MADE WITH LITTLE STORYBOOK

How Do We Travel to Mars?

Story lesson



Earth Holds On

The journey begins on Earth. A Mars rocket stands on the launchpad with enormous tanks full of fuel. Earth’s gravity pulls everything toward the ground, so leaving our planet is the first great challenge.





Climbing Away

At launch, the engines push hard and the rocket races upward. It climbs through the clouds and gains tremendous speed. When lower stages run out of fuel, they separate over protected empty areas, making the spacecraft lighter for the climb into space.

The Long Coast

Once the spacecraft is on the right path, its main engines can rest. The craft coasts through silent space while Earth grows smaller behind it. Crossing the enormous distance to Mars takes many months, not just one quick afternoon.





Timing the Trip

Earth and Mars keep circling the Sun, and Mars follows the larger, slower path. Mission planners launch when the planets are arranged so the spacecraft and Mars can meet months later. With an adult, you can model this: use a large ball for the Sun and two smaller balls for the planets, then move them around the Sun at different speeds.

> **TALK ABOUT IT**
> Which planet moves more slowly around the Sun?

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Slowing Down

Reaching Mars is not enough—the spacecraft is moving very fast. It must slow down before landing. A parachute opens in the thin atmosphere, and landing engines control the final descent until the lander settles gently onto the red ground.





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Mars at Last

Launch, climb, coast, careful timing, and braking have all worked together. Adult explorers step beside their lander and leave the first footprints in the red dust. High above them, Earth shines like a tiny star—the distant home where their journey began.

Check your wonder

1 **Why does a Mars rocket need such a powerful launch?**

- **A.** To overcome Earth’s gravity and gain speed
- **B.** To make Mars move closer
- **C.** To create clouds

2 **What happens during most of the journey to Mars?**

- **A.** The spacecraft coasts through space
- **B.** The spacecraft stays in Earth’s clouds
- **C.** The spacecraft lands again and again

3 **Why must the spacecraft slow down near Mars?**

- **A.** So it can land safely
- **B.** So Earth can catch it
- **C.** So Mars stops orbiting

ANSWERS 1-A 2-A 3-A

1. Correct. The rocket must overcome Earth’s pull and climb fast. 2. Right. Much of the months-long journey is quiet coasting. 3. Exactly. Parachutes and engines help control the landing.

THE END

Story lesson



Put your child in this story

Free to try. Scan the code or visit

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