



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume VI: Selected Topics in Contemporary Astronomy and Space Science

Life on Earth and Beyond, Our Search for Answers

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.06.07
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This unit is written for high school self-contained special education students. These students cannot participate in mainstream science courses for a variety of reasons. Most of my students have severe learning disabilities and read significantly below grade level. Their knowledge of Astronomy is extremely limited. Basic Astronomy concepts must be introduced during the unit and reviewed throughout the unit in order for the learning disabled students to internalize the main ideas.

The narrative information I have included in the paper should be used as guide, to be modified depending on the varying academic levels of your students. My main goal is to use the student's enthusiasm and curiosity for Astronomy to practice and refine their critical thinking skills.

Topics covered during this unit will include formation of the Universe and the Solar System, Earth's characteristics that enable it to sustain human life, the feasibility of space travel beyond our solar system, and the need for responsible stewardship towards our planet.

Students will be given time during this unit to do independent research in the area of Astronomy that they find most interesting. This will allow each students to work at his or her own academic level on a topic they have chosen for themselves, making them more responsible for their own learning. At the end of the unit, students will present their research projects to their classmates, giving the students a chance to learn from their peers as well as an opportunity for the teacher to assess the students understanding of the material presented and researched.

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