

2025 - 2026

NEW JERSEY STATE MUSEUM

ELEMENTARY FIELD TRIP GUIDE 2ND - 5TH GRADE

EXPLORE OUR FIELD TRIP GUIDE!

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PLAN YOUR MUSEUM ADVENTURE TODAY!

**SCIENCE, HISTORY, ART -
IT'S ALL UNDER ONE ROOF!**

- Engage with hands-on workshops designed with NJ curriculum standards in mind
- Book a Planetarium show to explore space and the planet we call home
- Learn directly from Museum experts
- Explore new ideas in our exhibits



TEACHER RESOURCES

We are currently developing new teacher resources for you to use before or after your visit to the Museum. These resources can help prepare your students for learning at the Museum, and keep the learning going once you're back in the classroom! Check our [Digital Resources tab](#) on our website, and keep checking for more resources as we post them.

Our current pre-visit resources include our gallery guides. Gallery guides encourage students to engage and explore each of our long-term exhibits. Feel free to use these guides to help plan your day at the Museum, especially for student gallery exploration. If you choose to use the guides, please make sure your students bring a pencil and something to write on. Pens and markers are not allowed in the galleries, and cases and walls cannot be used to write on. You can check out the gallery guides [here](#).



GALLERY EXPLORATION

Gallery exploration is an important part of any field trip to the New Jersey State Museum.

Keep the learning going outside of your workshop or Planetarium program by planning time to allow your group to explore our four floors of exhibits.

WRITTEN IN THE ROCKS: THE FOSSIL HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY

Step back through time and explore ocean life, birds, reptiles, and mammals. There are fossil and rock touchable stations throughout the gallery – so keep an eye out for the signs that indicate what you can touch! Our live paleontology lab is also in this gallery, and if you're lucky, there may be a museum paleontologist working on something during your visit that you can talk to. However, please keep your students out of the Discovery Den, as it is a space reserved for families and is not designed for school groups.



NEW JERSEY'S ORIGINAL PEOPLE, CULTURES IN COMPETITION & A MUCH MOVED PEOPLE EXHIBITIONS



Archaeology and Ethnography exhibits are located on the lower level and encompass two galleries and the hallway between them. In “New Jersey’s Original People,” students can enjoy seeing a reconstruction of an archaeological dig site and learn how the Lenape made pottery during the Woodland Period. There is an interactive station in the Woodland Period room of the “Original People” gallery, as well as lift-up panels.

AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES: THE FINE ART COLLECTION

Our Fine Art gallery on the 2nd floor has a wide range of art on display, including paintings, sculpture, photographs, drawings, collages and more. While there is nothing that can be touched in this gallery, we encourage students to take their time appreciating the art and getting inspired.



PRETTY BIG THINGS: STORIES OF NEW JERSEY HISTORY

Our Cultural History gallery on the 3rd floor has objects that represent New Jersey history. Admire china and ceramic, quilts, historical toys, furniture, and more. While exploring this gallery, students can color their own State seal, design a quilt, and practice joint techniques with a wooden puzzle.



ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK: THREATENED & ENDANGERED IN NEW JERSEY



Our first floor temporary exhibit, “Ecosystems at Risk,” will be on display until March 2026. The exhibition introduces students to New Jersey animals and environments that are in decline. Young students will enjoy learning about the different animals and plants throughout our state. There are some panel interactives and a chalkboard for students to share their commitments to the environment.

