

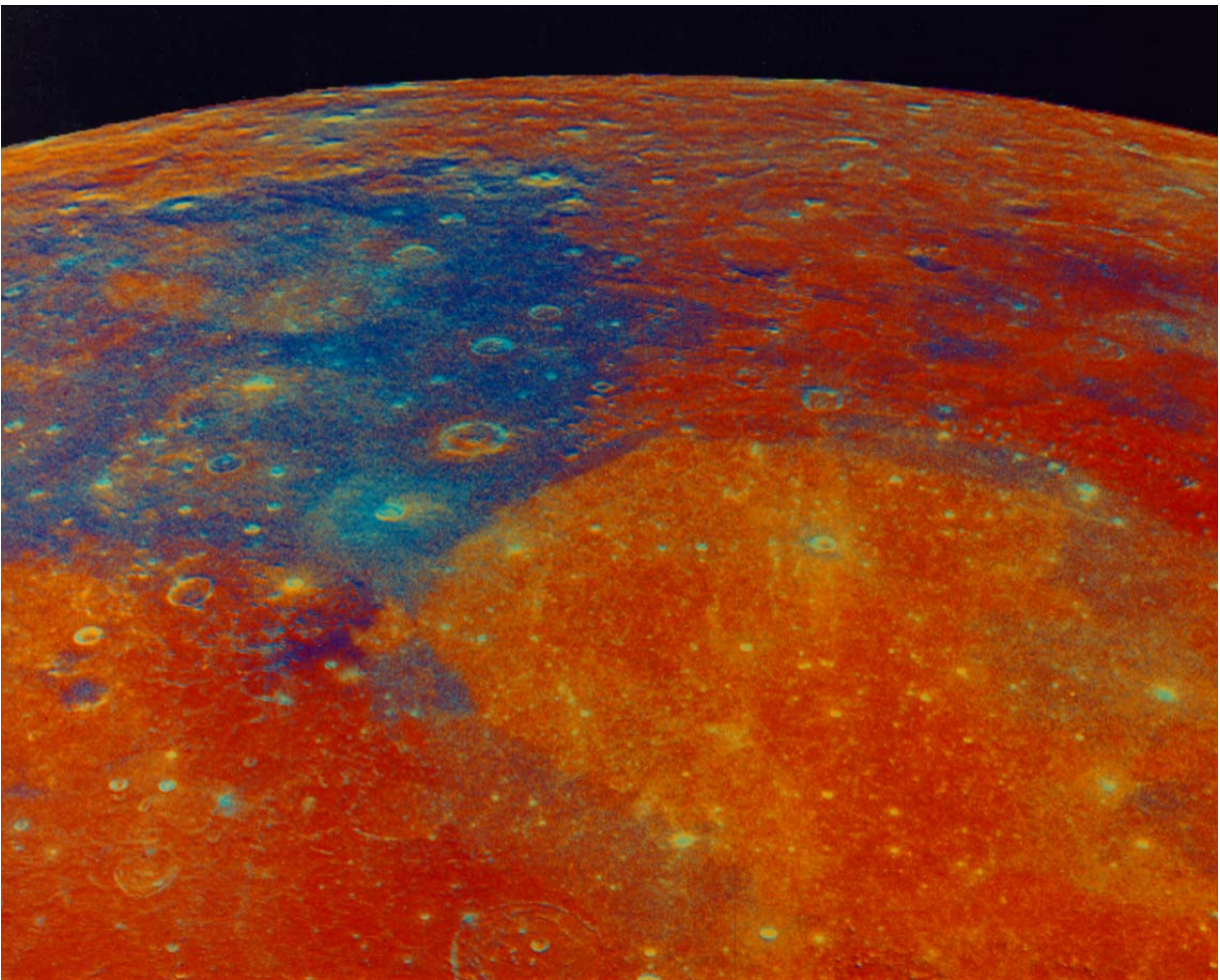
Seeing the Moon

Using Light to Investigate the Moon

An Educator's Guide to the Moon

In support of the

Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3) / Chandrayaan-1 mission



This Educator Guide is the result and compilation of hard work by many dedicated lunar scientists and educators. Activities contained herein have been vetted through numerous educator workshops across the country over a two year period. Although primarily designed for grade levels 6 – 9, many of these activities are also appropriate for upper and lower levels.

Original activities on spectroscopy are combined herein with relevant activities from the NASA's *Active Astronomy Educator's Guide* (NASA EG-#####).

This educator guide uses traditional U.S. units of measure (e.g., inch, foot, mile). Metric units are provided as comparisons where appropriate.

The information provided in this document is accurate as of the original publication date.

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OVERVIEW OF *SEEING THE MOON* EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

While working through the activities and modules in *Seeing the Moon: Using Light to Investigate the Moon*, students will become more familiar with the electromagnetic spectrum and its uses as a diagnostic tool. Through the enclosed hands-on and inquiry-based activities students collect **real data** using a spectrometer, **examine and compare** rock samples, learn about the Earth-Moon system, and **map features to uncover the history of the Moon**.

Key Content Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Compare the characteristics of light of different frequencies to white light.
- Describe features of a plotted spectrum as wavelength versus brightness.
- Demonstrate how spectra can be used to identify and map minerals and rocks.
- Describe why the spectra taken by the Moon Mineralogy Mapper / Chandrayaan-1 will obtain more information about the Moon than any observations to date.

Key Inquiry Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Develop descriptions, explanations, predictions, and models using evidence.
- Use appropriate tools and techniques to gather, analyze, and interpret data.
- Communicate scientific procedures, results, and observations.
- Recognize and analyze alternative explanations and predictions.
- Express the role of technology in science & exploration.

The activities are divided into three primary “modules,” with each module containing several steps that include open inquiry, demonstrations, hands-on activities, presentations, and a discussion to synthesize and assess the students’ understanding.

MULTI-MEDIA SUPPORT

Moon Mineralogy Mapper Education

<http://m3.cofc.edu/educators.html>

A suite of hands-on inquiry based activities engage middle-school students in understanding and interpreting reflectance spectra from Earth and Moon rocks. These activities are part of a suite of educational resources that investigate the geologic history of our Moon, the Chandrayaan-1 Mission, spectrometry, and future lunar exploration.

Moon Posters

http://www.lpi.usra.edu/education/moon_poster.shtml

A series of three posters explores what — and how — we know about our Moon's formation and evolution, and how its history affects lunar resources. The front of the posters provide content depth for students, while back panels provide educators with information, activities, stories about the Moon, resources, and introductions to lunar scientists.

The Electromagnetic Spectrum

http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/science/known_11/emspectrum.html

Imagine the Universe investigates the spectrum and offers lesson plans for exploring emission spectra from supernovas for grades 9-12.

Cool Cosmos

<http://coolcosmos.ipac.caltech.edu/>

What does a cat look like in the infrared? Tour Yellowstone in the infrared and learn more about this portion of the electromagnetic spectrum through discussion, activities, images, and games at this rich site.

Northwestern University Reflectance Spectroscopy Lab

<http://ser.sese.asu.edu/SPECTRA/>

Explore reflectance spectroscopy and perform online analysis of lunar and Martian rocks in this undergraduate laboratory exercise.

Active Astronomy

<http://www.sofia.usra.edu/Edu/materials/activeAstronomy/activeAstronomy.html>

Infrared activities (geared for 7th grade through high school)

ALTA II Reflectance Spectrometer for the Classroom

<http://www.vernier.com/labequipment/altaspectrometer.html>

The ALTA is a rugged, simple classroom instrument designed to help students in grades 5 to undergraduate learn about light, color, and spectroscopy. Using the spectrometer, students can collect spectral data on the proportions of colored light (including infrared) that reflect from real-world objects. Lesson plans are included.

Rock Around the World

<http://ratw.asu.edu/>

Send a rock for spectral analysis! Scientists studying Mars are collecting spectra from Earth rocks so that they can compare the spectral data collected by Martian spacecraft.

Mars Student Imaging Project
<http://msip.asu.edu/index.html>

Students in grades 5-12 analyze THEMIS visible spectrum camera aboard NASA's Mars Odyssey spacecraft.

Missions

The **Moon Mineralogy Mapper** (<http://moonmineralogymapper.jpl.nasa.gov/>) is one of NASA's instruments aboard the Indian Space Research Organization's Chandrayaan spacecraft (<http://www.chandrayaan-1.com/index.htm>). It will map the entire lunar surface, and reveal the minerals of which it is made. Extensive educator content and classroom resources are available on the education pages.

NASA's **Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter** mission (<http://lunar.gsfc.nasa.gov/>) will return detailed information about the surface of the Moon and the lunar environment. Explore the Outreach pages for links to more activities and resources.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's **KAGUYA** (SELENE) mission (http://www.jaxa.jp/projects/sat/selene/index_e.html) gathered gravity, magnetic, and compositional data from the Moon to help scientists better understand how the Moon formed and has changed through time and to support future exploration.

European Space Agency's **SMART-1** spacecraft (<http://www.esa.int/SPECIALS/SMART-1/index.html>) orbited the Moon for three years, collecting spectra to characterize the composition of the lunar surface and provide chemical data that would help scientists understand how our Moon formed.

The **Clementine Mission** (<http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/clementine.html>) was a joint venture between the Department of Defense and NASA to test instruments in long-term space environment and to acquire a global multispectral map of the Moon's surface.

NASA's **Lunar Prospector** (<http://lunar.arc.nasa.gov/>) spacecraft orbited the Moon, acquiring a global map of lunar resources, gravity, and magnetic fields. The education section offers a teachers guide, lesson plans and a multitude of other resources.

NASA's **Galileo Mission** (<http://galileo.jpl.nasa.gov/gallery/earthmoon.cfm>) made two passes by the Moon, providing the first multispectral images.

CORRELATION OF ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES with the National Science Education Standards for Grades 5 - 8

<i>Description of Standard</i>	<i>Activity to which Standard Applies</i>							
	Activity I-A	Activity I-B	Activity I-C	Activity I-D	Activity I-E	Activity II-A	Activity II-B	Activity IIIA
Content Standard A: Science as Inquiry								
Abilities to do Inquiry: Develop descriptions, explanations, predictions, and models using evidence.								
Abilities to do Inquiry: Use appropriate tools and techniques to gather, analyze, and interpret data.								
Abilities to do Inquiry: Communicate scientific procedures and explanations.								
Abilities to do Inquiry: Recognize and analyze alternative explanations and predictions.								
Mathematics is important in all aspects of scientific inquiry.								
Technology used to gather data enhances accuracy and allows scientists to analyze and quantify results of investigations.								
Scientific explanations emphasize evidence, have logically consistent arguments, and use scientific principles, models, and theories.								
Asking questions and querying other scientists' explanations is part of scientific inquiry. Scientists evaluate explanations by examining and comparing evidence, identifying faulty reasoning, and suggesting alternative explanations for observations.								
Scientific investigations sometimes result in new ideas and phenomena for study, generate new methods or procedures for an investigation, or develop new technologies to improve the collection of data.								
Content Standard B: Physical Science								
Light interacts with matter by transmission (including refraction), absorption, or scattering (including reflection). To see an object, light from that object--emitted by or scattered from it--must enter the eye.								
The sun's energy arrives as light with a range of wavelengths, consisting of visible light, infrared, and ultraviolet radiation.								
Content Standard D: Earth and Space Science								
Land forms are the result of a combination of constructive and destructive forces..								
The earth is the third planet from the sun in a system that includes the moon...								
CONTENT STANDARD E: Science & Technology								
Science helps drive technology, as it addresses questions that demand more sophisticated instruments and provides principles for better instrumentation and technique. Technology is essential to science, because it provides instruments and techniques that enable observations of objects and phenomena.								

BACKGROUND > LUNAR SCIENCE: What, When, Why, How and You!

The Moon's Formation and Evolution

The current theory that best explains the scientific evidence is the "Giant Impactor Theory." In this model, early in the history of the solar system, the Earth collided with a small planet, approximately half the current size of Earth. The impacting planet was destroyed in the collision. Some rocky debris from that impactor, and less from the Earth, were hurled out into orbit around Earth. This material accreted — came together — to form the Moon. Some models suggest our Moon may have formed in as few as 10 years.

