



COOL SUITS

Activity topic selected from NASA's KSNNTM 21st Century Explorer newsbreak "How will your imagination help you become an explorer?"

Educator Section

Introduction

Astronauts depend upon their space suits to hold in air needed for breathing as well as pressure to keep them alive in the near vacuum of space. Space suits also help keep astronauts at a comfortable temperature; neither too hot nor too cold. For this reason, space suits are made from materials and colors that reflect large amounts of energy. By avoiding the absorption of energy, the astronauts are kept at a comfortable temperature for longer periods of time.

Lesson Objective

In this lesson, students understand the relationship between energy reflection/absorption and color.

Problem

Which color, black or white, reflects energy better? Which color absorbs energy better?

Learning Objectives

The students will

- gather data by measuring temperature in 2 different colored envelopes (black and white).
- use data to infer which color reflects energy better and which color absorbs energy better.

Materials

- NASA's KSNNTM 21st Century Explorer 30-second newsbreak, "How will your imagination help you become an explorer?" (Download the newsbreak at <http://ksnn.larc.nasa.gov>.)
- 1 thermometer to serve as the control for the entire class (calibrated in units of 1-2 degrees Celsius)

Per group (2 or 3 students working together)

- 2 construction paper envelopes – can be prepared in advance. (See Pre-lesson Instructions.)
 - 1 sheet (8.5" x 11") of black construction paper
 - 1 sheet (8.5" x 11") of white construction paper
 - tape, staples or glue to fasten the construction paper envelopes
- 2 thermometers (calibrated in units of 1-2 degrees Celsius)
- cotton balls or tissue paper (approx. 2 handfuls)
- 1 small box (shoe box, lid not needed)
- stopwatch, or timepiece with a second hand (watch or clock)

Grade Level: 3-5

Connections to Curriculum: Science

Science Process Skills: observing, predicting, measuring, classifying, communicating
(Association for the Advancement of Science)

Teacher Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Lesson Duration: 60 minutes

Prerequisite: heat, light, reflection, absorption, solar energy

National Education Standards

addressed in this activity include Science (NSES), Mathematics (NCTM) and Health (AAHPERD). For an alignment to standards in this activity, see page 5.

Materials Required

thermometers

black construction paper

white construction paper

tape, staples or glue

cotton balls or tissue paper

small boxes (shoe box)

stopwatches

NASA's KSNNTM 21st Century Explorer 30-second newsbreak – "How will your imagination help you become an explorer?"

Per student

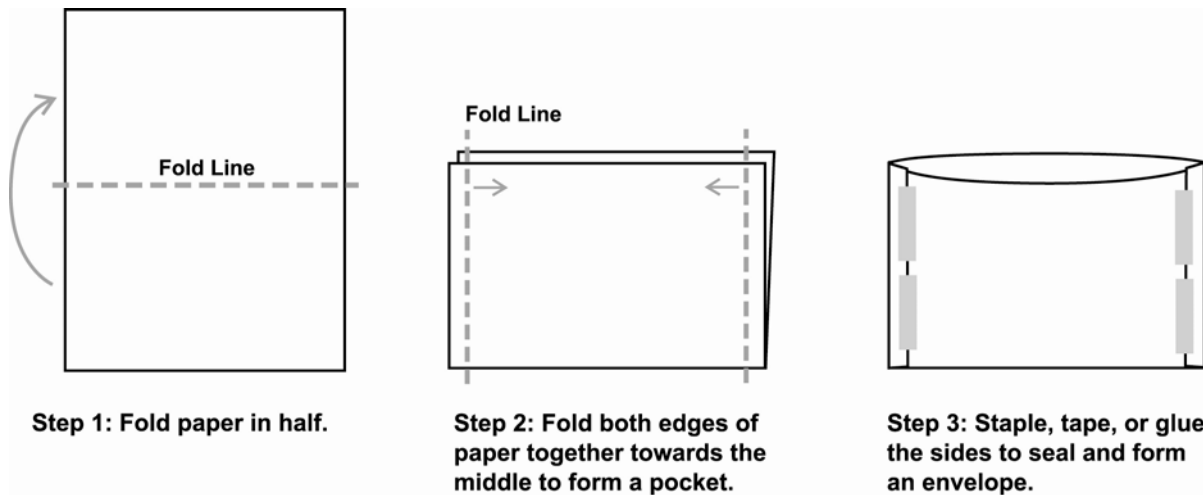
- Cool Suits Student Section

Safety

Remind students about the importance of classroom and lab safety. Caution them about the proper use of thermometers.

Pre-lesson Instructions

- Students should work in groups of 2 or 3.
- Locate a sunny area such as a windowsill, or an outside location for the “test site”.
- Each group will need 2 small envelopes: one made out of black construction paper, and the other made out of white construction paper. To save time, make the envelopes prior to class. (See diagram.)