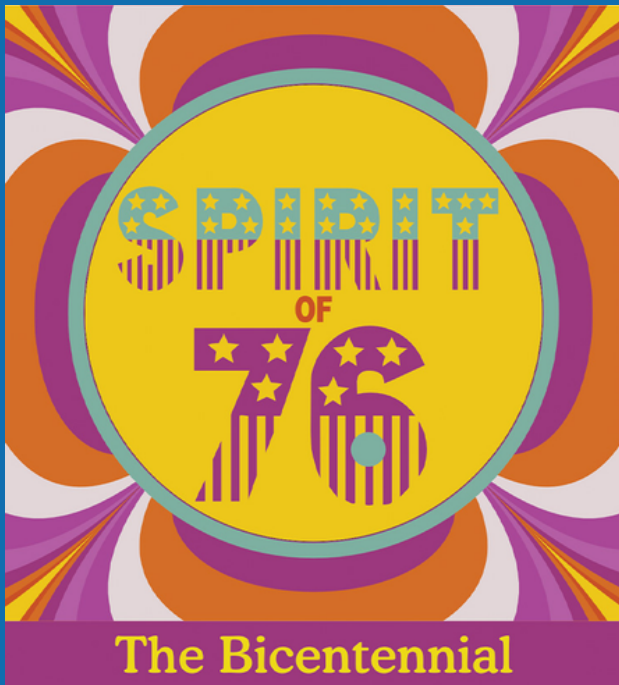


RECENT ACQUISITIONS: FINE ART

Our second floor temporary exhibit, “Recent Acquisitions: Fine Art,” will be on display through December 2025. Students can discover some of the latest accessions to the Fine Art collection, many of which are on view to the public for the first time. We suggest students visit this exhibit in tandem with our “American Perspectives” gallery to continue growing their creative minds.



SPIRIT OF '76: THE BICENTENNIAL



Opening in February 2026, “Spirit of ‘76: The Bicentennial” showcases an assortment of never-before-exhibited artifacts and artworks produced fifty years ago as part of the energy and excitement of the Bicentennial. Young students can make their own button at an interactive station. We suggest visiting both “Power to Change: Revolutionary Stories from the New Jersey State Archives,” opening April 25, 2026, and this exhibit for students to appreciate the past and present celebrations of our nation.

POWER TO CHANGE: REVOLUTIONARY STORIES FROM THE NEW JERSEY STATE ARCHIVES

Opening in April 2026, celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution with this exciting exhibit, developed in collaboration with the New Jersey State Archives. The exhibit highlights rarely seen foundational federal and state government documents. Visitors will also explore how revolutionary ideals, fought for by our founders, influenced the newly established government and continue to allow for reinterpretation and adaptation today.



WORKSHOPS

Enhance your field trip with hands-on experiences, designed around New Jersey's curriculum standards. Our elementary workshops are for second through fifth graders. Using scaffolding and inquiry-based learning, these workshops build on topics throughout the Museum, and allow for a fully comprehensive visit for your group.



Workshop FAQs:

- **How long is a workshop?** All workshops are 45 minutes long.
- **How many students can fit in one workshop?** All workshops can accommodate groups of 15 - 30 students.
- **What should I do if I have multiple classes on the same day?** Large groups will be divided into multiple sessions, often with two workshops occurring at the same time in our two classrooms.

SHIFTING SEASONS

Explore the connection between Earth's orbit around the Sun and our four seasons. Learn how scientists can use weather data from the past to predict how the weather might change in the future.



Overview: In this workshop, students learn how the Earth's rotation cause our seasons. Students will work in groups to create a physical model of the Earth's orbit around the Sun while identifying and describing seasons. Students will first assign the correct temperature to each season on the model, then work together to figure out how the Earth needs to be tilted for each season. For our older students (4th – 5th grade), the workshop includes a discussion about how temperatures in the same season can change over time, serving as a great introduction to climate change!

Suggested Planetarium Shows: We offer a few Planetarium shows focusing on our solar system and our planet that would be an excellent complement to this workshop.

- We Are Guardians
- Dynamic Earth
- Earth Moon Sun

SHIFTING SEASONS

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with weather patterns, like temperature
- Understanding of seasons



Related Galleries: Students can explore visualizations of more weather patterns on Earth and on other planets using our Magic Planet in the Planetarium lobby! We ask that you encourage students to break into smaller groups to use the Magic Planet.

Below are some prompts to guide students through thoughtful exploration.

- On the Earth page, go to “Land Surface Temperatures.”
- What does each color tell us about the weather?
- Where is it mostly cold and where is it mostly warm?
- What season do you think it was in New Jersey?
- On the Earth page, go to the “Seasons” animation. Watch how the Earth changes throughout the seasons
- What changes do you notice on the Earth?

