



NASA SpacePlace

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News and Notes for formal and informal educators

The Space Place is a NASA website for elementary school-aged kids, their teachers, and their parents.

It's colorful!
It's dynamic!
It's fun!

It's rich with
science, technology,
engineering, and
math content!

It's informal.
It's meaty.
It's easy to read and
understand.
It's also in Spanish.
And it's free!

It has 130 (and
counting) separate
modules for kids,
including hands-on
projects, interactive
games, animated
cartoons, and
amazing facts about
space and Earth
science and
technology.

If you ever thought “weather” was a dull topic for conversation, **SciJinks.gov** will convince you otherwise. **SciJinks** is sister website to *The Space Place*. **SciJinks** (for “Science Hijinks”) targets middle school students with games, videos, and amazing facts about Earth’s wild weather and other Earth science and technology topics. This issue gives a few specifics.



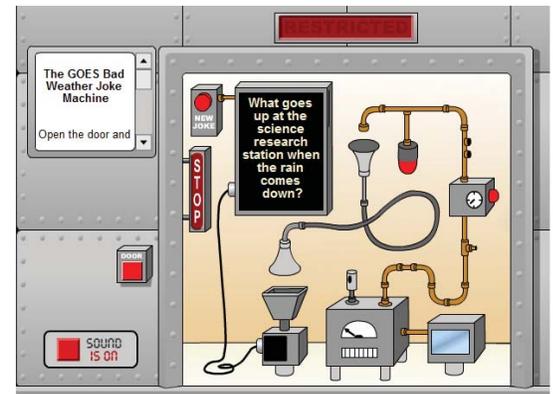
New each day

Every day brings a new “Picture of the Day” and “Cool Fact” to scijinks.gov. Pictures are mostly from the extensive historical photo library of the National Weather Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).



Cool Facts seem to be right out of the Guinness World Book of Records for Weather Weirdness, but they are, in fact, officially recorded weather events. For example, “February 11, 1899: The Great Arctic Outbreak of 1899 begins. Ice floes choke the Mississippi River in New Orleans and snow falls in Florida.” Now that’s a “cool” fact!

Bad Weather Jokes



So are these jokes about bad weather or bad jokes about weather? We'll let you decide. The Bad Weather Joke Machine (<http://scijinks.gov/joke>) is a Rube Goldberg device that produces a new joke, then, at the touch of a button, processes and spits out the punch line answer.

But not all the fun and games are just fun and games. “Whirlwind Disaster” includes an easy explanation of how hurricanes—or typhoons or cyclones, as they are called in different parts of the world—form, fed by the energy of the ocean’s warm surface water.



“Weather Folklore” (<http://scijinks.gov/folklore>) is a tour of the cultures of the world and their weather traditions. Before modern science gave them a better, perhaps less frightening explanation, people of the Caribbean used to believe that a hurricane was an evil spirit sending terrifying winds to punish people when he was angered.

Now I get it!



In this section of SciJinks, we present simple, yet thorough, answers to every-day Earth science questions.

- What makes it rain?
- Why doesn't the atmosphere just drift off into space?
- Why is the sky blue?
- How did Earth's atmosphere form?
- How does weather on the Sun affect us?

Understanding and explaining the rhythms and rhymes of our planet is not so easy. This section of SciJinks breaks each answer into small bites and assumes little prior knowledge.

And if anyone has a question we haven't answered, try our Ask a SciJinks Expert page, where you can ask us about the weather, storms, Earth's atmosphere, and even weather in space, and read answers to questions from others.

Pick a medium or pick a topic

Do you want to look at some interesting cloud images, or do you want to know why it rains? Would you rather play a game about wild weather or watch videos of wild weather as seen from space? You can pick your activity or medium, or you can pick a topic. It's your weather website to explore.

Resources for teachers

SciJinks has two free, downloadable board games, a cloud identification poster, bookmarks, and post-cards. There's also a booklet on building your own weather satellite. Well, maybe not your own. But it's a fun, simple explanation of what goes into a weather satellite and how it works.

SciJinks also has downloadable original classroom activity articles (<http://scijinks.gov/classroom-activities>) previously published by the International Technology and Engineering Education Association (ITEEA) in their journal for middle school teachers.

Special Days

May 4: National Weather Observer's Day

Watch "Ask a weatherman" and find out how a weatherman keeps abreast of the latest infor-

mation about what the weather is going to do next. <http://scijinks.gov/ask-a-weatherman>.

May 12, 1978:

On this date, hurricanes started getting boys' names, as well as girls'. Up until this date, all hurricanes were female. Not fair, huh? Find out how hurricanes form at <http://scijinks.gov/hurricane>.



May 18, 1980: Mt. St. Helens in Washington erupted—massively!

Find out why volcanic ash is so bad for airplanes at <http://scijinks.gov/volcanic-ash>.

June 5: World Environment Day.

You'll really appreciate the environment here on our planet after you take an environmental tour of some of the other planets in our solar system.



June 15: Fly a Kite Day.

But don't do it in a lightning storm, like Ben Franklin did in 1752, when he discovered that lightning is electricity. That's dangerous! Instead, play "Flight Controller" at <http://scijinks.gov/aviation-game>, and help route airplanes around lightning storms and other aviation hazards.



June 21: Summer Solstice.

What is a solstice anyway? Or an equinox? Find out once and for all at <http://scijinks.gov/solstice>.

And coming soon . . .

Last issue we mentioned that we are working on a whole new Space Place website. We're getting close now. Keep checking back with us at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov>.

We will not have a July – August issue, so until September, we wish you a wonderful summer!