Lesson Development

To prepare for this activity, the following background information is recommended:

- Read NASA’s KSNN™ 21st Century Explorer Web Text Explanation titled “How will your imagination help you become an explorer?” at <http://ksnn.larc.nasa.gov>.
- Read the following text taken from the Observation Section of the Cool Suits Student Section.

Observation

Living and working in space is challenging. Outside the spacecraft, astronauts depend upon their space suits to hold in air needed for breathing as well as pressure to keep them alive in the near vacuum of space.

Space suits also help keep astronauts at a comfortable temperature; neither too hot nor too cold. In the harsh environment of space, temperature can vary greatly from the extreme heat of the Sun (solar energy) to the extreme coldness of the darkness of space. For this reason, space suits are made from different colors and materials that reflect large amounts of energy. By avoiding the absorption of energy, the astronauts are kept comfortable for longer periods of time.

In this activity you will test 2 different colors (black and white) to see if color affects energy reflection and absorption.

- If needed, additional research can be done on the following science topics:
 - solar energy
 - heat
 - light
 - reflection
 - absorption

Instructional Procedure

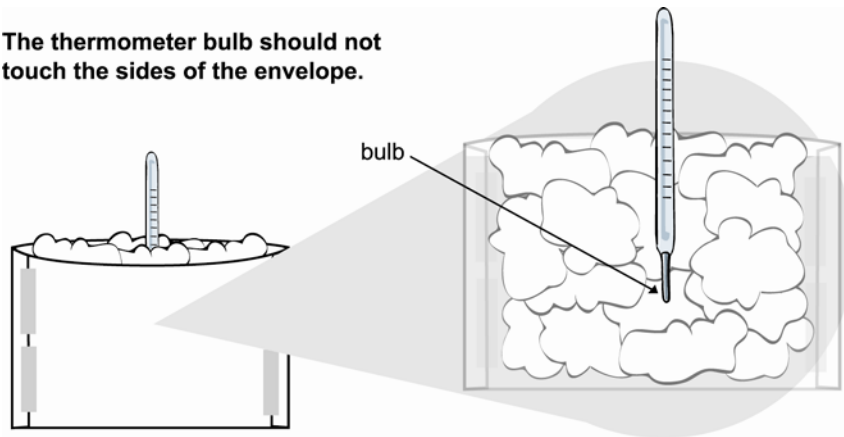
Throughout this lesson, emphasize the steps involved in the scientific method. These steps are identified in ***bold italic*** print throughout the Instructional Procedure Section.

1. Show NASA's KSNM™ 21st Century Explorer newsbreak "How will your imagination help you become an explorer?" to engage students and increase student knowledge about this topic.
2. Remind students about solar energy, energy in the form of heat and light, and reflection and absorption.
3. Review the problem with the students.
Problem: Which color reflects energy better? Which color absorbs energy better?
4. Have the students read the ***Observation*** Section in the Cool Suits Student Section and discuss in their groups.
5. As a class, have students identify the colors and materials of the clothes they are wearing. List common characteristics, such as similar colors, similar materials, etc. Discuss whether the colors and materials they chose to wear are affected by the season. How will their choices change when the seasons change?
6. Encourage your students to discuss and make ***observations*** about this topic by completing the first two columns in the KWL (KNOW/WANT TO KNOW/LEARNED) chart on the Cool Suits Student Section. Use the KWL chart to help students organize prior knowledge, identify interests, and make real-world connections. As students suggest information for the "KNOW" column, ask them to share "How they have come to know this information."
7. Ask your students if they have predictions relating to this activity and the "problem question". Help them refine their predictions into a ***hypothesis***. In their Student Section, they should restate the "problem question" as a statement based upon their observations and predictions. Encourage students to share their hypothesis with their group.
8. Students will ***test*** their hypothesis following this procedure.
(The following steps are taken from the Student Section. Educator specific comments are in italics.)

Place one thermometer without an envelope at the "test site" to act as a control. For this experiment, the "test site" will be a sunny area such as a windowsill, or an outside location.

1. Put both envelopes inside a small box to hold them upright while you are working with them.
2. Stuff cotton balls or tissue paper inside the envelopes and then carefully place a thermometer inside each envelope. The thermometers should be upright in the envelope and the bulb of the thermometer should touch the cotton or tissue, not the envelope. See the diagram below.

The thermometer bulb should not touch the sides of the envelope.



3. Let the thermometers rest in the envelope for about 1 minute to record the temperature of the new environment. Then check the temperature in degrees Celsius. Record this data at 0 minutes in the Cool Suits Data Sheet. Also, record the temperature from the control thermometer, which your teacher will have.

Let the students know where the “control” thermometer is placed, and announce the temperature for them to record in the 0 minutes column of the Cool Suits Data Sheet.