JUNIOR PALEONTOLOGIST

Do you have what it takes to be a paleontologist? Explore the history of life on Earth, then describe and interpret real fossils through observation, just like actual paleontologists!



Overview: In this workshop, learning is split between the Natural History gallery and our STEAM classroom. In the gallery, students travel back in time and learn about the evolution of life on our planet, and learn more about some fascinating animals that used to call New Jersey home! In the classroom, students practice scientific observation as they work in groups to describe and examine real fossils, including using a fossil guide to try and identify each fossil while learning interesting facts about ancient animals.

Suggested Planetarium Shows: We offer a few Planetarium shows focusing on paleontology and earth sciences that would be an excellent complement to this workshop.

- We Are Guardians
- Dynamic Earth
- Dinosaurs in Antarctica

JUNIOR PALEONTOLOGIST

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with descriptive words
- Ability to measure items using rulers
- Practice in observation



Related Galleries: While some of the workshop takes place in our Written in the Rocks gallery, there is still plenty to explore in our natural history gallery before or after your workshop! Take a look at our mammal corner, including modern mammals and our Ice Age animals. Don't forget to touch the mammoth and mastodon bones that are available for physical interaction, or say hi to our paleontology preparators in the lab!

LENAPE POTTERY IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

Explore the development of pottery in New Jersey,
start to think like an archaeologist,
and learn how to make your own pot like the Lenape did!



Overview: In this workshop, students are introduced to the science of archaeology. In the gallery, students learn how archaeologists find artifacts to study, what artifacts are, and why they are important to understanding past cultures. Students will also learn how the Lenape made pottery in the Woodland Period and why the development of pottery was an important technological advancement for the Lenape community. In the classroom, students develop skills that archaeologists use as they work in groups to put a pottery puzzle together, like observation and pattern recognition. Then, students make a pot to take home, modeling the coil method used by the Lenape.

Suggested Planetarium Shows: We offer a few Planetarium shows focusing on anthropology and culture that would be an excellent complement to this workshop.

- Tales of the Maya Skies
- Áróra

LENAPE POTTERY IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with puzzles
- Practice in observation
- Understanding of culture



Related Galleries: While some of this workshop can take place in our New Jersey's Original People gallery, there is still more archaeology to explore! Return to the Original People gallery to explore the Paleoindian and Archaic Periods, or discover what happened to the Lenape during and after European colonialism.

HEARTH & HOME

BEST FOR 4TH & 5TH GRADE

Using Indigenous homes as inspiration, students work together to build model homes designed for different biomes across North America.



Overview: In this workshop, students work in teams to identify resources and environmental concerns across different biomes in North America. Student teams examine a specific biome, design then build a home. Modeling approaches done by architects and engineers, students work together in a planning phase, identifying possible resources available and environmental conditions and making a sketch of their design. Students then enter the building phase, where they work together to make their design come to life using items that represent possible resources available. At the end, students are encouraged to share their work to the class.

Suggested Planetarium Shows: We offer a few Planetarium shows focusing on natural environments or anthropology that would be an excellent complement to this workshop.

- We Are Guardians
- Dynamic Earth
- Tales of the Maya Skies

HEARTH & HOME

BEST FOR 4TH & 5TH GRADE

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Knowledge of North American biomes
- Familiarity with the fields of architecture and engineering



Related Galleries: Explore the “New Jersey’s Original People” gallery to see how the Lenape built their houses and communities here in New Jersey. Then discover what happened to the Lenape during and after European colonialism in the “A Much Moved People” and “Cultures in Competition” galleries.

NEW

REVOLUTIONARY CHOICES, NEW JERSEY LIVES

BEST FOR 4TH & 5TH GRADE

Using primary source documents from the NJ State Archives, students work in teams to uncover stories from the past.



Overview: It all happened so long ago... Why does it still matter today? The American Revolution took place in the distant past, but the ideals behind it endure. In this workshop, students explore how foundational documents in the collection of the New Jersey State Archives guide us today. Through object-based learning combined with primary source documents students will team up to solve the case recreating stories of New Jersey's past.

