

Name:

Teacher: HAVEN SANDOVAL PRICE

**WRITE YOUR NAME ON ALL PAGES - COMPLETE THE ENTIRE PACKET!**

<b>ELA 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE</b>	
<b>(Q2) Week 3: Oct. 26-30, 2020</b>	
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>DANGER! THIS MISSION TO MARS COULD BORE YOU TO DEATH! (text)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read the Text – Annotate</li><li>• Comprehension Check/Text Questions</li></ul>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>CONCEPT VOCABULARY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocabulary worksheets</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>ANALYZE CRAFT &amp; STRUCTURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Text Structure</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>CONVENTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Action &amp; Linking Verbs</li></ul>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SELECTION TEST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete the test and turn in your packet to the school/bus</li></ul>

**When you complete the packet, you may return it with any of the following options:**

- *Scan each page and send it to your teacher's email address.*
- *Drop off the packet at the TMS front office.*
- *Return it to the bus driver on the following Monday and pick up a new packet.*

**Any questions - Email your teacher or call TMS at 928-729-6811.**

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About the Author



**Maggie Koerth-Baker**

(b. 1981) is an American science journalist and author. She is the science editor at *BoingBoing*, a general-interest blog, and has contributed articles to the *New York Times Magazine*. Koerth-Baker writes about the relationship between science, culture, and human behavior.

# Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!

## Concept Vocabulary

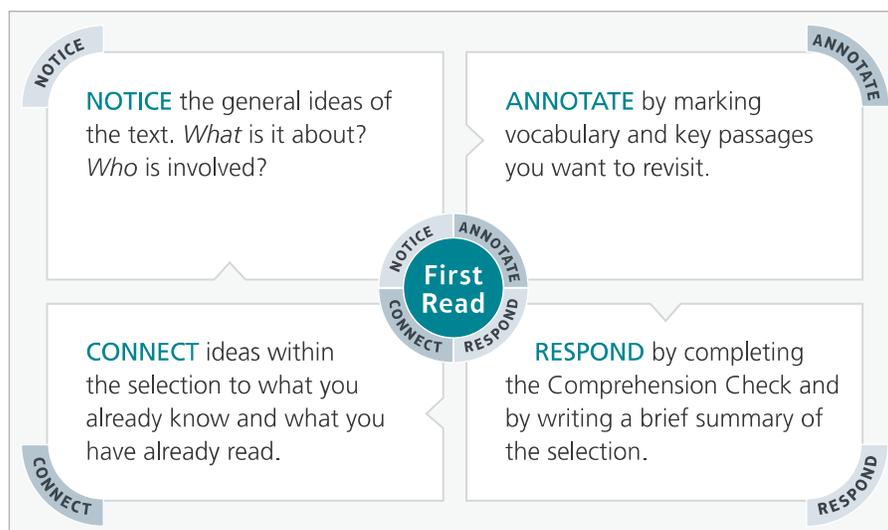
You will encounter the following words as you read “Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!” Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (6).

WORD	YOUR RANKING
chronic	
stimulus	
subconsciously	
excruciatingly	
monotony	
catastrophic	

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

## First Read NONFICTION

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.



**STANDARDS**

**Reading Informational Text**  
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.



# Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!

Maggie Koerth-Baker

## BACKGROUND

This article mentions Ernest Shackleton, who led several expeditions to the South Pole in the early 1900s. While these icy voyages took a huge toll on the crew's bodies, crew members also struggled with the mental stress of being isolated from society for months on end. On a mission to Mars, astronauts would also have to endure long periods of isolation and boredom.



1 **R**ight now, six people are living in a nearly windowless, white geodesic dome<sup>1</sup> on the slopes of Hawaii's Mauna Loa volcano. They sleep in tiny rooms, use no more than eight minutes of shower time a week and subsist on a diet of freeze-dried, canned or preserved food. When they go outside, they exit through a mock air lock, clad head to toe in simulated spacesuits. The dome's occupants are playing a serious version of the game of pretend—what if we lived on Mars?

1. **geodesic dome** round building that is inexpensive to build and is known for its structural strength, efficiency, and durability.

