

Pre-Reading Guide

Before your Club launches into reading the first 37 pages of Andy Weir's *The Martian*, try the activities and discussion questions described below.

Page numbers used are from Weir, Andy. *The Martian*. Classroom edition, Broadway Books, 2014.

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. *The Martian* centers on a mission that lands humans on Mars for the third time. Discuss the potential value of sending live astronauts to Mars as opposed to only unmanned probes, which can gather information through the use of instruments and robotic explorers. For additional reading, the *ChemMatters* article “‘Follow the Carbon.’ Follow the What?” describes several unmanned Mars probes and the information they collect. (<http://bit.ly/ChemMattersMars2008>)
2. Is exploring the solar system worth the monetary cost? Research the cost of a past Mars rover mission or the planned Mars 2020 rover. Discuss the pros and cons of using money for space exploration versus spending it on problems/needs that exist on Earth. Some examples might be free college educations for high school graduates, cleaning up environmental problems, providing food/housing to those in need, etc.
3. Do you believe that we will send humans to Mars during your lifetime? Discuss reasons why/why not.

Martian Music Activity

In *The Martian*, each astronaut brings a personal data-stick with digital entertainment, including television shows and music (p. 22). If you knew you would be going on your own trip to Mars—with a lengthy travel time and an unfamiliar environment with hazardous conditions—what playlist would you bring? Each person in your Club could create his or her own, or your Club could collaborate on a single themed list.

- Create a 10-song playlist
 - o Include the full title and artist of each song
 - o For each song, share with your club why you selected the song

Share your martian playlist with other ACS ChemClubs by posting a photo or playlist to Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram with #ACSCHEMCLUB & your school name. Only Clubs that are registered for the virtual book club will be eligible to win. All lists received before the virtual book club chats in April/May 2017 will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a movie prize pack.

Need some inspiration? Check out the ChemClub staff playlists on the blog: http://acschemclubs.org/martian_music

Acknowledgement

Thank you to ChemClub advisor Kathleen Chesmel for the idea to create a music playlist related to *The Martian*.



One Book Activity

The classroom edition of *The Martian* contains “A Conversation with Andy Weir.” One of the questions asked is, “You’re stranded on Mars and you can take only one book with you. What is it?” (p. 380)

- Which book would you choose?
- Take a look at Weir’s answer on p. 380. If you haven’t heard of the book he chose, learn a little about its plot (<http://bit.ly/ChemClubOneBook>)—does it sound like something you might like to read?
- Share your book choice with other ACS ChemClubs on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram with #ACSCHEMCLUBBook.

Happy reading!