Additional Resources:

See Poster Number 1 (How our Moon Formed) of 3-set series on the Moon (<http://m3.cofc.edu/multimedia/poster.html>).

Early Stages: A Magma Ocean — As the rocky materials orbiting Earth accreted, the Moon grew larger and hotter. This heat formed an ocean of magma.

Heat from accretion caused the outer surface, and perhaps more, of the Moon to melt, forming an ocean of magma. The evidence for a magma ocean comes from the layering of the Moon's interior. The uppermost part of the Moon's crust is mainly the rock anorthosite, which is primarily made of a single mineral: low-density, aluminum-rich, plagioclase feldspar. This rock forms the "lunar highlands," the brighter, light-colored, heavily cratered regions we see on the Moon. Deeper parts of the Moon's crust and mantle include larger amounts of other minerals, such as pyroxene and olivine. As the magma ocean cooled and crystallized over a period of 50–100 million years, low-density minerals such as plagioclase floated to the top, while denser minerals such as pyroxene and olivine sank. The oldest rocks collected by Apollo astronauts are 4.5 billion years old, which is thought to indicate when the Moon's crust solidified.

As the outer layers solidified, the interior of the Moon also differentiated. The heavier iron separated from the less-dense rock in the mantle and sank, forming a small core surrounded by the rocky mantle and crust.

Big Impacts, Big Basins — Our early solar system was a messy place! An abundance of material remained in space and debris of all sizes constantly pummeled the Moon and all other planetary bodies. The impactors left their mark; huge impact basins such as Imbrium, Crisium, and Serenitatis, hundreds of miles across, occur where they struck the Moon. The upturned rims of these basins form mountain chains on the lunar landscape. The impacts broke apart the rocks at the surface of the Moon and fused them into impact melt breccias — rocks made of angular, broken fragments, finer matrix between the fragments, and melted rock. These rocks, collected by Apollo astronauts, provide scientists with the timing of basin formation, ranging from 3.8 to 4.0 billion years ago. By 3.8 billion years ago, the period of intense bombardment came to a close; impact events became less frequent and were generally smaller. Impacts still occur today.

Basin Filling — Although cooling, the Moon was still hot, heated by radioactive decay of unstable isotopes of elements, such as uranium and thorium, and the processes of accretion and differentiation. Isolated pockets of hot mantle material slowly rose to the surface, melting at lower pressures. This magma poured out through cracks in the lunar surface — fissures — many of which were created by the earlier impacts. The magma flooded across the lowest regions on the lunar surface to fill the impact basins. It crystallized quickly, forming basalt, a dark, fine-grained, volcanic rock. The composition of the basalt varies because the magma formed in different places in the lunar interior. Some basalts have more titanium, others are more enriched in other elements such as potassium and aluminum. The large, smooth, dark

regions we see on the Moon are the basaltic “lunar maria.” “Maria” is Latin for “seas,” as these areas looked like seas to early astronomers. They are smooth because they are less cratered than the lunar highlands. The smaller number of craters in the maria suggests that these regions have not been impacted as much and therefore are younger. Mare basalts have been radiometrically dated to be between 3.0 and 3.8 billion years old.

Imagine standing on the Moon at this time. Hot basalt lava flowed from long fissures, filling regions of low elevation. Fountains of lava sporadically erupted along the fissures, spewing molten rock high above the lunar surface. Chilled magma droplets fell back as beads of colored volcanic glass, later sampled by Apollo astronauts. Flowing lava cut channels into the landscape. In a few locations, small volcanic domes built up on the surface of the maria. Gradually, as the Moon’s interior cooled, volcanism ceased.

Recent History — For the last one billion years, our Moon has been geologically inactive except for small meteoroids pummeling its surface, breaking the rocks and gradually adding to the layer of fine lunar dust — regolith — that covers the surface. In some places the regolith may be thicker than 50 feet (15 meters). The Moon has no atmosphere, flowing water, or life to erode or disturb its surface features. Other than impactors, only a few spacecraft, and the footsteps of 12 humans, have reshaped its landscape.

The data returned by orbiting spacecraft and the Apollo program reveal much about the formation and evolution of our Moon and, in turn, of our own Earth. Resurfacing processes active on Earth have obscured our planet’s early history of formation, differentiation, and asteroid bombardment. New missions will help scientists piece together details of the history and evolution of the Moon (and Earth) and will help us better understand lunar processes and the distribution of resources in preparation for humans to live and work on the Moon.

Human Exploration of the Moon

Between 1969 and 1972 six manned Apollo missions brought back 382 kilograms (842 pounds) of lunar rocks, core samples, pebbles, sand and dust from the lunar surface. Each trip to the Moon took about 3 days to reach the Moon and another 3 days to return. These samples have been analyzed by scientists to better understand the Moon’s composition, formation, structure, and geologic history. The Apollo explorations covered only 95 kilometers (60 miles) of the Moon’s surface – a small percentage!

A New Age of Discovery

The United States has set new goals for the Moon: NASA plans to send humans on the Moon, *possibly* by 2020, as the launching point for missions beyond. Building a human presence on the Moon will allow us to develop and test some of the technology that will be needed to send a human mission to Mars – and beyond! In order to achieve these goals, NASA is planning robotic missions to study the Moon for possible landing sites, examining the Moon’s natural resources, and preparing technology suitable for future human landings.

As we study the Moon today, we are preparing for tomorrow’s exploration. Your students may be among the next generation of astronauts and space explorers; we welcome them to join in these activities as today’s scientists examining the Moon.

The Chandrayaan-1 Mission and the Moon Mineralogy Mapper Instrument

The Indian Space Research Organization launched its first mission to the Moon in 2008, with an instrument provided by NASA to map the mineral composition of the lunar surface. M³ is one of

11 instruments onboard the spacecraft, of which six are Indian, two are American, and three are European.

The Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M^3) instrument is a state-of-the-art imaging spectrometer which is examining lunar mineralogy at high spatial and spectral resolution. M^3 will map the entire lunar surface from an altitude of 100 kilometers (62 miles) at 140 meter spatial sampling and 40 nanometer spectral sampling, with selected targets mapped at 70 meter spatial and 10 nanometer spectral resolution. M^3 was launched aboard India's Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft in October, 2008. The nominal mapping mission will last two years.

Data collected by M^3 will be important both for science and human exploration. A detailed characterization of lunar surface mineralogy can dramatically improve our understanding of the Moon's origin and geologic evolution, as well as the early development of the Earth. A detailed map of lunar resources will also be needed by future astronauts who may live and work on the Moon.

PRELUDE: ASSESSING CURRENT UNDERSTANDING

What do your students know and understand about white light and the frequencies of light?
What do they know and understand about the Moon and current robotic space missions?

You may wish to spend some time during the activities or before beginning the activities discovering your students' current preconceptions of the concepts to be presented. Education research has shown that many students have confused and naïve concepts of light and color, and that their misconceptions may interfere with their learning. If you are able to address your students' misconceptions, you are much more likely to meet your learning objectives and the students will be more likely to retain their new understanding.

Common misconceptions about light:

Research shows that students in middle school through college have multiple misconceptions regarding light and the electromagnetic spectrum^{2,3,4,5,6,7,8}. These misconceptions include:

- An object is seen whenever light shines on it, with no recognition that light must move from the object to the observer's eye¹.
- We see by the act of looking (visual ray idea), and not by light being reflected to our eyes^{1,2}.
- Light is reflected away from shiny surfaces, but light is not reflected from other surfaces¹.
- Different forms of light include "natural," "electric," "ultraviolet," and "radioactive"³.
- When light passes through a prism or a filter, color is added to the light⁴.
- Color is a property of an object, not affected by the illuminating light⁵.

There are also misconceptions regarding NASA's exploration of the Solar System. Some students may believe that humans have never been to the Moon⁷, while others may believe that astronauts have visited many of the planets in the Solar System. Students may not be aware of past or ongoing scientific robotic missions to our Moon and other planets.

To determine your students' current understanding of light, conduct at least one of the following activities, if not both.

1. Guesne, E. (1985). Light. In R. Driver, E. Guesne, & A. Tiberghien (Eds.), *Children's ideas in science* (pp. 10-32). Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press. Fetherstonhaugh and Treagust (1992)
2. Watts, D.M. 1985. Students' conceptions of light-a case study. *Physics Education* 20: 183-187
3. Zylbersztajn, A. and Watts, D.m. (1982) *Throwing Some Light on Colour* Mimeograph, University of Surrey
4. Driver, R., A. Squires, P. Rushworth, and V. Wood-Robinson. 1994. *Making sense of secondary science: Research into children's ideas*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
5. Anderson, C. and Smith E. (1986) Children's Conceptions of Light and Color: Understanding the Role of Unseen Rays. Research Series No. 166.
6. Eaton, J., Harding, T., and Anderson, C.W. (1985) *Light: A teaching module*. East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University.
7. Plait, P. (2007). <http://www.badastronomy.com/bad/misc/apollohoax.html>
8. The "Minds of Our Own" DVD: <http://www.learner.org/resources/series26.html>

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 1: The Story of a Bit of Light

EDUCATOR

In this 20 minute activity, students complete a story about light. The teacher will then examine their stories for key concepts and misconceptions regarding how we see and the role of light in seeing.

Outcomes:

- The teacher will be able to use the results of this activity to better understand his or her student's misconceptions of sight.

Key Concepts:

- Light travels or moves until it is reflected or absorbed by an object.
- Light can be reflected, or "bounce" off of any object (not just mirrors).
- In order for a person to see something, light must be reflected off of that object and into his or her eye(s).

Materials

For each student:

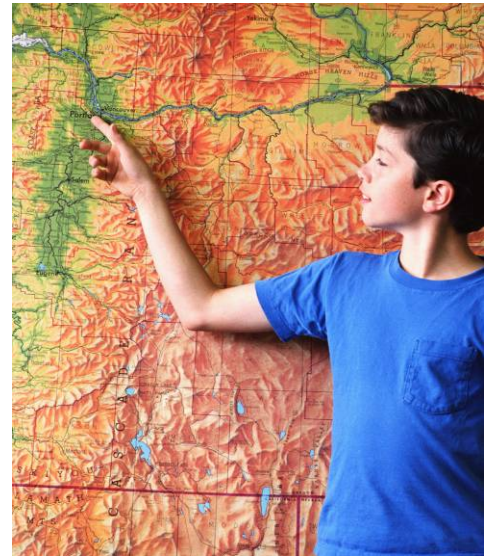
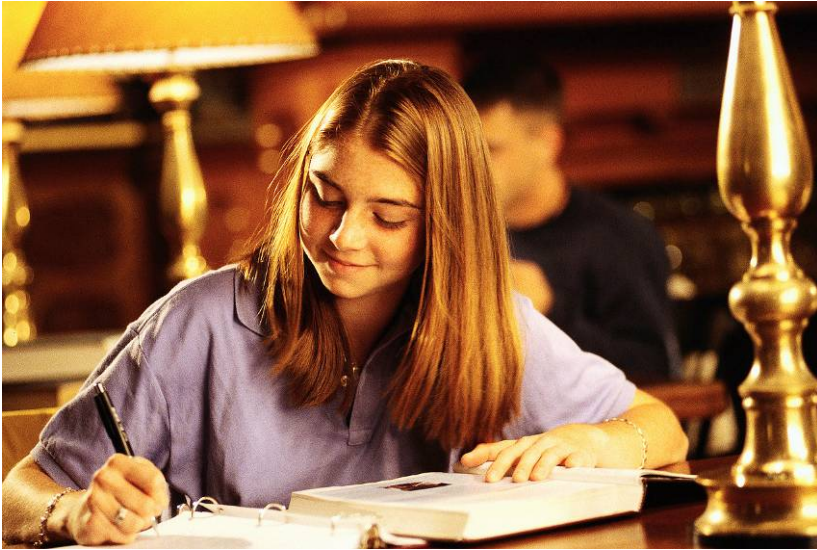
- One copy of the [Story of the Little Bit of Light](#)
- Pen or pencil
- Colored pencils

The Assessment Activity:

1. Hand out copies of the *Story of the Little Bit of Light* to your students. Let them know that this science writing activity is for you and that their work will not receive a grade—this is not a test.
2. Let the students know they have 15 minutes to write the rest of the story. Their assignment is to write what happens to the light –*What does it do? Where does it go so that the student in the photo can see the book or map?* Remind the students that this is a science writing exercise; you would like a scientific story about the light, not a fictional story.
3. At the end of 15 minutes, collect the students' work. Outside of class, examine the stories for indications that the students understand that light keeps moving (instead of stopping), that the light reflects or hits objects, and that it does travel to the child's eyes in order for him or her to see. Take note of misconceptions and preconceptions.
4. Keep your students' misconceptions in mind while conducting the activities in this guide and address them throughout the activities. If there is substantial confusion as to how we see, consider additional discussion and activities about sight and seeing before conducting the activities in the modules.
5. Re-apply this assessment after the students further explore light, the electromagnetic spectrum, and how we (humans) see, to assess if there has been an increase in their understanding of these concepts.

