

Aerospace Engineering:

Mars Rover

Project Based Integrated STEM

A STEM-Maker Research and Design Project

Context and Rationale

- ✓ *The study of space travel and space habitation.*
- ✓ *Understanding the challenges of space exploration, including zero-gravity, time and distance, and lack of essential life support systems.*
- ✓ *Researching possible solutions for sustaining life on other planets, moons, or other celestial elements.*
- ✓ *Designing space transportation systems, space communications, and space habitats that support human life.*
- ✓ *Understanding and applying laws of motion, fluid mechanics, and conservation.*



Introduction

This STEM-Maker project is appropriate for middle and senior high school levels and is recommended for students working in pairs or small teams up to four students. This project is designed to promote creative thinking, problem solving, innovation, invention, and provides an excellent applied learning experience for all STEM students.

Welcome

Activity Information

This activity will require students to use the process that designers and engineers use to solve problems. Students will walk through each step of the design and engineering process as they develop their own solution to a problem.

Classroom Management

This activity packet should serve as a guide for students as they develop creative solutions to problems. Students can work in groups of up to four to research, design, and engineer their own solution to a thematic problem.

Resources Needed

Rokenbok Advanced Projects Lab

Activity Time

120-180 Minutes

Table of Contents

Project Based Integrated STEM: Aerospace Engineering

Information

Context and Rationale	1
Activity Information	2
Classroom Management	2
Resources	2
Activity Time	2

Mars Rover

Design Project	3-6
STEM Concepts	7

Design Project

Aerospace Engineering

AEROSPACE ENGINEERING:
MARS ROVER

Design Brief: Scenario

The Rokenbok Exploratory Space Agency (RESA) is in the process of developing plans for a space colony on the planet of Mars over the next ten years.



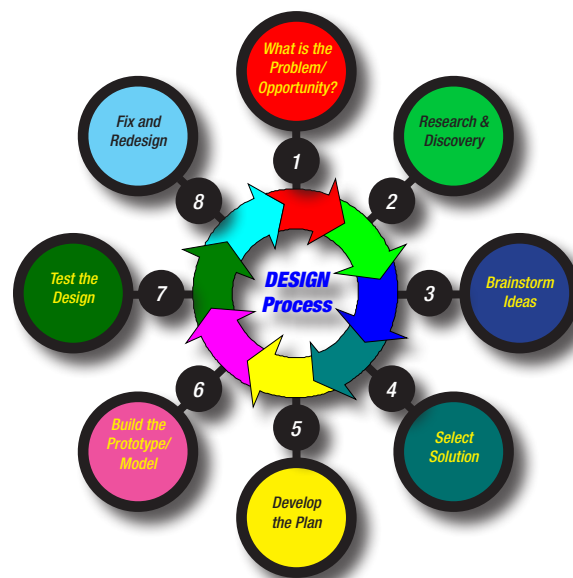
The engineers at RESA are exploring various creative options for using existing materials on the martian surface as a cheap and efficient way to build structures and habitats on Mars without having to transport everything from Earth.

Design Project

In order to help these aerospace engineers understand what materials would be available and how they might be used, RESA is in need of a small, yet functional Martian rover that can safely land on the surface of Mars and then collect material samples that can be retrieved and analyzed for future use.

Your design and engineering team has been assigned the task of building a scale model of the Mars rover that can launch into space, land, and retrieve materials from Mars.

Time is of the essence and your team must work together to prepare your scale model for presentation to RESA at their next planning meeting. Each team should work through each step of the design process to research, prototype, and develop a high quality design.



