

5 (or so) sites & 10 videos

Distant Worlds

Read this column online, with links, at www.littleclickers.com/distantworlds

The discovery of seven Earth-sized planets has sparked a lot of questions. How long would it take to visit them? Could we live there? Could there be other forms of life? Let's answer some of these questions.

1. How far away are these seven planets?

According to the New York Times <http://nyti.ms/2m0GuGJ> these planets are 235 trillion miles from us, orbiting around a star called Trappist-1. If you could travel at the speed of light, it would take you 40 years to get there.

2. What kind of telescope do you need to find planets?

These seven planets were spotted with the Hubble. Next year the James Webb Space Telescope will be launched with ten times the power of the Hubble. That means we'll be able to spot many more Earth-like planets. Learn more at <https://jwst.nasa.gov/>

3. What type of spacecraft would we need to travel to another planet?

NASA has an answer: Orion. Currently Orion is designed to take a crew to Mars. Learn more about Orion's design at <http://go.nasa.gov/2mtpY2P>

4. What's it like to stand on another planet? Erik Wernquist is a digital artist who has put a lot of thought into this question. Watch his film at <https://vimeo.com/132183032> or visit his art gallery at <http://www.erikwernquist.com>.

5. Can we tell if a remote planet has life?

Yes. Planets with life look different than other planets, at least to a space telescope. By looking at the way light reflects off the planet, astronomers can tell if the planet's atmosphere contains gasses associated with living things, including oxygen, ozone, or methane. Visit the NASA Astrobiology Institute's Virtual Planetary Laboratory to learn more <http://go.nasa.gov/2mdRXCN>.

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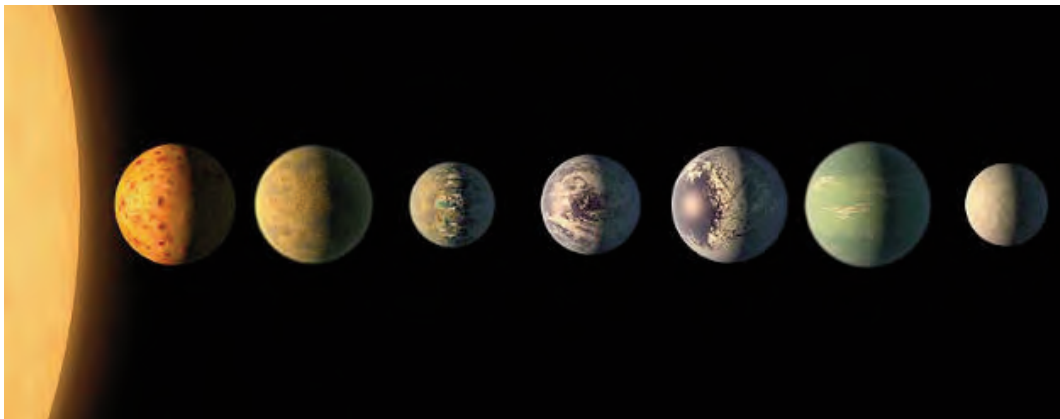


Application: Download these Three Apps

Space by Tinybop. Create a rocket and blast off to visit each planet where you can explore. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/2mLa10Y>

Star Walk Kids by Vito Technology. Point your device at the sky to identify a star, constellation or planet, in real time. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/2mdStRw>

Solar System for iPad by Touch Press. Tap a planet, moon or comet in a working model of the solar system. Full Review: <http://bit.ly/2mFjz1d>



Select Videos About Distant Worlds

Here's a set of hand-picked videos that go along with this column. <http://bit.ly/2mtG2l9>