



Previous, Current, and Future Missions to Mars: 2003 Mars Exploration Rovers

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Two identical rovers will be launched between May and July 2003, bound for Mars. The rovers will be much like the Sojourner Rover, but they will be much more powerful. Like Mars Pathfinder, the Rovers will enter the Martian atmosphere directly, slowed by parachutes. Then airbags will shelter the robots as they bounce approximately 12 times and roll to a stop. Upon landing, the spacecraft will unfold and the Rover will deploy. Unlike Pathfinder, the Rovers will have all the scientific instruments on board, and they will be able to travel up to 100 yards each Martian day. With no need to return to the landing site, the Rovers will be able

to explore a comparatively large area of the Martian surface. The Rovers, which will land in different areas on Mars, will send back images from their cameras and data about the Martian soils, which they will be able to analyze at very small scales.



Mars Exploration Rover. NASA/JPL.

The Benchmark Lessons were developed with the help of the following sources:

JPL's Mars Missions website, <http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/missions/>

JPL's Planetary Photojournal, <http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/>

The NASA Image Exchange, <http://nix.nasa.gov/>

Mission to Mars: Project Based Learning: Dr. Anthony Petrosino, Department of Curriculum and Instruction,
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<http://www.edb.utexas.edu/missiontomars/index.html>
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