THE STORY OF A BIT OF LIGHT

STUDENT



Student Instructions: Finish the science story, using *one* of the two pictures above, ending with a student seeing the object(s):

I am a little bit of light. I was formed inside a light bulb inside a lamp in a dark room with no windows. I moved through the glass of the bulb and then I

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 2: The Electromagnetic Spectrum

EDUCATOR

In this 15 minute activity, students write a description or draw a spectrum that includes the different types of light or radiation, and then compare two of the types of light, to allow the teacher to assess their understanding of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Outcomes:

- The teacher will be able to use the results of this activity to better understand his or her student's preconceptions and misconceptions about the spectrum.

Key Concepts:

- White light can be broken down into different colors.
- There are different types of visible light, ranging from blue to red, and types of light that we cannot see (radio waves, infrared, ultraviolet, x-rays, and gamma rays).
- Different types of light have different frequencies, which correspond to different amounts of energy and different wavelengths.

Materials

For each student:

- a sheet of paper
- a pen or pencil
- colored markers, pencils or crayons

The Assessment Activity:

1. Hand out blank sheets of paper and (if desired) markers or crayons to your students. Let them know that this activity is for you and that their work will not receive a grade—*this is not a test.*
2. Let the students know they have 10 minutes and that this assignment has two tasks:
 - a) To write about and/or draw and label the electromagnetic spectrum.
 - b) To write down a comparison of two of the different types of light that make up the electromagnetic spectrum.

Evaluating your students' work for Assessment 1 and 2:

1. Collect your students' work. Outside of class, examine their work and drawings for indications that a spectrum is made of light, and that it can be divided into different colors. Look for other concepts in both tasks relevant to your students' experiences and your grade level's standards—such as frequency, wavelength, energy, and types of light that are not visible. Take note of student preconceptions and misconceptions.
2. Keep your students' misconceptions in mind while conducting the activities in these modules. If you have questions whether students' understood something, you will want to bring it up for discussion.
3. These assessments may be reapplied at the close of the ALTA activities to see if there has been an increase in understanding.

MODULE 1

In this first activity module, students will be introduced to the visible and infrared portions of the electromagnetic spectrum, take a spectral measurement using the ALTA hand-held reflectance spectrometer, and receive an introduction to the Moon Mineralogy Mapper / Chandrayaan-1 Mission.

Activity I-A. Experimenting with Color Filters (45 minutes)

Students begin their exploration of the properties of light. They observe different colors of construction paper using colored filters as eyeshades, and discuss their findings. Based on their observations, students make and test predictions of the appearance of other colors through the colored filters.

Activity I-B. Making Observations of Spectra (45 minutes)

This activity introduces the concept of a spectrum, including both visible light and wavelengths that are not visible to human eyes. Students observe a light spectrum, created using a diffraction grating and an overhead projector. Students experiment with observations of the spectrum, using their color eyeshades and construction paper, and a solar-cell and sound amplifier to detect near-infrared light through sonification.

Activity I-C. Fingerprints of Light (20 minutes)

This introductory activity introduces students to the useful tools of observation and comparison as a means of classifying and potentially identifying similar features/objects. Students will compare collected fingerprints, classify and describe them as an introduction to looking at spectra.

Activity I-D. Introduction to the ALTA Spectrometers (60 minutes)

Using the ALTA reflectance spectrometer, students take readings of different colored objects at different wavelengths, and graph a reflectance spectrum for those objects. Students compare their reflectance spectra graphs and observe that different objects have different spectra.

Activity I-E. Spectrometers in Action (30 minutes)

Students collect reflectance spectra and discover that objects that appear similar can have different spectra. Students discuss the advantages of a high-resolution spectrum to identify objects, and learn about the Moon Mineralogy Mapper / Chandrayaan-1 mission.

ACTIVITY I-A: EXPERIMENTING WITH COLOR FILTERS EDUCATOR

Overview

In this 45 minute exploration, students begin their exploration of the properties of light. They observe different colors of construction paper using colored filters as eyeshades, and discuss their findings. Based on their observations, students make and test predictions of the appearance of other colors through the colored filters.

Learning Outcomes:

The student will :

- interpret the relationship between an object's appearance or color and the light reflected off of that object.
- compare reflection and absorption of light by an object.
- describe the role of predictions and testing in the process of science.

Key Concepts:

- An object's appearance or color depends on the light reflected off the object that reaches our eyes.
- Objects absorb some colors of light and reflect other colors of light.
- Scientific investigation includes making observations and making and testing predictions.

Materials:

For each student:

- Two different 2" x 6" strips of color gels sheets (color filters) and
 - 4 pipe cleaners
- Or
- One color paddle with multiple color filters

For each group of 4 to 5 students:

- One-hole punch
- Sheets of colored construction paper: red, dark blue, yellow, green, orange, and two additional colors
- Observation Sheet 1
- Observation Sheet 2

Gels can be purchased from a variety of locations, including <http://stagelightingstore.com/>, <http://www.stagespot.com>, and <http://www.premier-lighting.com>

Gels come in 20x24" sheets; each will produce 40 sets of eyeshades. Recommended Roscolux colors include: red #27, blue #74, green # 90, orange #23, and blue-green #95.

Prepared paddles of colored gels can be purchased at <http://store.rainbowsymphonystore.com>

Preparation:

Cut the color filters into 5 by 15 centimeter (2 by 6 inch) strips, with two different colors for each of your students. Each sheet will make 40 strips.

The Activity:

1. Making the Color Eyeshades (optional): Give each student two different color filter strips and four pipe cleaners. Ask your students to punch one hole in both ends of each strip, about 1 centimeter (1/2 inch) from the edge. Ask students to pull a pipe cleaner halfway through each hole. The students should bend the pipe cleaners in half and twist the two halves together. By curling the ends of the pipe cleaners behind their ears, your students now have two color eyeshades to wear over their eyes or glasses.



Alternatives: hand out one color paddles per student, invite them to hold the color filter strip in front of their eyes, or create a cardboard frame for the different color filters, for students to share.

To maintain standards of hygiene, the students should not share eyeshades.

For their safety, students wearing dark colored gels should remain seated.

Remind the students never to look directly at the Sun with their eyeshades; even dark eyeshades will not protect their eyes.

Open Inquiry Option:

2. Invite the students to observe clothes and objects in the room, and to share what they see, Students may comment that objects appear darker or brighter, or appear to be a different color. As they discuss their observations, ask them to look for patterns. Your students may notice that light colored object still appear bright through most filters, but darker colored objects are only bright through some filters. For instance, dark red objects will be much brighter through a red filter than through a blue filter.
3. Ask your students to devise their own experiment using the color filters, record their observations, and arrive at conclusions.
4. Invite each student to share their research findings with the class.

Some students may have partial or complete color-blindness. Depending on the severity of the condition, some of the color-related activities may be difficult for them.

Be prepared for the possibility that your students may be unaware that they are color-blind. They may be disturbed by this discovery. Alternately, if the student is comfortable with discussing their vision, it may be a useful point of discussion and observation.

To make the activity accessible for the students who are color-blind, you might use textured or patterned surfaces in addition to the colors.

Guided Inquiry:

5. Organize the students into groups of 4 to 5, making sure that each group has all of the different colored eyeshades. Give each group a sheet of red, dark blue, yellow, orange, and green construction paper.
6. Ask your students to observe the different sheets of construction paper through their eyeshades, describing what they look like—does the paper look brighter or darker? Students should record their observations on their group's *Observation Sheet 1*. While comments may vary, in general the blue eyeshades will make red construction paper look

dark grey and will make the blue construction paper appear brighter than the other papers. The red eyeshades will do the opposite.

7. Ask the students to remove their color eyeshades and discuss their recorded observations and look for patterns, and write down their thoughts
8. Pass the two other colors of construction paper out to the groups along with *Observation Sheet 2*.
9. HYPOTHESIZE: Each group should write a prediction of what they will observe if they look at the new colors through blue and red eyeshades.
10. OBSERVATIONS, EXPLANATIONS: Encourage the students to test their predictions. Did their predictions match their observations? Ask each group to devise an explanation for their observations.

CLASS DISCUSSION

11. As a class, invite the students to share their groups' predictions, outcomes, and any explanations they have devised.

What do the students think of the various explanations from the groups? Are there any that they think may be mistaken—why? Are there ways to test any of them?

[Let the students critically examine each group's hypotheses. You may want to point out that important aspects of "doing science" include arriving at results, sharing those results, evaluating each others work, and proposing alternative ideas.]

What do the students think the point of the activity was?

[Answers may vary greatly, but could include observing colors, testing how color filters affect objects' appearances, and studying how filters absorb colors of light.]

Which aspects of science did your students do today?

[Answers could include making observations, making predictions, testing predictions, and forming hypotheses.]

We need light in order to see. What does light do to let us see something?

[In order for us to see something, light is reflected off that object and into our eyes.]

How does light allow us to see an object's color?

[The object absorbs some wavelengths or colors of light, and reflects other wavelengths or colors of light. The wavelengths that are reflected give the object its "color."]

What did the color eyeshades do to the light before it reached our eyes?

[The eyeshades absorbed some of the colors of light, and allowed other colors to pass through. The eyeshades did not add color.]

If red eyeshades allowed red and orange light through, what would dark blue paper look like through red eyeshades? Why do red eyeshades make yellow and white paper look red?

[Almost all of the light reflected off of the blue paper was absorbed by the red filter, making the blue paper appear dark. Yellow and white papers reflect many colors; red filters absorb most of these colors but allow the red light to pass through, making those sheets of paper appear bright.]

BACKGROUND

EDUCATOR

Seeing Color

In order to see an object that is not emitting light, there must be some light reflecting off of that object, and some of that light must be reflected from the object and into our eyes. Light goes from the source (the sun) to an object (such as an apple, or the Moon), and finally to a detector. In a human, the detector is both the eye and brain; for the Moon Mineralogy Mapper instrument orbiting the Moon, 256 separate channels make up the eye, and a computer processor is the brain.

Most materials absorb some specific wavelengths, or colors, of light and reflect others. Our perception of color stems from seeing a combination of wavelengths of light. For example, a red apple reflects a fair amount of red light, and absorbs more of the blue, green, and yellow wavelengths of light. Our eyes detect the combination of wavelengths and our brain interprets the apple as a shade of red.

When we see white, almost *all* of the colors or wavelengths have been reflected off the object collectively. Materials that absorb almost all of the light appear black. We can still see black objects, because they still reflect some light.

Additional information on how the receptors in our eyes work to see color is available at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute: <http://www.hhmi.org/senses/b110.html>
More information about light is at How Stuff Works at <http://science.howstuffworks.com/light.htm>

OBSERVATION SHEET 1:

STUDENT

Experimenting with Colored Filters

Team Members

Fill in the color of the paper and the filter, and circle how bright the paper looks:

_____ paper looks	very bright	bright	dark	very dark	through a _____ filter.
_____ paper looks	very bright	bright	dark	very dark	through a _____ filter.
_____ paper looks	very bright	bright	dark	very dark	through a _____ filter.
_____ paper looks	very bright	bright	dark	very dark	through a _____ filter.
_____ paper looks	very bright	bright	dark	very dark	through a _____ filter.
_____ paper looks	very bright	bright	dark	very dark	through a _____ filter.
_____ paper looks	very bright	bright	dark	very dark	through a _____ filter.

