Exploring Careers at NASA for Students
Content Review
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NASA maintains a specific area of their on-line presence for students interested in a career path that could lead them to work at NASA. This can be found at https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/careers/index.html. This home page is an attractive and engaging page for young people with a desire to pursue a career in aeronautics, space studies, physics, and many other STEM pathways. There is a slogan on the page that states, “Inspire, Engage, Educate, Employ- The Next Generation of Explorers”. This gets my attention and inspires me as an adult so I’m certain it does the same for young people.

The site offers a variety of avenues to introduce students to possible careers at NASA such as articles, pictures, videos, team greetings, current projects, and future endeavors. On the left-hand side of the home page, there are helpful links for educators and students as well as a NASA kids’ club geared towards elementary aged students. In addition, there are links for webcasts, competitions, workshops, pre-service educator materials, and additional opportunities. This area of the NASA web page is chock full of information, experiences, and engaging activities for students of all ages.

The educator link is comprehensive and exciting! Within it, there are areas organized by age groups (k-4, 5-8, 9-12, higher education, and information education) to provide teachers with information, lessons, and visuals to share with their students. The “For Students” link provides kids with a variety of fun activities such as what they can view in tonight’s sky and information about what they can see on the moon as well as simple yet fun items such as puzzles and news stories.

Below the educator and student links are the career specific links broken down by age. The “Career Corner for Students Grades 5-8” is a perfect spot for middle school students to discover all that NASA offers. This area offers over two-dozen various activities for younger students to currently engage in to deepen their knowledge base and understanding of space as well as actively engage in space studies. There are several citizen scientist projects running that invite students to add their own data to the pool for NASA scientists to analyze and consider. Other areas of interest that are offered for our younger scientists include: fun apps such as Spacecraft AR app and the NASA selfies app; art projects; games; Hubble spottings; ongoing projects such as aiding NASA in finding new planetary systems; and writing contests. This area of the NASA careers for students website is current

and consistently updated with new projects that NASA scientists encourage budding scientists to become a part of!

Next, site visitors will find a link to internships offered for students from high school age through post-doctoral students. “Current Opportunities for Students: Internships and Fellowships” lists the current offerings within NASA for students of an advanced age. Internships are being offered at the Marshall Flight Center, Kennedy Space Center, Langley Research Center, the Goddard Space Flight Center, and more. These amazing experiences are available for students beginning in high school. There are fellowships currently being offered in the fields of aviation and space history with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

In addition to the internships and fellowships, there are scholarships offered for students to conduct research within STEM fields. These are exciting opportunities for current college students and can greatly enhance studies for these young people.

Even though I am not teaching space science this year, I look forward to incorporating this area of the NASA website. Many of my students have a strong knowledge base in space studies and would be very interested in the offerings here. I anticipate introducing the NASA careers site and offering an extra credit assignment for my students that involves investigating the site and participating in either the essay writing contest or getting involved in one of the citizen scientist projects. The students on our Science Olympiad team that I advise will also find this site worthwhile of their interest and time! I have not found any limitations with this resource as it has highly engaging and useful and houses a variety of interesting aspects for students of all ages up to and including educators.