4. Take each envelope from the box and place them in the “test site” (windowsill or outside) where they will receive direct sunlight. Make sure that both envelopes receive the same amount of sunlight.
5. Predict how many degrees the temperature will change in each envelope over the 5-minute period. Record the predicted temperatures on the Cool Suits Data Sheet. Discuss your predictions with your group.
6. After 5 minutes, **collect and record data** by reading and recording the temperature of the thermometers on the Cool Suits Data Sheet. Discuss the data with your group.
7. Every 5 minutes for the next 30 minutes, repeat steps 5 and 6.

Make sure the students predict the next temperature change before collecting the data from the thermometers.

8. After taking all measurements, **study the data** and **draw conclusions** by answering the questions following the Cool Suits Data Sheet.

Using this information, ask students to determine if the data supports or refutes their hypotheses.

Conclusion

- Discuss the answers to the Cool Suits Student Section questions.
- Have the students update the LEARNED column in their KWL chart.
- Ask students to compare their individual data to the class data. What patterns can be found?
- Ask students how their findings relate to the development of new space suits for space exploration?
- Ask students “what they wonder now?” Encourage students to design their own experiments.

Assessment

- Assess student knowledge through questioning.
- Observe and assess student performance throughout the activity using the attached Scientific Investigation Rubric.

Activity Alignment to National Education Standards

National Science Education Standards (NSES):

Content Standard A: Science as Inquiry

- Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry (K-8)
- Understandings about scientific inquiry (K-8)

Content Standard B: Physical Science Standards

- Properties and changes of properties in matter (5-8)
- Transfer of energy (5-8)

Content Standard E: Science and Technology

- Abilities of technological design (K-8)

Content Standard F: Science in Personal and Social Perspectives

- Changes in environments (K-4)

National Mathematics Education Standards (NCTM):

Data Analysis and Probability Standard:

- Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them
 - collect data using observations, surveys, and experiments
- Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data
 - propose and justify conclusions and predictions that are based on data and design studies to further investigate the conclusions and predictions

Health Education Standards (AAHPERD):

Standard 4: Students will analyze the influence of culture, media technology and other factors on health.

- Describe ways technology can influence personal health (K-4)

Curriculum Explorations

To extend the concepts in this activity, the following explorations can be conducted:

Mathematics

Create a line graph to show the change in temperature of each envelope. Predict what the line graph would look like if you kept the thermometers in the sunlight for another 20 minutes. Predict what the line graph would look like as the Sun sets.

National Mathematics Education Standards (NCTM) (3-5):

Algebra Standard:

- Understand patterns, relations, and functions
 - represent and analyze patterns and functions, using words, tables, and graphs

Data Analysis and Probability Standard:

- Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them
 - collect data using observations, surveys, and experiments

- represent data using tables and graphs such as line plots, bar graphs, and line graphs
- Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data
 - propose and justify conclusions and predictions that are based on data and design studies to further investigate the conclusions or predictions

Language Arts

Ask students to explain the experiment. How might students improve this experiment? Where might there have been mistakes made? How might these mistakes have affected the results?

National Council of Teachers of English Standards (NCTE):

- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Engineering and Design

Try the experiment again with “insulators” other than cotton balls or tissue paper. For example: sand, Styrofoam, or plastic.

Try the experiment again with material other than construction paper. For example: aluminum foil, glass or plastic.

Challenge the students to design and create a “space suit” that will maintain a steady temperature in extreme hot and cold temperatures. Students will be given an empty paper towel tube and asked to design the tube so that the temperature will not vary more than 5 degrees Celsius when it is put in sunlight and then in the freezer.

- National Science Education Standards (NSES):
 Content Standard E: Science and Technology
- Abilities of technological design (K-8)

Sources and Career Links

Thanks to subject matter experts Sharon Garrison and Heather Paul for their contributions to KSNN™ and Noticias NASA™ on the development of this education material.

Find out more about Sharon Garrison and her work at the NASA Institute for Advanced Concepts (NIAC) at the Goddard Space Flight Center: <http://www.niac.usra.edu>.

Heather Paul is a project engineer for the Advanced Extravehicular Activity (AEVA) team at the NASA Johnson Space Center, working on the designs for the next generation space suits that astronauts will wear on the moon and Mars. To find out more about her visit: <http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/people/bios/space/paulh.html> and <http://profiles.jsc.nasa.gov>.

This activity was adapted from NASA educational products.

Lesson development by the NASA Johnson Space Center Human Health and Performance Education Outreach team.

Scientific Investigation Rubric

Experiment: COOL SUITS

Student Name _____

Date _____

Performance Indicator	0	1	2	3	4
The student developed a clear and complete hypothesis.					
The student followed all lab safety rules and directions.					
The student followed the scientific method.					
The student recorded all data on the data sheet and drew a conclusion based on the data.					
The student asked engaging questions related to the study.					
The student described at least one recommendation for NASA in the area of space suit design.					
Point Total					

Point total from above: _____ / (24 possible)

Grade for this investigation _____

Grading Scale:

A = 22 - 24 points

B = 19 - 21 points

C = 16 - 18 points

D = 13 - 15 points

F = 0 - 12 points