Talk with your team: Why do the different colored papers look different through colored filters? Are there any patterns to what you see?

OBSERVATION SHEET 2:

STUDENT

Testing Hypotheses with Colored Filters

Team Members

Can you make some predictions based on your observations so far? Try to predict what a different colored sheet of construction paper that you haven't used yet would look like through the different filters.

_____ *paper will look* **very bright** **bright** **dark** **very dark** *through a blue filter.*

_____ *paper will look* **very bright** **bright** **dark** **very dark** *through a red filter.*

Now test your predictions, and record your results. (It's okay if your predictions were incorrect—that is how scientists learn!!)

_____ *paper appeared* **very bright** **bright** **dark** **very dark** *through a blue filter.*

_____ *paper appeared* **very bright** **bright** **dark** **very dark** *through a red filter.*

Discuss with your team: did your observations match your predictions? Do you have a theory to explain your observations?

ACTIVITY I-B: MAKING OBSERVATIONS OF SPECTRA EDUCATOR

Overview

This 45 minute activity introduces the concept of a spectrum, including both visible light and wavelengths that are not visible to human eyes. Students observe a light spectrum, created using a diffraction grating and an overhead projector. Students experiment with observations of the spectrum, using their color eyeshades and construction paper, and a solar-cell and sound amplifier to detect near-infrared light through sonification. Modified from an activity in NASA's Active Astronomy Educator's Guide (NASA-EGXXXX)

Learning Outcomes:

The student will:

- define what is meant by a "spectrum."
- describe different wavelengths of visible light as different colors.
- describe some wavelengths of light that are not visible to human eyes.

Key Concepts:

- White light is made of many different colors, or wavelengths of light.
- When white light is divided into its different wavelengths, we call it a spectrum.
- Each color of light has a corresponding wavelength.
- There are wavelengths of light that are not visible to the human eye.
- Scientific investigation includes making observations, making and testing predictions, and sharing and skeptically examining explanations.

Materials:

For each student:

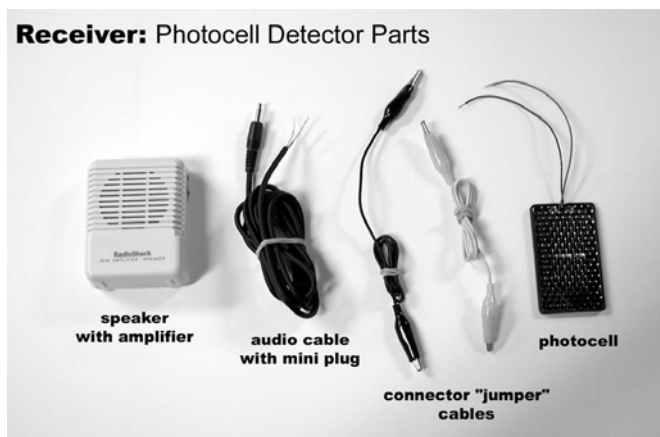
- Color eyeshades, filters or color paddles used in *Activity A*
- Spectrum Observation Notes

For the class:

- 1-2 dozen sheets of various-colored construction paper
- 1 Diffraction grating sheet (about 3x3 inches)
- 1 Overhead projector
- tape
- 3 or more thick markers
- Scissors
- 2 large sheets of white poster paper
- Diffraction grating glasses (optional)
- Flashlights, laser pointers (optional)

Receiver Circuit

- Solar cell*
- Amplifier/Speaker
- Audio cable with 1/8 inch mini-plug on one end
- 2 jumper cables with alligator clips on both ends
- 9 volt battery for amplifier/speaker



- Small Phillip's-head screwdriver to open amplifier/speaker
- Small handheld fan

Infrared Camera (Optional)

- Infrared camera
- BNC to VGA adaptor (male to male)
- DC power adaptor
- Video projector
- Remote control for tv, dvd, or similar electronic device

Diffraction Grating material comes in sheets from suppliers such as Science First (614-0066 or 614-0067) and from Sargent Welch (WL3820).

Diffraction grating glasses and cards are available suppliers such as Rainbow Symphony, Edmund Scientific, and Science First.

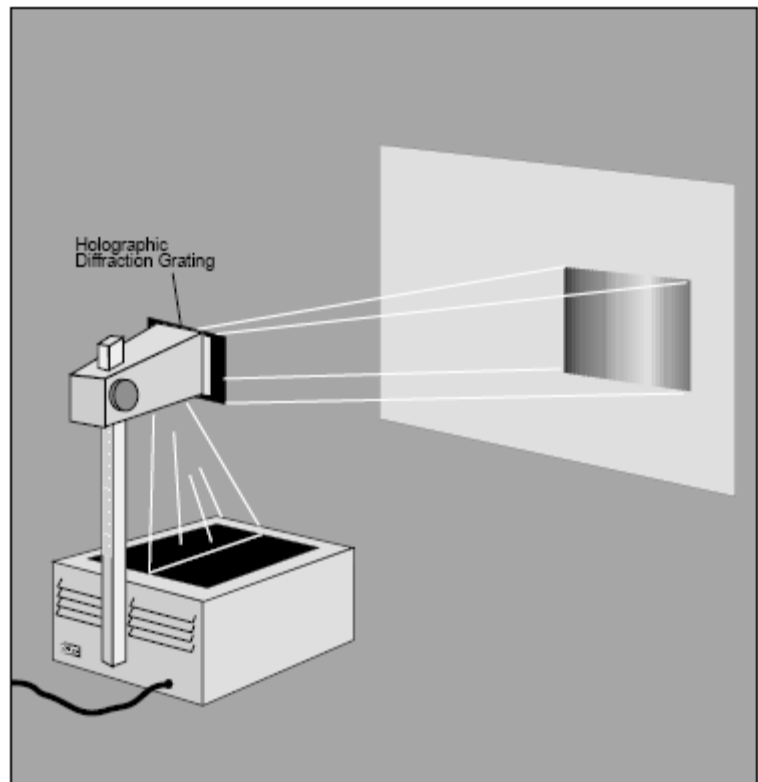
For the audio detector, the mini Audio Amplifier is available at suppliers such as Radio Shack (277-1008), as are alligator clip cables; the photocell is available from suppliers such as Solar World (#3-300).

For the infrared camera, a mini lipstick camera is available from suppliers such as LDP LLC (XNiteCamBtBW) and the rest of the materials are available at many A/V and electronics stores.

Preparation:

STEP I: Displaying a Spectrum

1. Set up the overhead projector so that it can project onto a flat wall in a dark part of the classroom.
2. Close the blinds and turn off most of the lights making the classroom fairly dark.
3. Place two dark (ex: black) pieces of construction paper on the projector's glass so the only light emerging from the projector passes through a 1-inch slit.
4. Turn on the overhead projector—you should see a white line of light projected onto the screen or wall.
5. Hold the sheet of diffraction grating over the top portion of the overhead projector projecting the light. Rotate the diffraction grating and the slit in the construction paper until you can clearly see one or two broad spectra clearly on the wall. Tape the diffraction grating in place.



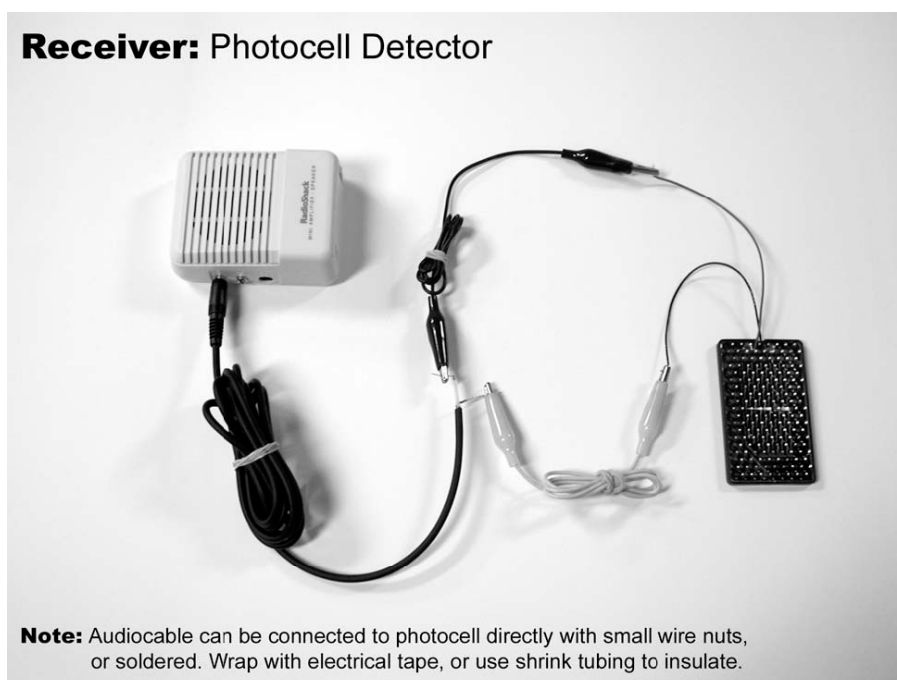
6. On the wall where the spectrum will be projected, tape or stick the two large poster sheets (stacked so marker doesn't bleed through on the wall).

STEP II: Set Up the Video Camera (optional)

7. INFRARED CAMERA - If you plan to use the infrared camera, turn it on by plugging it into a DC power adaptor, and plug the power adaptor into the wall. Attach the BNC-VGA adaptor to the camera's video cable, then plug it into the input for video on your video projector.
8. Turn on the video projector (facing a different direction from the projected spectrum) and point the infrared camera at the spectrum. Observe the video to make sure it works. NOTE: you will not see the infrared part of the spectrum until you cover the camera with colored filters.

STEP III: Prepare the Audio Photocell Detector

9. The first important but often forgotten step: install a 9V battery in the audio amplifier.
10. Plug the 1/8 inch mini plug into the "input" of the audio amplifier. Clip a jumper cable to one of the leads on the photocell, and clip the other end of the jumper cable to one of the leads of the audio cable. Use the second jumper cable to connect the other lead from the photocell to the other lead of the audio cable.



The Activity:

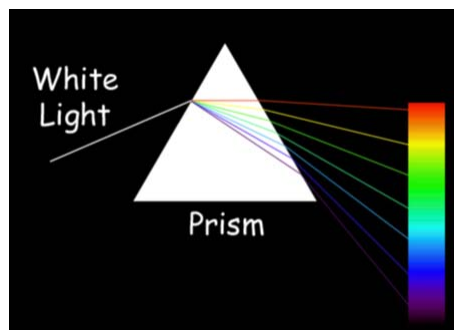
1. Begin with a class discussion about light, in particular white light and/or sunlight. Ask the students to describe what they know about light -- ask them what happens when light passes through a prism, what makes a rainbow, etc. Invite them to describe or define terms: white light, visible light, wavelength, colors, reflection, refraction, absorption.

Open Inquiry Option:

2. Give each student a diffraction grating slide or pair of glasses. Invite them to devise their own experiment with the diffraction gratings, flashlights, laser pointers, and the color filters from the last activity.
3. Hand each student a “Spectrum Observation Notes” sheet. Invite the students to record their hypotheses, observations, and conclusions on their experiments, and to share their findings. Students may notice that using the color filters in combination with the diffraction grating changes the spectrum they can observe.

Guided Inquiry Option:

4. Turn on the overhead projector and explain that you are using a diffraction grating to break up the projector’s white light into its colors—its spectrum. The diffraction gradient acts like a prism. Ask the students to identify which colors they see.



NOTE: Some students may have partial or complete color-blindness. Depending on the severity of the condition, some of the color-related activities may be difficult for them. If you have a student or students who is/are color-blind, pair them up with other students who are not and ensure that the group discussion includes good descriptions of the width and relationship of the various color zones within the spectrum. Any diagrams or sketches may include patterns or textures rather than colors to represent the changes in color.