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MARS ROVER

Constraints and Specifications

To successfully complete this STEM design and engineering project, the following constraints and specifications must be followed:

- ✓ *The Mars rover should be mobile and controllable via the ROK-star controller. The rover must be able to move forward and reverse.*
- ✓ *The rover must fit into an aerospace shipping capsule that measures 46cm wide x 46cm tall x 61cm long.*
- ✓ *The rover must be designed to collect material samples from the martian surface by scooping, grasping, or other possible design solutions.*
- ✓ *The mobility system of the rover should allow the vehicle to easily navigate in a harsh and rocky environment.*
- ✓ *Each team should prepare to deliver a presentation to the RESA about the merits of your rover model and design.*

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Creativity and design
- Functionality of designed unit
- Time management and teamwork
- Successful completion of the project
- Adherence to constraints/criteria

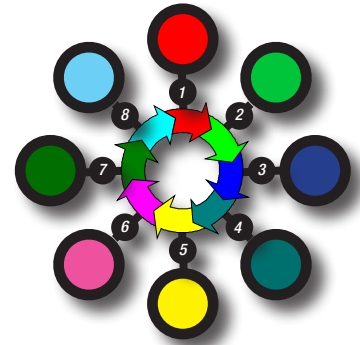


Use the Rokenbok Universal Performance Rubric for evaluation. Available for download at RokenbokEducation.org

Design Project

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MARS ROVER



Using the Design and Engineering Process

Use the steps in the design and engineering process to develop a high quality design.



Step 1:

What is the Problem/Opportunity?

A rover needs to be developed to conduct research on Mars.



Step 2:

Research and Discovery

Check out availability of materials and how to build a highly functional rover.



Step 3:

Brainstorm Ideas

List all the ideas that you have found, then look at the pros and cons for each idea, considering each one carefully before making a final decision.



Step 4:

Select a Solution

Identify the best solution and move forward with your design.



Step 5:

Develop a Plan

Once you have made a decision on which solution you think is best, then put together a good plan for designing and building a custom rover.



Step 6:

Build a Prototype/Model

Build a model of your design.



Step 7:

Test the Design

Once you build your prototype or model, test your design to make sure it meets all constraints and specifications.



Step 8:

Fix and Redesign

If you have identified any problems or design issues, then go back through the design process to make any needed changes or redesigns.

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MARS ROVER

Writing Your Story

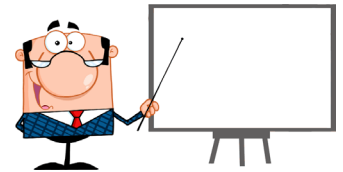
After you have completed the design of the Mars rover, it is important to tell others what you have learned and experienced. One good way to share is to write your story down on paper or on the computer. Some things you might include are:



1. What were the ideas your team brainstormed?
2. Why did you choose the designs that were built?
3. What was the most difficult part of your design?
4. What did you enjoy the most about this project? The least?
5. What did you learn about design and engineering by completing this project?

Telling Your Story

An important part to design and engineering is the ability to communicate the design to someone else. Prepare a short presentation to explain the rover that was built and the process of building it. Make sure you speak loudly and clearly so everyone can hear and understand you. Be enthusiastic and ready to answer any questions that might be asked.



Presenting the Design

When your team has completed the project, it should be presented to your teacher and classmates for evaluation.

Your grade will be determined by how well you do on all grading criteria. These include:

Specifications	Were all design constraints met?
Design Quality	Is the design built well? Is it highly functional?
Time Management	Did you get your project done on time? Did you use your time wisely?
Aesthetics	Does the design look good? Is it well balanced?
Story	Were you able to clearly communicate the design by writing a story?
Presentation	Did you make a good presentation? Were you interesting and engaging?

STEM Concepts

AEROSPACE ENGINEERING:
MARS ROVER

Science

Students will use and reinforce these science concepts:

- Applications of simple machines including wheels and axles, levers, and pulleys
- Balance and equilibrium
- Energy transformations such as magnetic to rotary motion and rotary to linear motion
- Mass, weight, and gravity

Technology and Engineering

Students will use and reinforce these technology and engineering concepts:

- Prototyping and modeling
- Invention and innovation
- Structural integrity/strength
- Brainstorming and problem solving
- Trial and error engineering concepts

Math

Students will use and reinforce these math concepts:

- Calculating size and space
- Time management and efficiency
- Linear measurement and scaling techniques
- Measuring area, volume, and distance

Standards

This design project is based on the following national standards:

- The Next Generation Science standards
- Common Core standards
- Standards for Technological Literacy
- Endorsed by the International STEM Education Association