

Teaching News Is Elementary

September 4, 2015

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. 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 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.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times e-Edition

Article: “BIG in the Future: STAR TREK AND SPACE”

Page: Sports C8

Date: Thursday, September 3, 2015

Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

Look at the title and images on page C8. What do you know about the TV series Star Trek? How do you think the Star Trek TV show and the Star Trek exhibit at the Washington State Fair are related to science?

Vocabulary:

Read the following quotes and determine the meaning of the word based on how it's used in the sentence:

“This is because in the show’s imagined future, scientists have made major breakthroughs in physics and **propulsion**. These advances—unknown to present science—allow a starship to “push” against something other than rocket **exhaust**.”

(propulsion: the force that moves something forward : the force that propels something)

(exhaust: the mixture of gases produced by an engine)

“To date, only a few planets that could support life have been identified, but scientists have a way of making a guess about the total number of **habitable** planets in the universe, and indeed, the number of civilizations like ours that could be out there—the Drake Equation.”

(suitable or fit to live in)

“Fans and **novices** alike will enjoy a first-hand interactive experience, exploring the worlds, wisdom, science, stories, cultures, characters, fashions and fantasies of the Star Trek universe.”

(people who have just started learning or doing something)

Journal Writing Prompts:

“Known as warp drive, these fictional engines give starships the ability to travel at many times the speed of light. With warp drive, distances that would take tens of thousands of years to cover with today’s technology can be reached in just a few hours or days. A Star Trek-like propulsion system would make a lot of people very happy!”

If you could use warp drive to travel through space where would you go and what would you do? Write a story in your journal about your trip to space.

Discussion Questions:

Review the excerpt and discuss the following questions:

From the beginning, science fiction movies, TV shows, comics and books have been stages for people to imagine far-fetched technology that didn’t exist in our world. Laser weapons, cloaking devices, teleporters, time travel machines; the list is endless. While most of these technologies have remained nothing more than fictional, a number of them have made the leap to the real world.”

Which of the technologies listed above (or variations of those technologies) have made it to the real world? What “far-fetched” technology would you like to see realized? What technology that has not yet been invented do you think people would have a use for? Why? Brainstorm the features of the technology with a group and share with the class.

Small group discussion and activity:

“To date, only a few planets that could support life have been identified, but scientists have a way of making a guess about the total number of habitable planets in the universe, and indeed, the number of civilizations like ours that could be out there—the Drake Equation.”

What planets that could support life have been identified? What features does a planet need to have to make it habitable? Research the solar system and summarize the features of each planet. Do you think there are other civilizations living on other planets? Why or why not?