Be prepared for the possibility that your students may be unaware that they are color-blind. They may be disturbed by this discovery. Alternately, if the student is comfortable with discussing their vision, it may also be a useful point of discussion and observation.

5. Pick a student to use markers to draw on the poster sheets where the red light begins and ends. Ask other students to do the same for the other colors of light.

Are the marks in the “right” place? If not, why not?

Does everyone see colors exactly the same way?

[Individuals see variations in colors differently, so students may have differing opinions on where the tape should be.]

6. HYPOTHESIZE: Hand out a Spectrum Observation Notes sheet to each student. Ask the students to predict what they will see when they look at the spectrum with their color eyeshades, and share those predictions with a partner.

Which colors will “come through?”

7. MAKE OBSERVATIONS; Invite the students to observe the spectrum through their color eyeshades and describe which colors they can see and which colors have disappeared.

What do they see?

[Red and orange light will be easily seen through the red eyeshades, but green and blue light will not. Blue will be easily seen through the blue eyeshades, but yellow and orange will not.]

To maintain standards of hygiene, the students should not share eyeshades.

For their safety, students wearing dark colored gels should remain seated.

Remind the students never to look directly at the Sun with their eyeshades; even dark eyeshades will not protect their eyes.

8. EXPERIMENT: Hold a sheet of colored construction paper against the wall so that part of the spectrum is projected onto the paper. Invite the students to describe (without their eyeshades) any changes they see in the spectrum. Repeat with other colors of paper. After two colors have been used, invite the students to predict what they will see when for particular colors of paper. After sharing their predictions, students should test them. In general, colors of light should still be visible when reflected off a similar color paper, but will be absorbed when a dark, different color paper is used.
9. SHARING EXPLANATIONS: As a class, invite the students to discuss their conclusions. Students may suggest that their eyeshades act as filters, blocking some colors of light, but allowing other colors of light through to be seen. Other students may guess that the filters have added color to the lights.
10. RECOGNIZE AND ANALYZE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS :Invite the other students to add any points that may support or refute the ideas. For instance, if the eyeshades were adding color, then a red eyeshade should turn the entire spectrum of light red, rather than simply making some of the spectrum disappear.
11. Share with the students that you are going to use an instrument to examine the light. Show the students the photocell detector/ audio receiver and switch it on. Demonstrate that the amplifier/speaker emits a noise when the photocell is placed in front of a light, such as the projector light, and that the noise is louder when the light is interrupted by a small fan (the instrument is sensitive to changes in light levels). Then slowly pass the photocell in front of the spectrum that is being projected on the wall, holding the fan in front of the photocell.

Which colors or frequencies of light can the photocell detect?

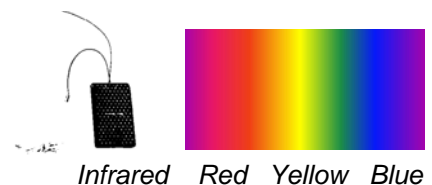
Are there any visible colors that it cannot detect?

[It does not detect the purple light as well as the other colors.]

How does the detector respond when it is moved from yellow to orange to red and beyond?

Does the detector make noise when it is in the 'black' area beyond the red light?

Can it still detect light? What type of light could that be? [The photocell is sensitive to infrared light.]



Infrared Camera Experiment (Optional)

12. Let the students know that there are also cameras that can see infrared light. Turn on the video projector with the infrared camera attached, and point the camera at different objects in the room, allowing the students to see its view. Describe the camera as a visible and infrared camera sensitive to low light levels, and ask the students what that means.
13. Point the infrared camera at the projected spectrum on the wall and tell the students that the camera is overloaded by the amount of light. Tell the students you are going to put color filters in front of the camera, and invite them to predict what the camera will see.

HYPOTHESIZE: What will the camera see through a blue filter?

[It will show light where the blue part of the spectrum is, and some red light, and infrared light.]

What will the camera see through a deep red filter?

[It will show only red and infrared light.]

What will the camera see through a blue and red filter together?

[It will show a little of the deep red light, and infrared light.]

14. Find a remote control for a TV, VCR, DVD, etc. Observe it with the infrared camera, while pushing buttons on the remote control.

What does the camera show about the remote controller?

[When in use, the controller emits light (infrared) that the camera can detect.]

Why would a TV remote controller emit infrared light?

[So it won't interfere with your viewing pleasure.]

CLASS DISCUSSION

15. Spend time after all of the observations to analyze and synthesize the students' thoughts and understanding.

What do the students think the point of the activity was?

[Answers may vary greatly, but should include the terms "light" and "spectrum".]

Which aspects of science did the students do today?

[Answers could include using technology, making observations, making predictions, testing predictions, and forming hypotheses.]

What is a spectrum? How did your class create one?

[A spectrum is white light spread out into its component colors. The class created a spectrum using an overhead projector as the source of white light, and a diffraction grating to spread the light out into different colors.]

What did the filters do to the spectrum of light?

[The filters absorbed some of the colors of light and only allowed a few of the colors to pass through. Introduce the term "absorption" if the students haven't used it.]

What happened to the light from the spectrum when it hit the colored construction paper?

[Some of the light was absorbed by the construction paper, so it could not be seen.]

Are there parts of the spectrum that humans can't see? Which parts of the spectrum can our eyes detect?

[We can see the visible light—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. We cannot see infrared light, and other types of radiation. Invite the students to name other types of radiation, such as x-rays, UV or ultraviolet light, radio waves, and gamma rays.]

If your class had an ultraviolet camera, where should the students point it to look for ultraviolet light in our spectrum?

[We would look past the blue end of the spectrum.]

In what way could looking at objects in different colors or frequencies give us useful information?

Can the students think of examples of different invisible colors or wavelengths of light, that we use to look at objects?

[Examples include having x-rays to check for broken bones, or using ultraviolet light at a crime scene to check for clues. Some students may have seen pictures of stars, planets, or galaxies in x-rays, infra-red, or other wavelengths.]

Extensions

Active Astronomy developed for the SOFIA mission includes additional activities on the spectrum and on transforming energy from one form to another.

<http://www.sofia.usra.edu/Edu/materials/activeAstronomy/activeAstronomy.html>

BACKGROUND

EDUCATOR

Properties of Light

White light, such as light from the Sun or from an overhead projector, is made up of different wavelengths of light, some of which we can see, and some of which are invisible to our eyes. Certain materials (e.g., a diffraction grating, a prism, a raindrop) will refract or bend the light and separate the wavelengths, allowing us to see a variety of colors separately.

The wavelength of light is directly related to energy; red light has longer wavelengths and less energy than yellow light, while green light has shorter wavelengths and more energy, and blue and violet light has the highest energy and shortest wavelength of the visible spectrum.

Many students do not realize that radiation is another term for light, and that there are many types of radiation or wavelengths of light that we cannot see. Radio waves are a type of light, with the longest wavelength, followed by infrared light, then visible light, then ultraviolet light. The shortest wavelengths of light are x-rays and gamma rays. Each of these is a type of radiation—a different range of wavelengths of light.

A wavelength of light has an associated frequency. Red light, with its longer wavelength, has a lower frequency than yellow light. Blue light has a still higher frequency and a shorter wavelength. Ultraviolet light has even shorter wavelengths, more energy, and higher frequencies. Gamma rays have the highest frequencies and energy and the shortest wavelengths, while radio waves have the lowest frequencies and energy, and the longest wavelengths.

Photocell Detector / Receiver Circuit

The receiver circuit uses a photocell to detect the light and converts it back to an electrical signal for the speaker. The photocell (or solar cell) produces an electric current when exposed to light. Because of the way speakers are constructed, a changing current is needed to produce a sound in the speaker. When a constant light source illuminates the photocell, it produces a constant current and students will hear static, if anything. When the light changes in brightness, the current produced by the photocell also changes accordingly, and the speaker will produce a sound. If the light is turned on and off (as happens if you move your hand back and forth in the beam of light), you will hear series of “pops” each time the light is turned back on. If the light varies because of a changing electrical current from an audio source, you will hear “music” from the speaker.

ACTIVITY B: Spectrum Observation Notes

STUDENT

My Hypotheses:

My Observations:

My Conclusions:

ACTIVITY I-C: FINGERPRINTS OF LIGHT

EDUCATOR

Overview

In this 20 minute activity students will discover how no two fingerprints are exactly alike, but yet many may have similar characteristics. Students develop a familiarity with tools used in the scientific process: comparison, observation, description and communication. This quick introductory activity introduces the concept of rock “fingerprints”, or spectral analyses to identify different rocks and minerals.

Learning Outcomes:

The student will

- observe similarities and differences in fingerprints.
- describe their observations.
- classify their observations and results.

Key Concepts:

- Characteristics found in fingerprints may be similar, and classified by their patterns.
- Fingerprints can be used to identify a person using comparative analyses.
- Rocks have similar characteristics, but no two are alike (similar to fingerprints).

Materials:

For each group of 3 to 5 students:

- Ink pad
- Baby wipes or access to a sink and soap
- Copy of student fingerprint worksheet

The Activity:

1. Begin a discussion on ways to identify people. Responses may include appearance, name, photo identification, and fingerprints.
2. Divide the class into groups of 3 to 5 people per group, and give each group a fingerprint worksheet, an ink pad, and a means of cleaning their hands. Instruct the students to take each other's fingerprints (one fingerprint per student) on the handout using the ink pads. Ask the students to press firmly to get a clear print.
3. **MAKING OBSERVATIONS:** Lead each group into a discussion comparing their fingerprints.
What do you observe about the fingerprints? What are some similarities in the fingerprints? What are some differences?
4. **CLASSIFICATION:** Invite the students to identify at least two characteristics of the fingerprints, and to classify the fingerprints into categories based on those characteristics. Ask them to record their thoughts on the student handout
5. **SHARING EXPLANATIONS:** Invite the students to share their reasoning.
[Students should describe general fingerprint patterns such as whorl, arch, and loops.]

CLASS DISCUSSION

6. Lead a large group discussion comparing the finding of the characteristics and categories of fingerprints. Use the discussion as a lead-in to how rocks have their own “fingerprints”.

Many of the rocks on the surface of the Moon may look similar, but they contain different minerals or amounts of minerals. Each mineral reflects very specific amounts of the different wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation, so each mineral has a characteristic spectrum of reflected light- a spectral fingerprint.

BACKGROUND

EDUCATOR

There are three basic fingerprint patterns: Arch, Loop and Whorl.

- In a loop, one or more of the ridges enters on the side of the fingerprint and curves back around to the same side from which it came.
- In a whorl, some of the fingerprint ridges make a turn through at least one circuit.
- In an arch, the ridges run from one side of the fingerprint to the other, making no backward turn.

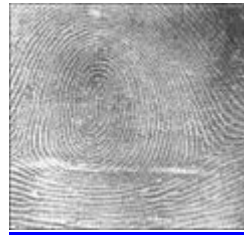
There are also more complex classification systems that further break down patterns further.



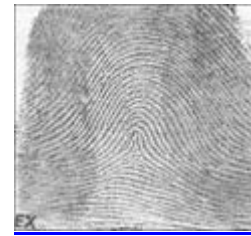
Arch



Loop
(Right Loop)



Whorl



Arch
(Tented Arch)

Modified from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fingerprint#Fingerprint_types

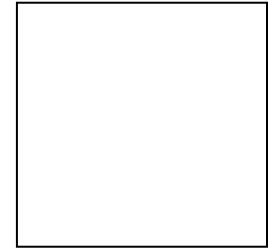
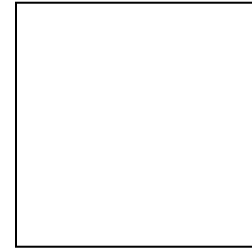
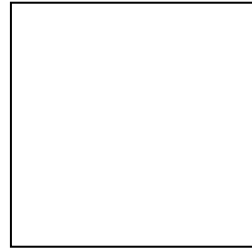
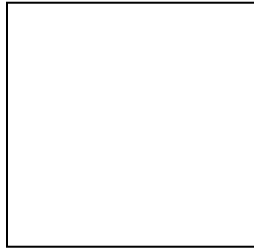
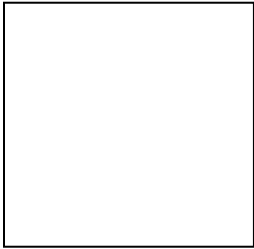
More information is available at <http://www.policensw.com/info/fingerprints/finger07.html> .

