

Space Station

SCRIPT:

When Hollywood makes a space station, they make it big...a place where thousands of people live and work among the stars. And now something very real – the International Space Station – is taking shape above the Earth. When it's completed, it'll be as big as two football fields, with as much living space as two jumbo jets... an orbiting laboratory for space research, and a stepping stone to a future in which we learn to live inside large structures in space, for long periods of time.

So how long will it be before you and I can live and work in space..? Well, nobody's getting too comfortable about the idea – at least not yet. There's still far too much we don't know. First, we have to make sure the washing machine and the toilet work.

The space station will teach us a million things about learning to live in a sealed container, where the bath water – and everything else – has to be recycled.

We also need to know whether life in space will lead to new discoveries that are good for people on Earth.

And finally, while ordinary people can visit a replica of the space station on Earth, how much are we willing to pay for the real experience of living in space..?

No one knows, but more than a dozen nations are now betting the International Space Station is a stepping stone to a future world...in which people really will live and work among the stars.

Relevant NSES Standards

NSES Content Standard A: Understandings about scientific inquiry.

(Grades K-12) Using tools/technology to gather data (space station is laboratory).

NSES Content Standard C: Life science.

(Grades K-4) Humans can depend on natural or constructed environments.

(Grades 5-12) Creating an ecosystem for a human population.

NSES Content Standard D: Earth and space science.

(Grades K-4) Objects in the sky. (Space station).

NSES Content Standard E: Understanding about science and technology.

(Grades K-4) Designing a solution for a problem (living in space).

(Grades 5-12) Science and technology work together to meet human aspirations.

NSES Content Standard F: Science in social perspectives.

(Grades K-4) Creating a new location for a human population.

(Grades 5-8) Scientists work in many different settings.

(Grades 9-12) Science is an enterprise of society.

NSES Content Standard G: History and nature of science.

(Grades K-4) Deriving pleasure from science (living on a space station).

(Grades 9-12) Science meets human aspirations.

Credits: Dr. M. Sean O'Brien, Hubble Space Telescope; Dr. John Uri,
International Space Station

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