Lesson Summary
Students design a travel guide to their favorite planet, including travel tips like what to pack and what sites to see.

Prior Knowledge & Skills
- Characteristics of the planets
- Expressing ideas in writing and drawing

AAAS Science Benchmarks
Habits of Mind
Communication skills
The Physical Setting
The Universe

NSE Science Standards
- **Earth and space science:** Properties of Earth materials (K-4), Objects in the sky (K-4), Structure of the earth system (5-8), Earth in the solar system (5-8)

Why Should We Care?
This activity invites students to imagine what it would be like to visit another planet. This isn’t such a crazy notion; though a crewed mission to Mars hasn’t been penciled into NASA’s datebook yet, NASA’s next moon mission (scheduled for 2018-2020) is designed as a test-run for Mars. Mars—or any other planetary destination—would require a lot more travel time, though (months or years, compared to a couple of days to get to the Moon), and so would require more cargo and place the astronauts at greater risk from muscle atrophy, radiation, and cabin fever!

Teaching Time: One 45-minute period

Materials
For each student:
- Handouts on which to write and draw

To share with the whole class:
- Science fiction examples
- Extra paper for drawing

Advanced Planning
Preparation Time: 30 minutes
1. Print and copy handouts
2. Review science fiction examples

Source: American Museum of Natural History
Space Travel Guide

Great science fiction writers play with scientific facts to make a story more exciting. Sometimes the author pretends that a mystery has been solved or that humans have powers that they don’t have. Some science fiction has actually inspired scientists by helping them imagine what might be possible.

Write a travel guide that will convince your Earthling pals that they must visit your favorite destination in space!

- Draw and write in the blank parts of the illustrations to tell your own story, and prepare others for trips like yours.

- You can draw more pages on your own if you want, too.

- Share your travel guide with others.
Where did you go?
What did the ad look like that made you decide to visit?
What did you bring with you?
What did you see when you arrived?
What new and exciting discoveries did you make?
What were your favorite memories from your trip?