ACTIVITY I-C: FINGERPRINTS OF LIGHT

STUDENT

Instructions:

1. In the boxes below, carefully collect a clean fingerprint from the same finger (e.g., index finger or thumb) from each of your team members. *DO NOT* write your name by your print!



2. Observe the different fingerprints and answer the following questions.

What are some similarities in the prints?

What are some differences in the prints?

Identify at least two characteristics of the fingerprints:

Classify the fingerprints into categories based on the characteristics and explain your reasoning:

How might rocks have their own “fingerprints”?

ACTIVITY I-D: EDUCATOR INTRODUCTION TO THE ALTA REFLECTANCE SPECTROMETER

Overview

In this 60 minute activity, students use the ALTA handheld reflectance spectrometer to take readings of different colored objects at different wavelengths, and graph a reflectance spectrum for those objects. Students compare their reflectance spectra graphs and observe that different objects have different spectra.

Learning Outcomes:

The student will:

- record measurements of the amount of light reflecting from a surface using an ALTA reflectance spectrometer.
- construct a graph from the reflectance spectrum data.
- compare reflectance spectra.
- predict that different objects have their own unique spectra.

Key Concepts:

- The ALTA Reflectance Spectrometer can be used to measure the amount of light that is reflected off of an object at 11 specific wavelengths.
- The data can be used to construct a graph of the reflectance spectrum for an object.
- Each object has its own unique reflectance spectrum, like a fingerprint.
- Scientific investigation includes observations, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data, and using technology to gather data.

Materials:

For each group of 3 to 4 students:

- Familiar materials for the students to analyze, such as a colored construction paper, a variety of fabrics, magazines, etc.
- 2 sheets of white paper such as copier paper
- 1 ALTA reflectance spectrometer
- 1 Calculator
- 1 copy of *Tips on Using the ALTA*
- 2 copies of the [Reflectance Worksheet](#)
- 2 copies of the *Spectrum Graph (we recommend graph #1 or 2)*

Preparation:

1. Plan to break your class into groups of 3-4 students each, with one ALTA spectrometer per group.
2. Check each ALTA reflectance spectrometer—make sure that it has a battery in it, and that numbers appear on the digital display when you turn it on.

The Activity

1. Divide the class up into groups of 3 – 4 each.
2. Review the “Fingerprints of Light” exercise and the similarities and difference observed in their different fingerprints with your class. Have them discuss it briefly within their groups.

3. Let your class know that materials also have a type of fingerprint—each material has a characteristic “reflectance spectrum.” Scientists can use this information from a distance to identify substances, such as minerals.
4. Give each group of 4 students an ALTA spectrometer, and let the students know that they can use these instruments to gather the reflectance spectra of different objects.
5. Ask the students to turn on the ALTA spectrometer. Some of the spectrometers may turn themselves off immediately; the students will need to play with the on/off button until it stays on. If there is no reading on the digital display, the spectrometer is off.
 - What do the students see on the back of the spectrometer?*
[There is a circle of 11 little lights—LED’s (light-emitting diodes)—with another similar-looking object in the middle.]
 - What do the students see on the front of the spectrometer?*
[There are 11 buttons, in addition to the On/Off button, each with a different color and a different number—that color’s wavelength.]
6. Ask the students to experiment with pushing the different buttons on the front, and observing the led’s on the back. If they are having difficulty pushing the buttons hard enough or holding down the buttons, recommend that they use a pencil eraser to push the buttons.
 - What do the students see when they push the “blue” button after turning it on?*
[The blue led on the back lights up and remains lit while you hold the button down.]
 - What happens when they push one of the “IR” buttons on the front?*
[One of the infrared led’s on the back “lights up” but at a wavelength our eyes cannot see.]
7. Ask the students to observe the numbers on the front.
 - What do the numbers do when the students hold the bottom of the ALTA over a desk or book? What happens when students hold it up in the air?*
[The numbers change and increase with increased brightness, until they overload the detector—at which point the ALTA gives a “1”.]
 - What do the numbers do when the students cover up the back?*
[They go down.]
8. Ask the students to place the ALTA flat onto a surface (such as a book, a coat…) and push two or three of the buttons (one at a time) and look at the numbers. Ask them to then place the ALTA onto a white piece of paper and repeat the same buttons, comparing the numbers.
 - How were the numbers different?*
[The numbers should be much higher for the white piece of paper.]
 - What could the reflectance spectrometer be measuring?*
[Answers may include “color” or “brightness” or “light;” a better answer is the amount of light that is reflecting off of an object.]
 - Which part of the ALTA could be taking the measurements?*
[The object in the center of the led’s on the back is a detector, measuring the amount of light that is entering it.]

9. Share with the students that the light detector measures the amount of light it receives, and displays that amount as a number on the front of the ALTA, measured as voltage.

Why are the numbers higher when the ALTA is held up in the air?

[Light from the room is entering the detector.]

Why are the numbers so low when the ALTA is completely covered up?

[No light is getting into the detector. The number that each ALTA reads when it is receiving absolutely no light is called its “Dark Voltage”.]

Do the ALTAs have the same numbers for the “Dark Voltage”?

[Each ALTA detector will be slightly different, producing different numbers.]

Why are there different colors of light bulbs that turn on when you press the buttons on the front?

[The different colors can emit specific wavelengths of light, which will reflect off of a surface and into the detector, so that we can measure how well an object reflects that particular wavelength of light.]

Why are the numbers higher for a white sheet of paper than a dark object?

[More light is bouncing off of – reflecting from - the paper and into the detector.]

10. Invite the groups to collect spectra for different objects. To do this, they will collect readings of different wavelengths of light reflecting off of objects, and then graph the data. Give each student a copy of the *Tips on Using the ALTA, Reflectance Worksheet*, a calculator and the *Spectrum Graph* and ask them to write their names and a description of their material.
11. Inform your students that they will need a standard or calibration for their ALTAs. One way to measure how much light of each wavelength is being reflected is to measure the percentage of light reflected, by comparing the light reflected from an object to the light reflected from a bright standard material, such as white paper. Direct the students, working in groups, to place their ALTA flat down on two stacked sheets of blank white paper and press the different wavelengths (colors) one at a time. All of the students in each group should record the numbers for each of the 11 wavelengths on their *Reflectance Worksheets* in the “white paper” column. Note: if the readings are changing (dropping) rapidly, direct the students to record the first high number.
12. Students should also record the “dark voltage”—the number displayed when none of the buttons are being pushed and the ALTA’s detector is completely covered.
13. GATHERING DATA: Next, the groups should place the ALTA directly onto the materials they are analyzing, and push the different wavelengths (colors) one at a time, and record the number for each of the 11 frequencies on their *Reflectance Worksheets*. Students in the groups can share roles: the group data recorder, the ALTA user, the recorder, and the calculator.
14. Using the calculators, have the groups determine what the percentage of reflectance is for their material for each of the 11 frequencies to two decimal places, by following the instructions on their *Reflectance Worksheet*.

15. ANALYSIS: The students should fill out their *Spectrum Graph* with the final numbers from their *Reflectance Worksheet*. Discuss graphing as a class or model one example of a spectrum graph if the students have limited graphing experience.

Where is the x-axis for the graphs? What does it indicate?

[The horizontal x-axis indicates different frequencies of light.]

Where is the y-axis for the graphs? What does it indicate?

[The vertical y-axis indicates the percentage of light reflected off of their object.]

Do the students' graphs have any peaks or high points? If so, at which wavelengths? What does that tell them about the objects?

[Objects reflect more of the light at those wavelengths; red objects will reflect more red and orange light, for instance.]

Do the students' graphs have any valleys or low points? If so, what does that tell them about the objects?

[The objects absorb most of the light at those wavelengths.]

Are there any strange graphs with unusual numbers (close to 0 or higher than 1)? What are possible sources of error?

[Buttons may not have been held down during the readings, too much light might enter the ALTA, the battery may be running low, the calculations may have been incorrect.]

16. SHARING CONCLUSIONS: Invite each group (one at a time) to present their results, then as a class discuss the similarities and differences in their spectra.

Do any materials have identical spectra or does each have a different spectrum?

[Although some of the spectra may be similar, different materials should have different spectra. However, with only 11 data points, the ALTA cannot always show these differences.]

CLASS DISCUSSION

17. Invite the students to reflect on the activity and analyze their results.

What do the students think the point of this activity was?

[Answers could include taking data and learning to use the ALTA, or may even include learning about the spectrum and learning about light.]

Which aspects of science did your students do today?

[Answers could include using technology, collecting data, putting those data into a readable format – a graph, making predictions and testing predictions.]

How did each student's spectrum compare to the others in his or her group? How did the different groups' spectra compare to each other?

[Different objects have different spectral "fingerprints" – each object had a unique spectral graph.]

What does the ALTA record? How might this be useful?

[The ALTA measures the amount of light that is reflected off of an object, for different wavelengths of light. Scientists could use the reflectance spectrum to identify a mysterious substance.]

How is the ALTA similar to the human eye?

[Both the human eye and the ALTA can measure the amount of light we see, at different wavelengths or colors of light.]

In what ways can the ALTA detect more than we can?

[It can detect four different infrared wavelengths.]

How could the ALTA be improved to collect more data about the spectrum of an object?

[More wavelengths could be added.]

How might spectrometers on spacecraft help us learn about other planets?

[It is much easier to fly an instrument like a spectrometer past a planet than landing on that planet. Spectrometers can take reflectance spectra of those planets to help us identify their makeup.]

BACKGROUND

EDUCATOR

The ALTA Reflectance Spectrometer

Each frequency or color of light has an associated wavelength. On the ALTA spectrometer, there are LEDs that emit specific wavelengths of light, which can reflect off of a surface. The shortest wavelength for the ALTA is emitted by a blue LED at 470 nanometers (nm) ($4.7 \times 10^{-7}\text{m}$), and the longest wavelength is emitted by an infrared LED at 940 nanometers ($9.4 \times 10^{-7}\text{m}$).

Each ALTA is slightly different, due to variations in the electrical components, lamps, and light sensors, so each ALTA has its own unique sensitivity to different wavelengths of light. Readings can change over time, due to temperature and other variables.

Using the ALTA

When measuring an object's reflectance using the ALTA, the students should hold down the ALTA and see if the dark voltage (the reading without any of the LED's turned on) is within 10-20 points of the dark voltage they had when the ALTA was pressed against a flat surface. If it is not, then outside light is getting in, and they should re-position the ALTA until the numbers are closer to the dark reading, before they begin to press other buttons.

Some of the buttons on the ALTA need to be pressed hard to turn on the LED; if students' data seem unusual (if multiple readings are the same and below 100) ask them to try again. If students have difficulty pressing or holding the button down, have them use the eraser end of a pencil to push the buttons.

TIPS ON USING THE ALTA

STUDENT

- You need to **HOLD DOWN** the buttons to take readings.
- What happens if you place the ALTA down flat and don't turn on any of the lights?
 - You still have a number—ALTA's photodetector and electronics don't go to zero. This is your "Dark Voltage."
- You need a large, somewhat flat surface for more accurate readings. Try not to let outside light into the detector.
- Begin with taking the data for two stacked pieces of white paper.
- If the numbers keep changing while you are holding the button, pick the first high number.
- Work in groups of 3: one to press the buttons, one to record the data, and the third to do the calculations.

