

Teaching News Is Elementary September 25, 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, pencil or colored pencils for sketching/drawing. Internet/library for research.

Article: Rare supermoon and eclipse show

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Date: Thursday, September 24, 2015

Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

Look at the title. What do you think a supermoon is? How might it be different from the moon or a full moon? What is an eclipse?

Vocabulary:

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

“A total **lunar eclipse** will share the stage with a so-called supermoon Sunday night or early Monday, depending where you are.”

(lunar: of or relating to the moon)

(eclipse: an occasion when the moon looks like it is completely or partially covered with a dark circle because the Earth's shadow is on it.)

“Many stargazers, professional and **amateur** alike, dislike the term ‘supermoon,’ noting the visible difference between a moon and supermoon is slight to all but the most faithful observers.”

(a person who does something (such as a sport or hobby) for pleasure and not as a job)

“That’s when the moon, Earth and sun will be lined up, with Earth’s shadow totally **obscuring** the moon.”

(hiding or covering (something) : being in front of (something) so that it cannot be seen)

Journal Writing Prompts:

“Observatories are marking the celestial event with public-telescope viewing, although magnifying devices won’t be necessary; the eclipse will be easily visible with the naked eye. Astronomers are urging stargazers to simply look to the east.”

Would you rather view the supermoon through a magnifying device at an observatory or with your naked eye? Why? Imagine you are viewing the supermoon. What do you see? What color is it? How big do you think it is? What other objects or sights does it remind you of? Describe what you see and make a sketch in your journal.

Discussion Questions:

Review the excerpt and discuss the following questions:

“It’s not like the difference between an ordinary man and Superman,’ said Alan MacRobert, a senior editor at Sky & Telescope magazine. ‘It really ought to be called a tiny, slightly little-bit bigger moon, rather than the supermoon.’”

In a group, brainstorm a new name for the term “supermoon.” Select one name as a group to share to the class. Why is your name the best choice, both scientifically and creatively? As a class, vote on a new name for the term supermoon.

Small group discussion and activity:

“When a full or new moon makes its closest approach to Earth, that’s a supermoon. Although still about 220,000 miles away, this full moon will look bigger and brighter than usual.

In fact, it will be the closest full moon of the year, about 30,000 miles closer than the average distance. (The moon’s orbit is far from a perfect circle.)”

Review the article and use the library or your computer for further research. What is the difference between a full moon and supermoon? What is an eclipse, both lunar and solar? When is the next full moon? When is the next supermoon? Present your findings in a poster board with illustrations you share with the class.