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Out of This World: A Solar System Thematic Unit

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OUT OF THIS WORLD: A SOLAR SYSTEM THEMATIC UNIT
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Using an integrated curriculum approach to teach elementary students about the solar system, we began by constructing a comprehensive thematic unit. In order to focus such an extensive topic, we began with a divergent outline of lessons which we synthesized to make the unit cohesive. Our goal was to ensure multiple means by which students could demonstrate their learning. "Out of This World" is a thematic on the solar system suitable for fourth or fifth grade students. Students will be immersed in exploration of the solar system. The purpose of this unit is to teach students not only the science of the solar system but also to explore the history and the lives and work of many people both past and present involved in the space program. The students will study the physical features of the planets through constructing a model of our solar system. They will learn about rotation and revolution and compare the length of days and years on various planets. In social studies, the students will learn about ancient astronomers and how they used the stars and the constellations to navigate. By the time they complete this unit, we expect them to have a greater understanding of and fascination with our solar system. It is our objective to create situations which encourage students to continue to explore the solar system.