REFLECTANCE WORKSHEET

STUDENT

Names of Scientists on Team

Sample Description

Dark Voltage Constant

Color	Wavelength in Nano-meters	White Paper Reading	Dark Voltage Constant	White Paper - Dark Voltage (A)	Sample Reading	Dark Voltage Constant	Sample - Dark Voltage (B)	$B \div A$ or [Sample - Dark Voltage] \div [White - Dark V]
Blue	470							
Cyan	525		Same			Same		
Green	560		Same			Same		
Yellow	585		Same			Same		
Orange	600		Same			Same		
Red	645		Same			Same		
Deep Red	700		Same			Same		
Infrared 1	735		Same			Same		
Infrared 2	810		Same			Same		
Infrared 3	880		Same			Same		
Infrared 4	940		Same			Same		

ACTIVITY I-E: SPECTROMETERS IN ACTION

EDUCATOR

Overview

In this 30 minute activity, students collect reflectance spectra and discover that objects that appear similar can have different spectra. Students discuss the advantages of a high-resolution spectrum to identify objects, and learn about the Moon Mineralogy Mapper / Chandrayaan-1 mission.

Learning Outcomes:

The student will:

- collect data and graph the spectra of two different substances that look alike, using the ALTA spectrometer.
- compare the different spectra.
- infer the potential uses of reflectance data.

Key Concepts:

- Each object has a unique reflectance spectrum.
- Data from a reflectance spectrum can be used by scientists to identify objects remotely.
- The Moon Mineralogy Mapper will be used remotely by scientists to analyze rocks on the surface of the Moon.
- Scientific investigation includes observations, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data, and using technology to gather data.

Materials

For each group of 3-4 students:

- 2 copies of the *Reflectance Worksheet*
- 2 copies of the *Spectrum Graph* (any will work for this activity, but be consistent)
- a sheet of white or black construction paper [Note: do not use black cardstock; it may not work for this experiment.]
- 1 black marker
- 1 ALTA reflectance spectrometer
- 1 calculator

Preparation:

1. Test your black construction paper ahead of time; look at the infrared reflectance raw numbers. If they are lower than 200, you will need a different type of construction paper. Most types of black construction paper yield numbers higher than 800 for infrared voltages.
2. Cut one small square, about 5 by 5 centimeters (2 by 2 inches), out of black construction paper.
3. Draw a similar-sized square using black marker on white construction paper. Fill it in and cut the square out.
4. Check each ALTA reflectance spectrometer—make sure they are working properly.

The Activity

1. Holding up the two black squares you prepared in advance, ask your students to identify the difference between the pieces of paper.
Can your students at the back of the room tell the difference? What about the students at the front of the room?

Are there times when scientists would like to examine something that is too far away for them to touch? Can the students name examples?
[Scientists might want to examine moons, planets, and stars to learn more about them.]
2. Divide your class into groups of 3-4 students each. Give each group an ALTA, a *Reflectance Worksheet*, a *Spectrum Graphs*, and a calculator.
3. Give half of the groups a sheet of white construction paper and a black marker, and ask them to color a small square with the black marker, so that at a 5 by 5 centimeter (2 by 2 inch) section is completely black. Ask them to cut out the black square.
4. Give the other groups a black sheet of construction paper, and ask them to cut out a small square (about 2 inches x 2 inches).
5. HYPOTHESIZE: Ask the groups to predict what the spectrum of the black squares will look like. Will the spectrum of the construction paper that has been colored black with marker will look similar or different to the black construction paper? Students may suggest that there will be low numbers—low reflectance—for most wavelengths.
6. Have the groups determine which student will be conducting which task. One person will be needed to use the reflectance spectrometer, one to record the data on the worksheet, one to compute the numbers (using the calculator), and one to graph the results.
7. The groups should first collect reflectance data from plain white paper with their ALTA, as in the last activity, to have a standard for comparison. They should also record the dark voltage for their ALTA.
8. GATHERING DATA: Invite the teams to collect the data for their black squares and fill out their worksheets.
9. Ask each team to graph the reflectance data for either the black construction paper square or the black-colored white construction paper.
10. ANALYSIS: Ask the students to decide how to best compare the spectra to see if they are alike or different.

CLASS DISCUSSION

11. As a class, invite the students to share their results and analyze their conclusions.
Are the spectra similar or different? If there are differences, what can they be attributed to?
[The spectra with black marker are much lower in the infrared range than the black construction paper. The chemicals in the black marker are darker in infrared.]

Can two substances that look alike have different spectra?

[Yes they can—particularly at wavelengths that our eyes can't see. Materials made of different chemicals will absorb different wavelengths of light. Objects with identical chemical makeup have identical spectra.]

What do the students think the point of this activity was?

[Answers could include that objects which look alike to us can still have very different spectral measurements.]

Which aspects of science did your students do today?

[Answers could include making a discovery, using technology, taking data, making predictions and testing predictions.]

We discovered that different materials have different spectra, even when they look alike. How might this be a useful tool on the Moon or Mars?

[Scientists can use this to help identify different materials, like rocks, minerals, and resources.]

12. Compare the range of wavelengths visible to humans, to the wavelengths taken by the ALTA spectrometer.

What colors do most humans see? How many different shades of color can people see?

[People see visible light. The cones in human eyes can detect red, green and blue, but our brains use that information to detect differences between hundreds to thousands of different shades of color.]

In what ways can the ALTA detect more than our own spectrometers – our eyes – can see?

[It can measure four different infrared wavelengths.]

In what ways is the ALTA limited? How could it collect more information, and why would those changes be useful?

[The ALTA can only give us a spectrum with 11 data points—11 wavelengths. More wavelengths would give us more details, and make it easier for scientists to identify specific materials.]

How might spectrometers on spacecraft help us learn about other planets?

[Spectrometers could take reflectance spectra of materials on those planets to help us identify them.]

13. Describe the Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M³), a spectrometer on Chandrayaan-1 that is currently orbiting the Moon and taking a detailed spectrum (with 261 different measured wavelengths, covering all of the visible spectrum and the near-infrared wavelengths) of the different points of the Moon's surface. Ask your students how this would provide more information about the Moon.

How would a more detailed spectrum help scientists?

[It would make it easier to identify the types of rocks and minerals on the Moon.]

BACKGROUND

EDUCATOR

Colored Materials

Paper, marker, and crayon have different colors because different pigments have been added to the original materials. Different types of black construction paper may have different reflectance spectra because of the different processes used to make them black.

Facilitator Background: The Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M³)/ Chandrayaan-1

Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M³) is one of two instruments that NASA is contributing to India's first mission to the Moon, Chandrayaan-1, which launched in 2008. M³ will provide the first spectroscopic map of the entire lunar surface at high resolution, revealing the minerals of which it is made.

The instrument detects electromagnetic radiation with wavelengths from 430 to 3000 nanometers (0.43 to 3 microns), which covers visible light and the near-infrared. M³ divides the approximately 2600 nanometer range to which it is sensitive into 261 discrete bands, each of which is only 10 nanometers wide. This is considered very high spectral resolution, and enables M³ to detect the fine detail required for mineral identification. Spatial resolution is similarly high. From its vantage point 100 kilometers above the lunar surface, M³ is able to resolve features as small as 70 meters in size.

The individual spectra collected by M³ are being combined to form a detailed picture or map of the lunar surface. Each picture or map that M³ produces shows mountains, craters, or plains like a regular camera, but in a very narrow range of wavelengths (the 10-nanometer sliver of the spectrum that constitutes one spectral channel). It's like taking a picture using a filter that allows only one precise color of light through the lens (similar to Activities 1 and 2). But M³ is taking 261 such pictures simultaneously, each in its own "color." To identify the spectral fingerprint of a particular portion of the lunar surface, one would plot the light intensity of each of the 261 channels, noting how bright each pixel is at each wavelength. Plotting this on a graph produces a spectrum. Each mineral has its own unique spectrum, identified by taking spectrographic readings in a laboratory.

For more information, go to <http://moonmineralogymapper.jpl.nasa.gov/INSTRUMENT/>

**Worksheets and Graph Paper Selections
for working with the ALTA Spectrometer**

REFLECTANCE WORKSHEET

STUDENT

Names of Scientists on Team

Sample Description

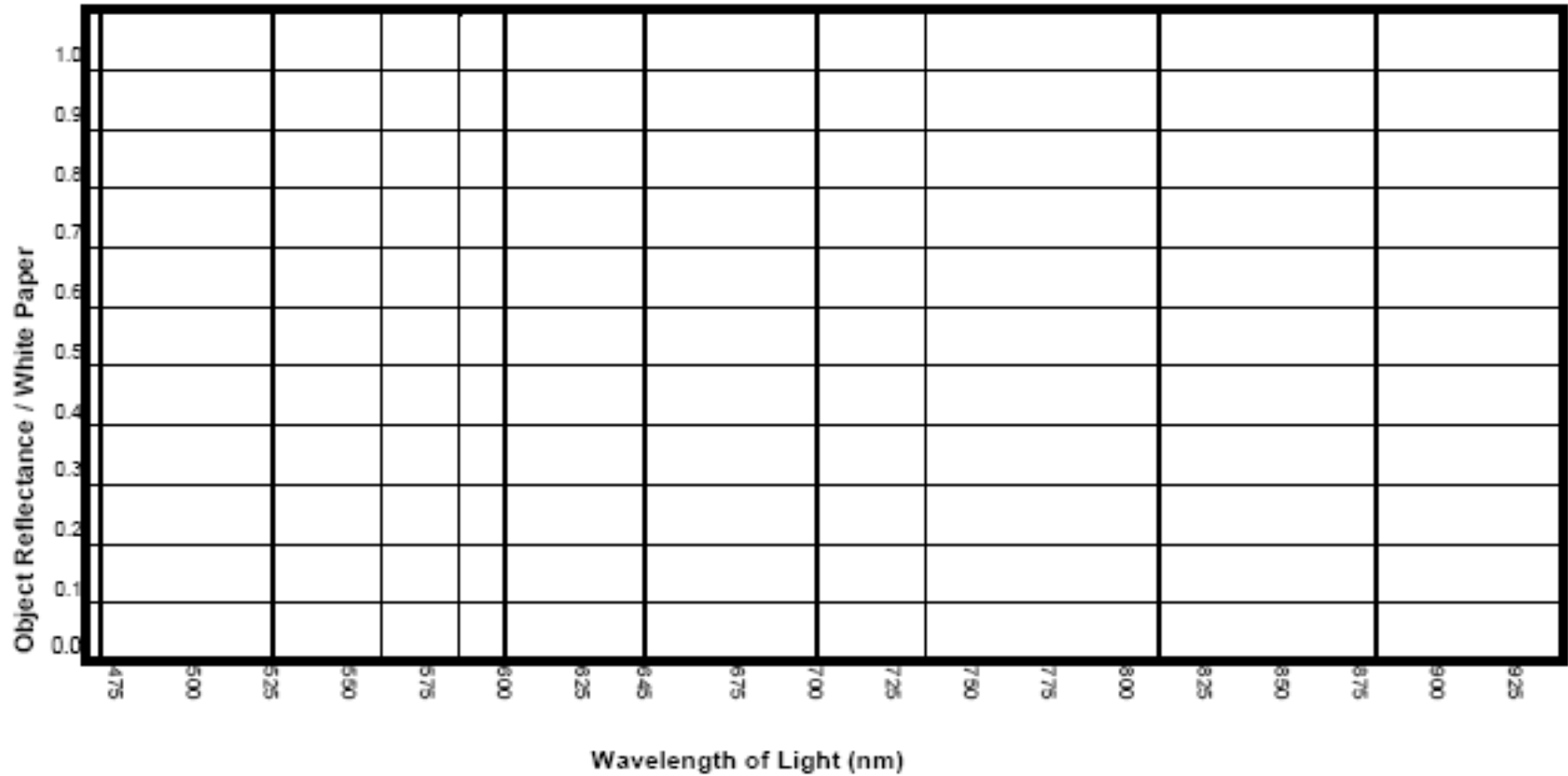
Dark Voltage Constant

Color	Wavelength in Nano-meters	White Paper Reading	Dark Voltage Constant	White Paper - Dark Voltage (A)	Sample Reading	Dark Voltage Constant	Sample - Dark Voltage (B)	$B \div A$ or [Sample - Dark Voltage] \div [White - Dark V]
Blue	470							
Cyan	525		Same			Same		
Green	560		Same			Same		
Yellow	585		Same			Same		
Orange	600		Same			Same		
Red	645		Same			Same		
Deep Red	700		Same			Same		
Infrared 1	735		Same			Same		
Infrared 2	810		Same			Same		
Infrared 3	880		Same			Same		
Infrared 4	940		Same			Same		