## NOTES

**chronic** (KRON ihk) *adj.*  
lasting a long time or  
recurring often

#### CLOSE READ

**ANNOTATE:** Mark  
descriptive details you find  
in paragraph 4.

**QUESTION:** What point  
is the author making by  
listing such details?

**CONCLUDE:** Do the details  
effectively support the  
topic sentence of the  
paragraph?

**stimulus** (STIHM yuh luhs) *n.*  
something that causes  
action or reaction

- 2 Research at the Hawaii Space Exploration Analog and Simulation (HI-SEAS) project, funded in part by NASA, is a continuation of a long history of attempts to understand what will happen to people who travel through outer space for long periods of time. It's more than a technical problem. Besides multistage rockets to propel a spacecraft out of Earth's atmosphere, years of planning and precise calculations and massive amounts of fuel, traveling the tens of millions of miles to Mars will take a tremendous amount of time. With current technology, the journey takes more than eight months each way.
- 3 Which means that astronauts will get bored. In fact, a number of scientists say that—of all things—boredom is one of the biggest threats to a manned Mars mission, despite the thrill inherent in visiting another planet. And so, attention is being paid to the effects of boredom at HI-SEAS, and on the International Space Station. But because of the causes of **chronic** boredom, scientists say, research facilities in Antarctica might actually provide a better simulation of the stress of a journey to Mars.
- 4 Most living things constantly seek out sensory stimulation—new smells, tastes, sights, sounds or experiences. Even single-celled amoebas will move to investigate new sources of light or heat, says Sheryl Bishop, who studies human performance in extreme environments at the University of Texas Medical Branch. Animals deprived of naturalistic environments and the mental stimulation that comes with them can fall into repetitive, harmful patterns of behavior. Anybody of a certain age will remember zoos full of manically pacing tigers, bears gnawing on their metal cages and birds that groomed themselves bald—all a result, we now know, of their rather unstimulating lifestyles.
- 5 Human boredom isn't quite as well understood, says James Danckert, a professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University of Waterloo. He's currently working on what he says may be the first study of how our brain activity changes when we're bored. Danckert is hoping to find out whether boredom is connected to a phenomenon called the "default network"—a background hum of brain activity that seems to remain on even when you aren't directly focused on something. There's a lot of observable activity in the brains of people who are staring at a blank screen—way more than anybody expected, Danckert says. The default network maps closely to the brain-activity patterns scientists see when someone's mind is wandering. It suggests that what we call a restless mind is just that—a mind desperate for something to amuse it, searching frantically for **stimulus**.
- 6 Boredom, it turns out, is a form of stress. Psychologically, it's the mirror image of having too much work to do, says Jason Kring, president of the Society of Human Performance in Extreme

Environments, an organization that studies how people live and work in space, underwater, on mountaintops and other high-risk places. If your brain does not receive sufficient stimulus, it might find something else to do—it daydreams, it wanders, it thinks about itself. If this goes on too long, it can affect your mind’s normal functioning. Chronic boredom correlates with depression and attention deficits.

- 7 Astronaut candidates go through two years of training before they’re even approved to fly. And before they are chosen to be candidates, they have to compete against thousands of other applicants. The 2013 class, for instance, had more than 6,000 applicants and only 8 were chosen. Astronauts are rigorously tested for psychological as well as physical fitness. But no mission in NASA’s history has raised the specter of chronic boredom to the degree that a Mars mission does, because none have involved such a long journey through nothingness.
- 8 What if, millions of miles from home, a chronically bored astronaut forgets a certain safety procedure? What if he gets befuddled while reading an oxygen gauge? More important, Danckert and Kring say, bored people are also prone to taking risks, **subconsciously** seeking out stimulation when their environment bores them.
- 9 The cognitive and social psychologist Peter Suedfeld says that people will sometimes do reckless, stupid things when they suffer from chronic boredom. In Antarctica, where winter can cut scientists and crew off from the rest of the world for as long as nine months, the isolation can lead to strange behavior. Suedfeld told me he has heard about Antarctic researchers venturing outside in 40-below weather without proper clothing and without telling anyone else they were going out.
- 10 The diaries of early polar explorers are full of tales of extreme boredom, depression and desperate attempts at entertainment reminiscent of prisoners’ stories from solitary confinement. An important lesson that Antarctica can impart on a Mars expedition is this: even scientists on important missions can get **excruciatingly** bored.
- 11 One effective way astronauts combat boredom is by staying busy with work. That’s a strategy at HI-SEAS, where the crew member Kate Greene told me that her schedule is packed—every hour planned and accounted for, from the time she wakes up to the time she goes to bed at night. Life on the International Space Station is similar. (In fact, historically, NASA’s problem has been overworking people: in 1973, the exhausted crew of Skylab 4<sup>2</sup> actually staged a relaxation rebellion and took an unscheduled day off.) But Antarctica is different from HI-SEAS or the

2. **Skylab 4** mission aboard United States space station Skylab.

