

Asters Hoity Toity Belt

Developer: Jacinta Behne, McREL

Audience: Grades K-5

Format: Website/PDF

Panel Recommendation: *Recommended via Teacher Workshops and/or with other materials related to this topic.*

The panel liked the story telling aspect of the product and the version where students supply their own illustrations to the story. This story's connection to the science of the asteroid belt is fairly concrete. This product may be recommended if included (limited audience) as part of a larger unit or lesson plan that covers the science of the mission including a section that addresses misconceptions that the story may create or enhance (e.g. that the asteroid belt is 'crowded'). Presented via teacher workshops, scientists or science educators could supply the necessary background teachers would need to answer questions the story sparks in students.

Individual Review Summary (prior to panel telecon)

Following is the summary of the individual reviews that was distributed to the reviewers prior to the panel discussion by telecon. This information was used to guide the panel discussion; it is included here to provide a complete report of the review process.

Reviewer	Overall Rating	Recommendation
Education Reviewer	Good	Major Revisions
Education Reviewer	Poor	Not Recommended
Education Reviewer	Outstanding	Recommended, revisions next update
Science Reviewer	Very Good	Recommended
Science Reviewer	Fair	Medium Revisions
Science Reviewer	Good	Medium Revisions

Strengths:

- The materials are colorful and have a professional appearance.
- The annotated sections and teacher notes are helpful and accurate.
- There are some links to NASA-unique SMD space science education- planetary science.
- The product is free of technical and content errors and is easy to navigate (except that Ceres is now considered a *dwarf planet*).
- Units referenced were either metric, or had the metric equivalent associated with them.
- The story is appropriate for the intended audience.
- There are good references to further information and investigations on the story Website.
- No personal information is solicited from students.
- Contact information for Dawn scientists involved in the E/PO content is included on the Dawn site.
- The alternate versions of the story allow students to create their own illustrations.
- Some reviewers liked the story and story telling format and felt that the fictional story was enhanced by the connection of facts highlighted throughout. (See also weaknesses below).

Weaknesses:

- The only links to additional information are to the Dawn mission site.
- Two typos were identified: “where the great power source lie.” and “Ceresobservations indicate that water has been present.” [IGES note: the second typo has now been addressed]
- One reviewer, using Mozilla Firefox, had to restart the Web browser each time they wished to switch to a new pdf file. [IGES note: We cannot replicate this on our systems.]
- The capitalization of “Solar System” should be consistent throughout the materials (it should be capitalized).
- One reviewer commented that while the materials are good for developing literacy skills, the science content was low.
- Standards are listed for grades K-4 and 5-8 in the teacher version, but the intended audience is K-5. This broad listing of standards may be confusing to some teachers.
- One reviewer felt the illustrations were confusing and didn’t help clarify the story (while another felt they were ‘fantastic...and attractive.’)
- As with the Genesis story, some reviewers felt this story was confusing and too abstract to communicate information about the science of the Dawn mission to students. One reviewer commented that the scientific aspects of the story are too well hidden in metaphor. Teachers and more traditional science educational materials would be needed to help students distinguish between fact and fiction to avoid creating misconceptions about the asteroid belt. One reviewer felt the story needs to be rewritten and retargeted (see comments under strengths above). See the individual review comments for more details and comments.

Additional Comments/Suggestions:

- Suggest providing a Word and html version in addition to the pdf version of the story.