

## From Night to Day (Grade K-2) Pre-Visit Activities

### Vocabulary List and Student Definitions (early elementary level)

- **Sun:** the star at the center of our solar system around which the Earth revolves
- **Moon:** a solid mass in space that can be seen from earth
- **Day:** the part of a 24-hour period when it is light
- **Sunrise:** the appearance of the sun right above the horizon each morning
- **Sunset:** the appearance of the sun setting below the horizon each evening
- **Night:** the part of a 24-hour period when it is dark
- **Star:** mass of gas in space, that gives off energy in the form of light and heat

### Teacher Background and Supporting Information

1. What is the solar system?
  - a. The solar system includes the Sun, **moon**, planets, satellites, asteroids, meteors, and comets that are subject to its gravitational pull.
2. What is the **Sun**?
  - a. The Sun is located at the center of our solar system.
  - b. It is considered a small, yellow **star**. It is the closest star to Earth, which makes it seem so much larger than other stars.
  - c. Earth and the other planets revolve around, or orbit, the Sun.
3. Why is the Sun important?
  - a. The Sun is Earth's primary source of energy. It provides energy in the form of heat and light, which helps life to exist on Earth.
  - b. The distance of Earth to the Sun is approximately 93 million miles. It would take about 17 years on a plane for us to travel that distance. This distance creates the perfect conditions for life to exist - heat and light, water and air.
4. **Night** and **Day** is caused by the rotational movement, or spinning motion, of Earth on its axis.
  - a. One complete rotation, 360 degrees, takes approximately 24 hours.

### Student Activities

1. Read-a-loud: What Makes Day and Night by Franklyn Branley.
  - a. Write important vocabulary (sunrise, day, noon, sunset and night) on the board as students encounter the words in the reading.
2. Using a globe, demonstrate the movement of the Earth. Ask students to describe the movement. The movement is rotating, or spinning.
3. Reinforce the day/night concept with a globe. Locate your city, state or country on the globe and place a sticker with your school name on it (or tape a paper doll to the surface) to mark the spot. Then using a lamp as the Sun, slowly rotate the globe and show students how the Earth rotates around the sun, resulting in day and night. The sun seemingly stays in the same position (although it is also moving).
  - b. Using the globe, have students volunteer to point to an area on the globe that is in daylight while your city is in darkness and.
4. Provide students with a large piece of drawing paper and crayons or markers. Have them fold the paper in half or draw a line down the middle to create two sides of the page. Ask students to draw objects that can be seen in the sky during the day on one side of the page. On the other side, ask them to draw

objects that can be seen in the sky during the night. Allow students to share their ideas. Are there any objects in the sky that can be seen during, both, day and night?