## NOTES

### CLOSE READ

**ANNOTATE:** Mark facts in paragraph 7 that show the challenges with which astronauts are faced.

**QUESTION:** Why did the author include these facts?

**CONCLUDE:** How do these facts help you to better understand the reason that chronic boredom is especially problematic for a Mars mission?

**subconsciously** (suhb KON shuhs lee) *adv.* occurring in the mind without one’s full awareness

**excruciatingly** (ehk SKROO shee ay tihng lee) *adv.* painfully; miserably

## NOTES

**monotony** (muh NOT uh nee) *n.* sameness; boredom

**catastrophic** (kat uh STROF ihk) *adj.* disastrous

International Space Station. Communications are limited. There's nobody outside the base directing your day. Spectacular views vanish in a haze of white. It's just you, the people you came in with, no way out and little to break up the **monotony**.

12 And so some researchers there have learned to actively fend off boredom by creating what you might call a unique office culture. They celebrate a ridiculous number of holidays, both traditional and invented. You need something to look forward to, Suedfeld says, and planning the events helps change the routine. Even Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic crew found ways to put on skits and concerts. On one expedition, Shackleton brought a small printing press. At McMurdo Station,<sup>3</sup> the 1983 winter crew created costumes, learned lines and acted out scenes from the movie *Escape From New York*. It's possible that we may, someday, watch recordings of Mars-bound astronauts acting out other John Carpenter films. (It's not so far-fetched. Chris Hadfield, a Canadian astronaut, made a tribute to David Bowie's "Space Oddity" that racked up more than 16 million views on YouTube.)

13 It might sound absurd, but many scientists say strategies like this are necessary because, without proper mental stimulus, we risk making a physically and technologically challenging endeavor into a psychologically grueling one. It would be **catastrophic** if humanity's greatest voyage were brought low by the mind's tendency to wander when left to its own devices. ❧

3. **McMurdo Station** Antarctic research station.

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## Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. Why are six people living in a geodesic dome on the slopes of a volcano in Hawaii?
2. With our current technology, how long will a journey to Mars take?
3. According to scientists, what is one of the biggest threats to a manned Mars mission?
4.  **Notebook** Write a brief summary of “Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!”

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### RESEARCH

**Research to Clarify** Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the news article. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the article?

**CONCEPT VOCABULARY AND WORD STUDY**

## Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!

Maggie Koreth-Baker

### WORD LIST

**chronic stimulus subconsciously excruciatingly monotony catastrophic**

A. **DIRECTIONS:** In each of the following items, think about the meaning of the italicized word or phrase, and then answer the question.

1. If Cora suffers from *chronic* pneumonia, is it long lasting or short lived? Explain.

---

2. Would you lie down and take a nap if you were bored and looking for outside *stimulus*? Why or why not?

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3. Nick was talking to the teacher about his homework, but *subconsciously* was thinking about lunch. Was Nick aware of his thoughts regarding lunch? Why or why not?

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4. It was *excruciatingly* awkward when I stood to applaud, not realizing the performance wasn't over. True or false? It was intensely awkward. Explain.

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5. If you were subjected to the *monotony* of watching paint dry, would this be an exciting experience for you? Explain.

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6. Would you say that a tsunami is a *catastrophic* event? Why or why not? Explain.

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B. **WORD STUDY: LATIN PREFIX SUB-:** The Latin prefix *sub-* means “under” or “below.” For instance, the word *submarine* means “a watercraft that stays under water.” Below, give a brief definition of each word and use it in a sentence.

1. *submerge*: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *subordinate*: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

## DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS: TEXT STRUCTURE

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Read the paragraph. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Of the two dessert choices, fresh fruit is far better than apple pie. First of all, apple pie is fattening. Additionally, fresh fruit leaves a better taste in the diner's mouth than apple pie does. Also, including a variety of fruits in a fresh fruit plate offers more options for those eating the dessert than does a pie with only one main ingredient.

1. Where in the passage does the author state the topic?

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2. How does the author develop the topic?