SPECTRUM GRAPH 1

STUDENT

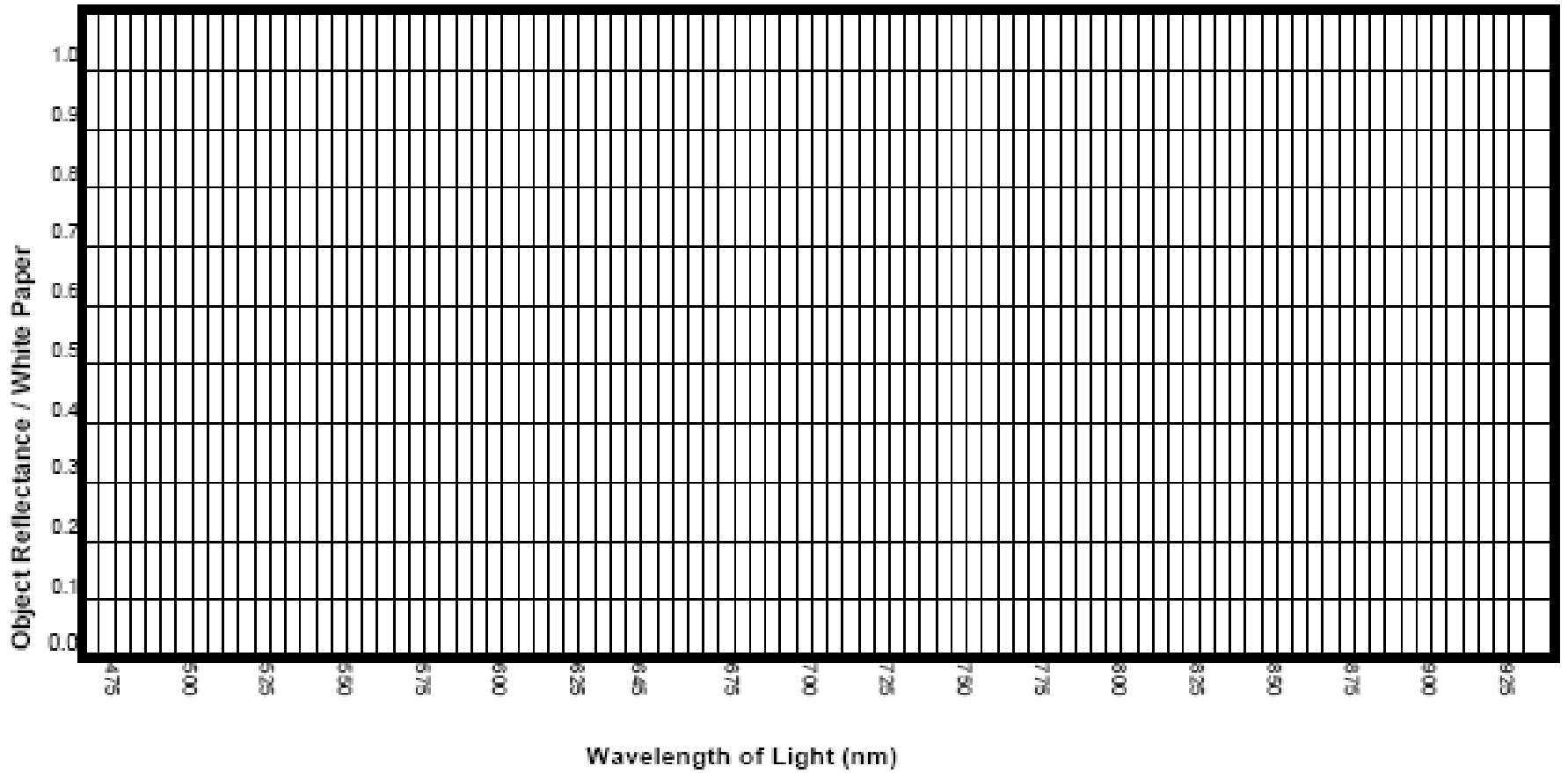
Reflectance Spectrum of _____



SPECTRUM GRAPH 2

STUDENT

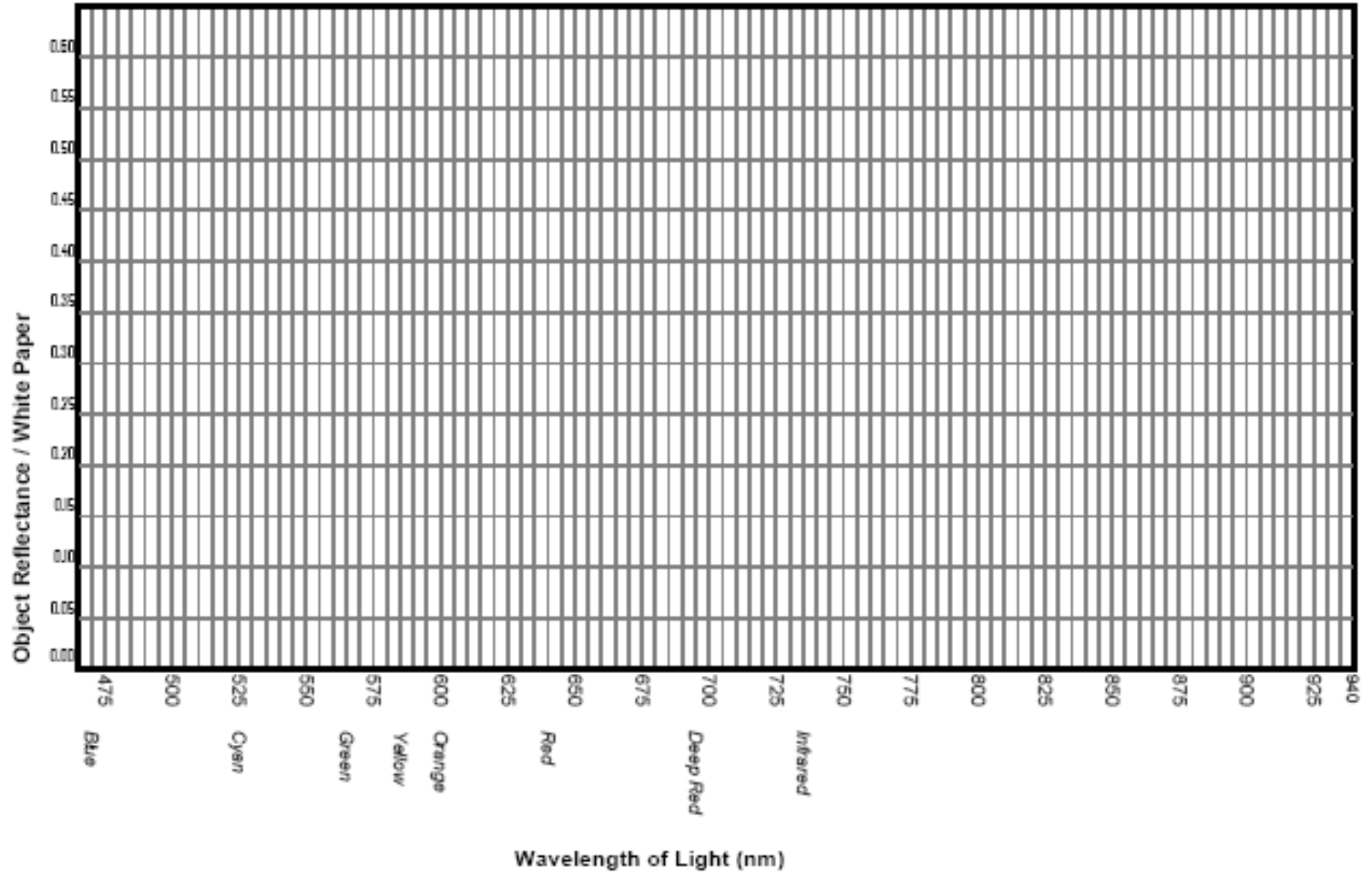
Reflectance Spectrum of _____



SPECTRUM GRAPH 3

STUDENT

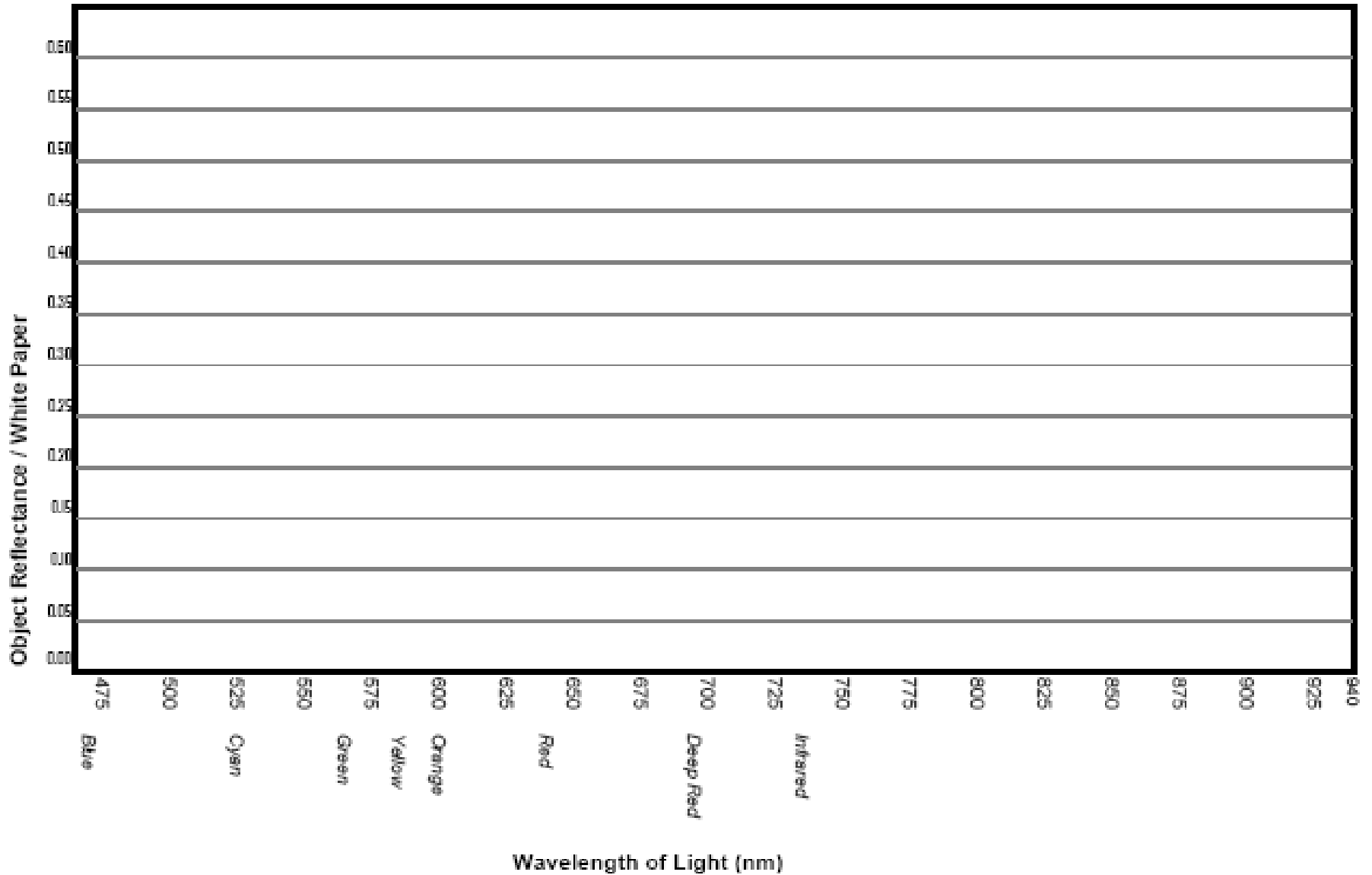
Reflectance Spectrum of _____



SPECTRUM GRAPH 4

STUDENT _____

Reflectance Spectrum of _____



SPECTRUM GRAPH 5

STUDENT

Reflectance Spectrum of _____

