



# Life on Mars

By: Jessica Shaffer

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Science  
Grades 3-5



## Introduction

Are you seeing red? With the recent launch of the Dragon to the International Space Station, there has been a lot of buzz about space travel! Delve into a writing activity that will familiarize you with Mars, and create a fictional narrative about what an eventful day in life would look like living on Mars thirty years from now!

## Learning Objectives

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3](#)

- WALT use the writing process to create a fictional narrative about an eventful day living on Mars in the future.

## Materials Needed

- [Pre-writing graphic organizer](#)
- [Writer's checklist](#)
- Story map anchor chart
- Additional activities
- Chromebook/tablet/computer

## Procedure

1. Discuss the space and prior knowledge on Mars. The focus of this writing will be fictional, but it is important to base the writing on actual knowledge of the planet Mars. In Task 2, there are many suggested articles and videos to help students develop knowledge of the red planet.
2. Watch videos and read articles about space travel and Mars. Make sure to preview all before assigning as websites and contents change frequently. Make sure the information is appropriate for the grade level you are teaching.
  - [Launch America: An article about the recent launch of the Dragon](#)
  - [NASA: Mars Exploration Program](#)
  - [Mars: What We Know About the Red Planet](#)
  - [BrainPOP Video: Mars](#)
  - [BrainPOP: Related Reading & Resources on Mars](#)
  - [Mars 101: Video](#)

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- [National Geographic: Exploring Mars](#)

3. Have students fill in a graphic organizer to organize ideas for writing. Students will use the ideas in this organizer to create their fictional narratives.

4. Have students create the rough draft of their fictional narrative.

- Paragraph 1: Exposition (Introduction)
  - Grab the reader's attention.
  - Introduce and get the reader's excited about the characters.
  - Create "unknowns"; make the reader want to continue to read the narrative.
- Paragraphs 2 & 3: Body: Rising Action
  - Present the conflict that the main character will face.
  - Make sure to determine internal or external conflict.
  - Keep the details in chronological order.
  - Include details that make the conflict exciting!
  - Use dialogue! (This can be for conversation or for what a character is thinking.)
  - Use great word choice in order to show your character's personality.
- Paragraph 4: Body: Climax and Falling Action
  - Climax: Turning Point in the Story
  - Make sure to include details about how the character(s) has/have changed throughout the story.
  - Falling Action: The events that happen after the climax.
- Paragraph 5: Conclusion: Resolution
  - Make sure to include why all events that happened in the story are important.
  - Discuss what the character learned.
  - Include the final outcome of the story.
- **Important Reminders:**
  - Have a clear beginning, middle, and end.
  - Use vivid details and descriptions of characters and events.
  - Reference the Story Map Anchor Chart.

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5. Teachers will conference with students as they create their writing piece. Students will be given a checklist that they must have teacher initial when their writing has been checked. This will be done throughout the writing process for the essay.
6. When the rough draft of the fictional narrative is completed, students should have two peers edit the essay and make the appropriate changes before handing in the revised rough draft to the teacher for a final edit.
7. After the teacher makes final revisions and edits, students will complete the final draft of the essay and prepare for the Writer's Celebration.

**Assignment:** The teacher should have two assignments/activities that correlate with space/solar system/planets/Mars.

**Writer's Celebration/Sharing Circle:** The final product should take around two weeks to complete (depending on the length of time you spend each day). At the completion of the fictional narratives, you can have a Writer's Celebration in your classroom (such as one in Writer's Workshop). Students will share their writing with the class.

## Evaluation

You should use the writing rubric that your district requires to grade the writing.