

Adopt an Asteroid!

Teacher's Notes

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Introduction. Get your students involved with asteroid science! Let them make an initial exploration into the wilderness of rocks, and become acquainted with one of them up close and personal!

This activity is designed to take about one classroom period spread over two days: part of a period to present the introductory material, about one hour observing time on an evening, and part of a period to look at the images.

1. Present *Introduction to Asteroids* that you can download from the NOAO Asteroid web site:

<http://www.observeasteroids.org/>

2. Pick an Asteroid. Divide students into small groups and have them pick an asteroid that is visible in the night sky over the next two months or so. The asteroids on the list on the student pages will be up in the early evening during April and May, 2007. Have each team find all they information they can about their asteroid from the Internet and books, including size, shape, class/type, orbit, how close to Earth they might come, images (for a few of them), etc.

3. Take Images of the Asteroid. You will need access to a telescope equipped with a CCD camera to do this. If you do not have access to a telescope, perhaps at a local private observatory, we will provide you with time on a remote-controlled telescope at the New Mexico Skies observatory (NMSO) near Cloudcroft, NM. Contact

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NMSO is a private observatory at which we have purchased telescope time and use of the telescopes is password protected. Consequently, you need to be registered to use the telescope. Registration takes a few business days, so plan ahead to get observing time on a given date.

When you register, you will be sent documents detailing contact information required and steps to sign onto the telescope. You can set your observing time whenever you wish, but at least by 4 PM on the evening you wish to observe.

Note: NMSO is a hands-on, real time observing experience. You arrange your own observing time on a first-come, first-serve basis. You take your own images using an online interface. Consequently, all observing sessions should be under your personal supervision. You don't necessarily have to be physically present for all of them since they will be at night, but we recommend it. REMEMBER: NMSO is on Mountain Time.

We run on the honor system: please do not use any more than the time allotted to you. There are no built-in limits on the NMSO web site, but the other observing time belongs your fellow teachers.

PLEASE NOTE: we would like a brief summary of your experience using our materials or the telescope at NMSO. If any students' reports or PR materials arise from the use of NMSO through this program, please make sure we get copies. Your report will help demonstrate the success of the program and ensure its continuation!

Good Viewing!