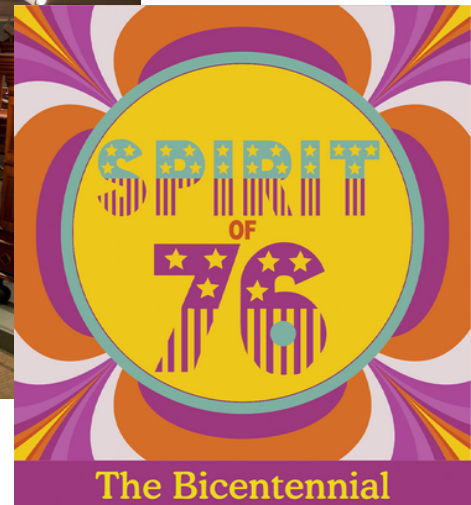
NEW

REVOLUTIONARY CHOICES, NEW JERSEY LIVES

BEST FOR 4TH & 5TH GRADE

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with US history
- Practice in observation



Related Galleries: Explore our temporary exhibits focusing on the American Revolution - “Spirit of ‘76: The Bicentennial,” opening Feb. 14, 2026 and “Power to Change: Revolutionary Stories from the New Jersey State Archives,” opening April 25, 2026. These galleries allow students to learn more about the American Revolution and how we have previously commemorated the occasion. Until then, explore New Jersey history in “Pretty Big Things: Stories of New Jersey History.”

PLANETARIUM SHOWS

From the prehistoric jungles of Antarctica to the moons of Jupiter, we have shows for all age groups and interests!

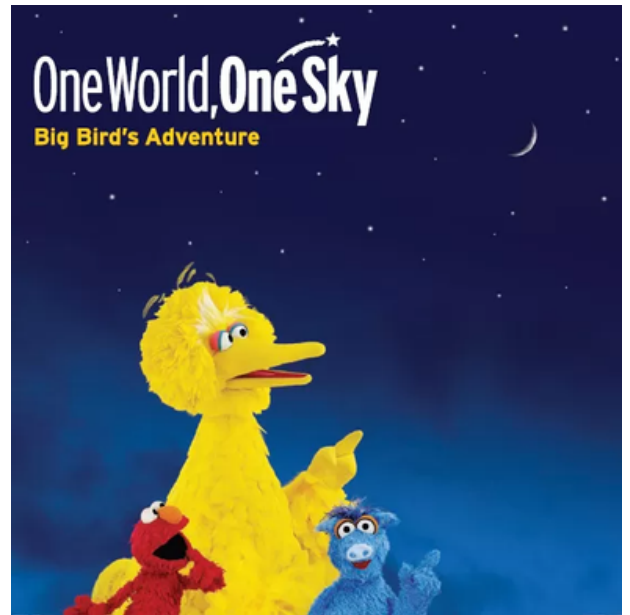


Planetarium FAQs:

- **How long is a Planetarium show?** All Planetarium shows are 45 minutes long and include a Sky Talk about the New Jersey night sky.
- **What happens if we are late?** Planetarium shows begin promptly at the scheduled time. We are unable to start the show late or issue refunds for late arrivals.
- **How many students can fit in one Planetarium show?** The Planetarium can accommodate a total of 140 people. Larger groups will be split into two or more shows.
- **Are teachers and chaperones included in the total count?** Yes! All students, teachers, and chaperones must be included in the total count when reserving the Planetarium.

One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure **2nd grade; Available in Spanish**

One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure begins on Sesame Street when Elmo's friend, Hu Hu Zhu, visits from China. Big Bird, Elmo and Hu Hu Zhu talk about some of their favorite constellations and realize we all see the same stars! Elmo and Hu Hu Zhu then blast off to the Moon where they learn that the Moon is a very different place from the Earth. They even pick the North Star as their friendship star to always remind them of their shared joy of looking up at the sky together. Watch the trailer [here](#).



Magic Tree House: Space Mission **2nd - 5th grade**



Travel through space with the brother-sister duo Jack and Annie....as well as their Magic Tree House! When they discover a note with a mysterious riddle, the siblings will go on a journey as they meet an astronomer, astronaut, and even the writer of the riddle. Audiences will learn about the planets, stars, what it is like to live in space, and where we are going in the future. This exciting voyage will carry visitors far into the cosmos, where Jack and Annie nearly get... well, we don't want to give it away! The adventure is just beginning. Based on the beloved book series by Mary Pope Osborne. Watch the trailer [here](#).

