Students will talk about why we, as the human race, aren't caring for the earth we live on. They'll discuss whether they'd move to Mars if given the opportunity and whether we'll we see an expansion of the human presence across the solar system in their lifetime.
Pre-Reading Discussion:

What do you think the article will be about? Are there clues in the pictures?
What can you infer from these 2 pictures?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using context clues? A context clue is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

They responded more favorably to his belief that private contractors should handle logistics and let NASA **hew** to its roots as a science organization, rotating researchers out of moon and Mars bases like researchers in Antarctica.

Write your guess and then look up the definition and write it below your guess. How close did you come to the correct definition?

**Hew Guess:**

**Hew Definition:**

Comprehension Questions:

1. NASA engineers, synthetic biologists, angel investors and others converge on the Mojave Desert in April for ________________ to discuss ideas about human settlements in space.

2. This small crew of space scientists, synthetic biologists, investors, entrepreneurs and one partygoer with flamethrower had higher ambitions. By jet, bus and more than a few Teslas, they came to this desolate valley for Betaspace. What is it?
3. Through sheer force of festive networking, its organizers hoped to spawn the companies and concepts that could allow what?
4. What do they refer to as terraform?
5. Should space colonization actually become a thing, however, Southern California could capitalize. Why?
6. In another part of the same desert, what three companies launch rockets that could get us to other worlds?
7. What is DARPA?
8. At a typical tech conference, a “moonshot” is generally a metaphor for what?
9. What main topics drove much of the talk, paired with a hope that some salvation might lie in space?
10. They responded more favorably to his belief that private contractors should handle logistics and let ________ hew to its roots as a science organization, rotating researchers out of moon and Mars bases like researchers in Antarctica.

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

- Do you think space colonization will happen? When?
- How do you feel about space colonization? Do you think humans were meant to travel and live there? Why or why not?
- Why do you think we, as the human race, aren’t caring for the earth we live on? That businesses could profit billions+, due to us destroying our own planet? How does that make you feel?
- Would you move to Mars if given the opportunity? Why or why not?
- Will we see an expansion of the human presence across the solar system in our lifetime? Why or why not? What things do you think we’ll see?

“Imagine if we live in a nature reserve — forests, meadows, lovely streams. We don’t go building an industrial plant in the middle of that forest,” said Jim Keravala, the chief executive of OffWorld, a Pasadena company that’s building industrial robots for space. “Earth is sitting in a nature reserve called the habitable zone of our star.”

- If you close your eyes and truly imagine a habitable zone on another planet, what do you see? Describe it.
- Would you want to leave earth to experience it?

“The reason that there is no space-settlement industry is because there is no market out there,” Cumbers said. “We all know that in a thousand years we’re going to have people living on the moon or Mars. In a hundred years, I put the probability at 75%. What about in 10 years? I put about 5%, maybe 10%, chance of that.
“We are going to create that market. We’re going to build this community, and this community is going to make the sustainable settlement of space a reality,” Cumbers said.

- Do you agree or disagree with Cumbers statement? Why or why not?

News Break is posted to the Web on Monday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please register on-line or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

Copyright © 2019 The Seattle Times Company
Newsbreak Answer Key: April 28, 2019

Vocabulary Building:

Hew: CONFORM, ADHERE hew to tradition — often used in the phrase hew to the line no pressure … on newspapers to hew to the official line

Comprehension Answers:

1. Betaspace
2. A one-night, invite-only confab for the not-quite-yet-burgeoning space-settlement industry.
3. For humanity to establish bases on Mars (or maybe the moon) or “terraform,” as they say, our nearest neighbors into habitable worlds and spin off technologies for us earthbound humans in the process.
4. The moon
5. Thanks to its long history in rocketry and its lively biotech sector.
6. SpaceX, Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic
7. The military’s experimental-research wing
8. A new monetization plan or a bold marketing strategy.
10. NASA

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions: Answers will vary