

STEM Spotlight

Learning about the MOON and Preparing for the ECLIPSE

On August 21 a solar eclipse will be visible from anywhere in the United States. The last time the contiguous U.S. saw a total eclipse was in 1979 and the next will be in 2024.

This past school year, two teachers from West Elementary and a teacher from Park Elementary, helped prepare their students to experience and

understand how to view the solar eclipse by teaching them about the moon through hands-on, engaging experiences.

Steve Boone and Roger Davis, sixth grade teachers at West Elementary in Tooele School District, applied for and received a classroom grant to take shadow LED flood lamps and other lights to show the shadow of the moon during its phases.

"The students were able to physically explore the phases of the moon instead of just reading about it or drawing pictures," Boone said. "We want the students to be able to manipulate the objects, to see what outcomes there will be."

Several students have become interested in stargazing since this hands-on activity in their classroom. One student is even making the trip to Idaho to see the total solar eclipse.



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"This activity was excellent at connecting the classroom to the real world," Boone said.

Katie Jenson, a second grade teacher at Park Elementary in Cache School District, applied and received a classroom grant to purchase a telescope in order for her students to learn about the moon.

"For a few weeks we learned about the phases of the moon and then we decided to have a night out," Jenson said. "It took some time planning when there would be a full moon at the right place and at the right time, but it worked out great in the end."

Students showed up one evening on a school night in their pajamas to see the moon through Jenson's purchased telescope.

"We've only seen models and pictures and books and it was great to show them that it was out there and it really does exist," Jenson said. "I think this project was so exciting and I want them to look up at the moon and the stars and understand how the world around them works."



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Solar Eclipse Logistics for Utah

Utahns will be able to see an eclipse that blocks 91 percent of the sun. The eclipse will be at its fullest in Utah at 11:33 a.m.

NOTE: With the sun still being visible throughout the entire eclipse as seen through Utah, it is critical that anyone looking at the eclipse has a special eclipse viewer through which it's safe to view the sun. A regular pair of sunglasses won't protect viewers' eyes, and no one should look directly at the sun.

(Source: <http://www.sltrib.com/artsliving/outdoors/2017/08/14/staying-in-utah-for-the-eclipse-plenty-of-viewing-events-to-help-celebrate-the-big-event/>)



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