Earth, Moon & Sun 2nd - 5th grade

Explore the relationship between the Earth, Moon and Sun with the help of an amusing character Coyote (adapted from Native American oral traditions). Examine how the Earth, Moon and Sun work together as a system, with a look the Moon's orbit, craters, phases, and eclipses. Young children and audiences of all ages will appreciate learning the science behind the myths. Watch the trailer [here](#).



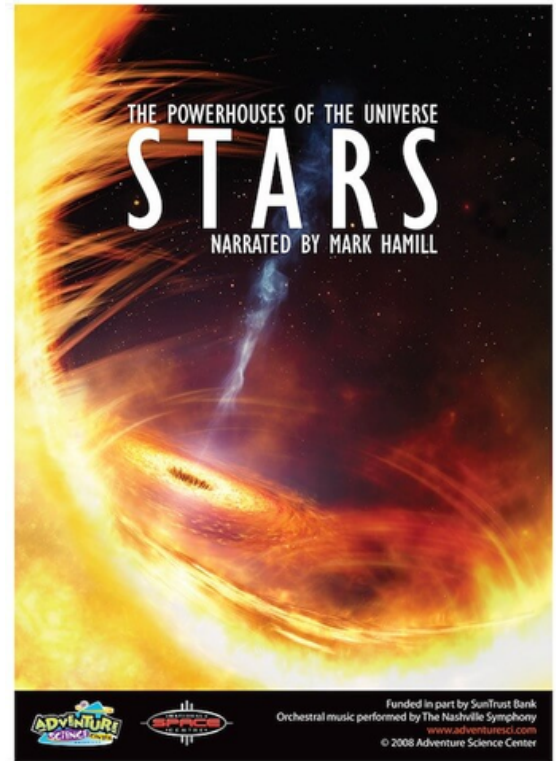
The Great Solar System Adventure! 2nd - 5th grade



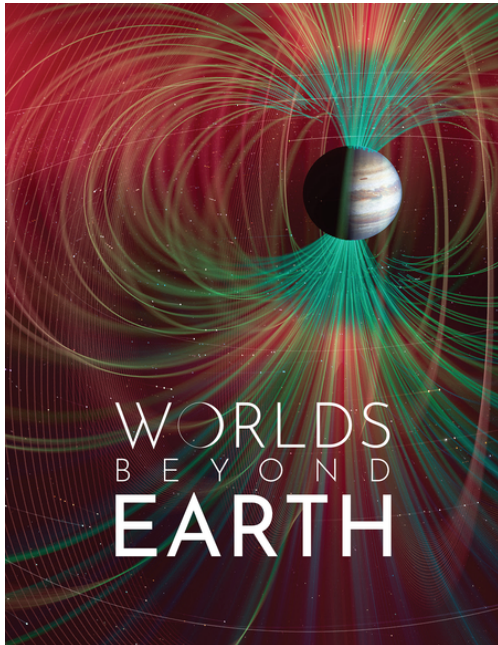
Join showman extraordinaire “The Great Schiaparelli” as he takes the audience on an immersive, death-defying adventure through space with his wondrous Observatory. From the sun-scorched surface of Mercury to the icy expanses of Pluto and beyond, prepare to experience the countless dangers and breathtaking wonders of our Solar System. Adventurers of all ages are welcome to join this exciting tour that reveals just how precious our home planet really is! Watch the trailer [here](#).

Stars 3rd - 5th grade

Every star has a story. Some are as old as time, faint and almost forgotten. Others burn bright and end their lives in powerful explosions. New stars are created every day, born of vast clouds of gas and dust. Through every phase of their existence, stars release the energy that powers the Universe. Journey to the farthest reaches of our galaxy and experience both the awesome beauty and destructive power of STARS. Narrated by Mark Hamill. Watch the trailer [here](#).



