

# MSU Science Zone

## Would Mars be a good place to visit?

Besides the Earth and the Moon, Mars is probably the only other place in our solar system that humans could visit or live on someday. Will astronauts visit Mars in the future? Will you?

Here are some interesting facts about Mars you might want to consider before your trip.

- Like Earth, Mars has polar ice caps, volcanoes, canyons and four seasons — but the seasons on Mars are twice as long.
- It could take between 6 months and almost a full year to reach Mars in a spaceship depending on the orbital paths of Earth and Mars during the mission.
- The average temperature on Mars is  $-81^{\circ}\text{F}$  or  $-62^{\circ}\text{C}$ .
- If you were standing on Mars, you would see its two moons in the sky.
- Scientists think they may be some microbial life (tiny organisms smaller than your eye can see) on Mars that we haven't discovered yet, or evidence of past microbial life.

Could there be life on Mars or life elsewhere in the universe? Scientists at MSU are working with NASA to answer questions like these. Maybe one day you could be a scientist and travel to Mars.

### TRY THIS

Color these astronauts, draw your crew's faces, then ask an adult to help you visit this NASA Web site about Mars <http://marsprogram.jpl.nasa.gov/participate/funzone>. At the Web site you can register to send your name to Mars on a NASA rover launching in 2011, find out how much everyday objects weigh on Mars and play a computer game where you pack your rocket for a trip to Mars. Adults and teachers might want to check out this video lecture outlining the latest findings about Mars at <http://abrc.montana.edu/outreach/lecture.html>.