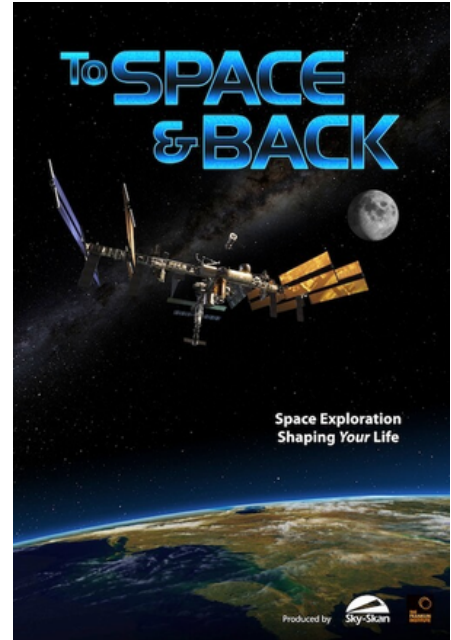
Worlds Beyond Earth 4th - 5th grade; Available in Spanish



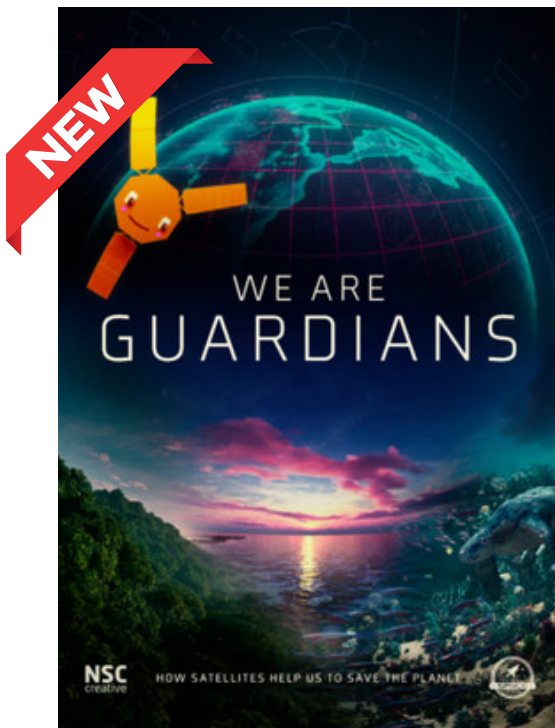
Narrated by Academy Award-winner Lupita Nyong'o, "Worlds Beyond Earth" tells the story of the surprisingly dynamic worlds that orbit our Sun. Based on authentic scientific data from groundbreaking space missions, the show takes viewers on an exhilarating adventure through our cosmic neighborhood. Immersive visualizations showcase the solar system with unprecedented accuracy, including a landing on the cratered surface of our own Moon, a dramatic flight through the swirling rings of Saturn, and soaring encounters with distant worlds of active volcanoes and buried oceans. Watch the trailer [here](#).

To Space and Back 4th - 5th grade

Join us as we take an incredible journey from the far reaches of our known universe to our own planet. It is an extraordinary story of human ingenuity and incredible engineering, describing how the technology that transports us through space is paving the way for devices and applications we use every day. Discover how space exploration is shaping your world in this new fully immersive show. Watch the trailer [here](#).



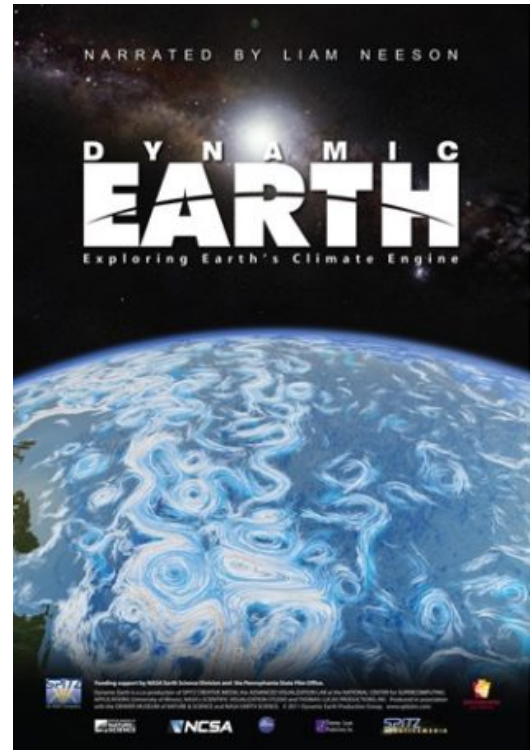
We Are Guardians 4th - 5th grade; Available in Spanish



Come get a view of our world from a satellite's perspective! "We Are Guardians" is a visually stunning show that reveals how the Earth, its ecosystems, and its people are all intrinsically connected. From a single bumblebee to an expansive forest, discover how each component of our planet's beautiful ecosystems fit together. Find out how satellites can help us monitor these environments, better understand the impact of climate change, and help us to protect our shared home! Watch the trailer [here](#).

Dynamic Earth **4th - 5th grade; Available in Spanish**

“Dynamic Earth” is an exciting show that explores the inner workings of Earth’s climate system. With visualizations based on satellite monitoring data and advanced supercomputer simulations, this cutting-edge production follows a trail of energy that flows from the Sun into the interlocking systems that shape our climate: the atmosphere, oceans, and the biosphere. Audiences will ride along on swirling ocean and wind currents, dive into the heart of a monster hurricane, come face-to-face with sharks and gigantic whales, and fly into roiling volcanoes. Narrated by Liam Neeson. Watch the trailer [here](#).



Áróra **4th - 5th grade**

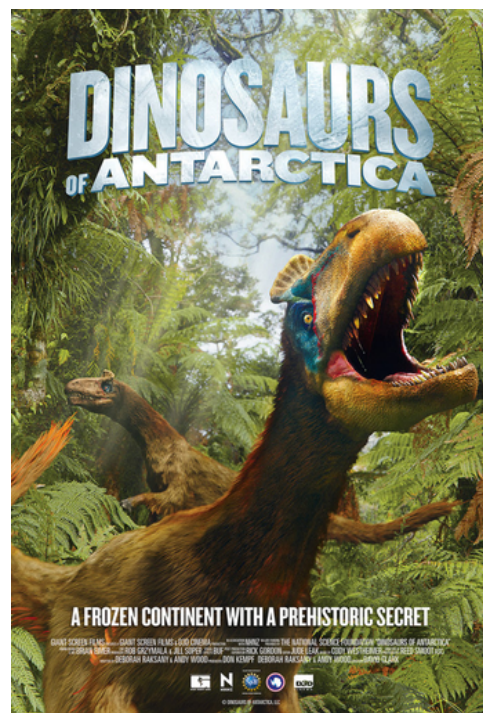


“Áróra” is an immersive fulldome show that transports audiences to Iceland to learn the story of the aurora, the northern and southern lights. Join us on a voyage through time and space to find out how auroras are caused by the Sun, how Earth’s auroras have siblings across the Solar System, and how different cultures have explained this majestic and mysterious phenomenon. Watch the trailer [here](#).

Dinosaurs of Antarctica **5th grade; Available in Spanish**

Roam through primitive forests and thick swamps filled with bizarre dinosaurs, colossal amphibians, and egg-laying mammals all fighting for survival! “Dinosaurs of Antarctica” tells the story of Antarctica’s geological and ecological history, focusing on the Permian and Triassic extinction and Antarctica’s climate transition from Greenhouse to Icehouse. Follow along as an expedition of scientists uncover Antarctica’s past through the discovery of ancient animal and plant fossils. Computer-generated imagery brings to life these past eras of Antarctica’s history! Watch the trailer [here](#).

Note: This show is 40 minutes, which does not leave time for the pre-show sky talk.



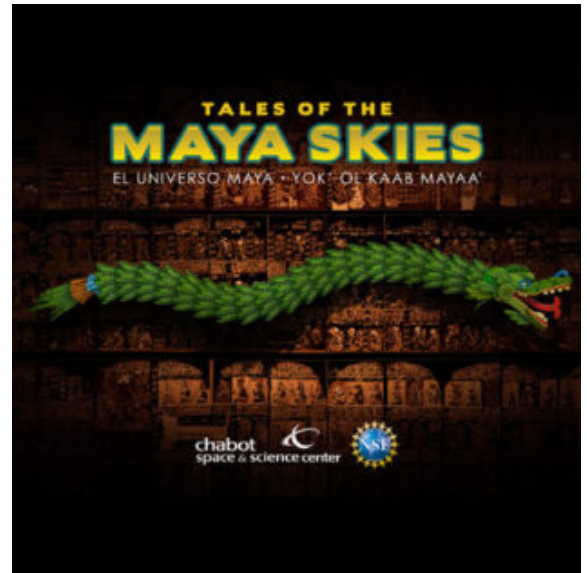
Destination Mars: The New Frontier **5th grade; Available in Spanish**



Ever wonder what it would be like to fly to Mars? NASA – and others – have their sights set on the Red Planet and they’re building the technology to get us there! Explore the work being done around the globe to help make the dream of getting humans to Mars a reality. Fly through the International Space Station, where astronauts are already living and working in space, and follow the rockets and vehicles that will take humans beyond the Moon and, one day, all the way to Mars! Travel along as we imagine this remarkable journey. This film is narrated by former NASA astronaut Mae Jemison and Emmy-award winning actor Keith David. Watch the trailer [here](#).

Tales of the Maya Skies **5th grade; Available in Spanish**

“Tales of the Maya Skies” immerses viewers in the wonders of Maya science, cosmology and myth, as we are taken back in time to the jungles of Mexico and to the cities and temples of the ancient Maya. The beautifully illustrated story reveals how the Maya scholars developed a sophisticated understanding of astronomy, architecture, and mathematics that enabled them to predict solstices, solar eclipses, weather patterns and planetary movements, and through this knowledge make sense of the world around them. Watch the trailer [here](#).



RESERVATION & FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Cost & Discounts: The New Jersey State Museum has free admission. Planetarium shows are \$5 per person, including chaperones. Workshops are \$5 per student. A minimum of 15 students is required to reserve any program. We offer a 20% discount for Trenton Public School District schools and Title 1 schools. It is the responsibility of the group making the reservation to notify the reservationist if eligible for one of the discounts.

Online Reservation Form: Please use our [online reservation form](#) to submit your reservation request. Use this Guide to explore the options at the Museum before submitting the reservation request. After submitting your request, our reservationist will review it. If no other information is needed, they will build your itinerary and send a confirmation email. To help you plan your visit, we have created an orientation video. You can watch it [here](#).

Bulk Orders: If you are interested in making 5 or more reservations in a school year and will be paying for all in one PO, please contact our reservationist directly at reservations.NJSM@sos.nj.gov. You will get a personal account representative who will work with you to schedule all of the trips.

Payments: All payment is due before arrival, and payment is required for the entire group in one payment, we do not accept deposits or partial payments. Reservations must be pre-paid in full, two weeks prior to your field trip date.

Arrival & Late Policy: Please have an arrival time in mind when making your reservation. We suggest arriving at least 15 minutes before the start of your first program. If your group is over 100 students, we suggest arriving at least 30 minutes before your first program. We are unable to hold Planetarium shows for late arrivals. If you are late, we can try and accommodate your original reservation, but cannot guarantee that. If you are more than 30 minutes late, your first program may be cancelled without a refund.

RESERVATION & FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Chaperones & Code of Conduct:

- We request 1 chaperone per 10 students.
- Chaperones are required to stay with students at all times and refrain from talking on the phone in the galleries.
- Chaperones must be included in the total number of seats for the Planetarium.
- You can find the full Code of Conduct [here](#).

Available Lunch Spaces :

- Lunch room reservations are no longer accepted.
- Limited seating (up to 60) is available indoors on the Museum's first floor on a first come basis.
- Please keep your students together so that there is seating available for other groups.
- Groups must limit their lunch to 30 minutes.
- Outdoor seating for up to 150 people is available at picnic tables around the Museum.
- Groups may also picnic on the front lawn.
- There is no alternate space in the case of inclement weather.
- Lunches should be stored in bins inside the Museum's main entrance; students are not permitted to carry food or drink through the Museum.

We can't wait to see you and your students!