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**B. DIRECTIONS:** Imagine you are writing an essay about Abraham Lincoln. Read each statement below. Then, put them in order (write 1-5 after each statement) for the best organization of your essay.

1. Lincoln was assassinated in April 1865.

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2. Lincoln was born in 1809.

---

3. Lincoln will always be remembered as the leader who guided our country through one of its most difficult times.

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4. Lincoln was first elected president in 1861.

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5. Abraham Lincoln is regarded as one of our most famous presidents.

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**ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE****DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS: TEXT STRUCTURE**

In order to communicate effectively, authors of nonfiction think about the best way to present information. This often involves introducing the topic early, providing any necessary context and background information, and presenting information in a logical order. Another part of good structure is an effective conclusion that ties everything together and gives the writing a “finished” feeling.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Thomas Jefferson was one of the most complex thinkers who ever lived. He was an architect, an inventor, a writer, and a philosopher. And he also loved gadgets! He built his own extremely complicated (and extremely accurate) clock!

1. Where in the passage does the author introduce the topic?

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2. Where in the passage does the author provide background about the main topic?

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**CONVENTIONS** ACTION VERBS AND LINKING VERBS

A **verb** is a word that expresses an action or a state of being. A complete sentence must have at least one verb.

- An **action verb** tells what action someone or something is doing.
- A **linking verb** joins the subject of a sentence with a word or phrase that describes or renames the subject. The most common linking verbs are forms of *be*, such as *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *has been*, and *will be*. Other linking verbs include *seem*, *become*, *stay*, and *feel*. Several of these verbs can also be used as action verbs.

ACTION VERBS	LINKING VERBS
He <i>tastes</i> the apple.	The apple <i>tastes</i> sour.
The farmers <i>grow</i> corn.	The corn <i>grows</i> tall.
She <i>felt</i> the turtle's shell.	The shell <i>felt</i> hard.

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Identify each underlined verb by writing *action* or *linking*.

1. Botanists develop stronger types of plants. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Strong plants fight disease with good results. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Healthy plants certainly are a great benefit to farmers. \_\_\_\_\_
4. They seem to rapidly get large. \_\_\_\_\_
5. These crops increase the yield at harvest time. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Each sentence contains a linking verb. Underline the subject with one line and the verb with two lines. Then, write the word that either describes or identifies the subject on the line provided.

**Example:** Her new sweater looks beautiful.

DESCRIBING WORD: beautiful

1. Her rug is too small for her room. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Computers are an important tool of education. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Dana may be the most likely choice for the office. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The girls were hoarse from cheering. \_\_\_\_\_

Name:	Date:
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**CONVENTIONS** ACTION VERBS AND LINKING VERBS

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Identify each underlined verb by writing *action* or *linking*.

1. The golden plover migrates long distances. \_\_\_\_\_
2. It breeds in Arctic regions. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Some plovers stay in Florida during the winter months. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The bird flies about 2,400 miles over open ocean. \_\_\_\_\_
5. A picture of a plover is on our living room wall. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Each sentence contains a linking verb. Underline the subject with one line and the verb with two lines. Then, write the word that either describes or identifies the subject on the line provided.

1. *Frankenstein* is a famous novel. \_\_\_\_\_
2. After their swim, the boys felt very refreshed. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The plant grew sturdy in the hothouse. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Rhode Island is the smallest state in the Union. \_\_\_\_\_

**C. DIRECTIONS:** Complete each sentence by writing the form of the verb shown in parentheses. Then, identify the verb by underlining *action* or *linking*.

1. We \_\_\_\_\_ a skunk in our backyard. (past of *spot*)  
[action or linking]
2. The temperature had \_\_\_\_\_ to below 32 degrees. (past participle of *fall*)  
[action or linking]
3. My little brother \_\_\_\_\_ too big for his shoes. (past of *grow*)  
[action or linking]
4. We \_\_\_\_\_ to the lake one chilly morning. (past of *go*)  
[action or linking]
5. Sally had \_\_\_\_\_ sick all day long. (past participle of *feel*)  
[action or linking]

**SELECTION TEST** **DANGER! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death****FIRST READ: Comprehension**

*Identify the choice that best answers the question.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ **1.** According to “Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!” why are astronauts living on the slopes of a volcano as part of the Hawaii Space Exploration Analog and Simulation project?
- They are testing a variety of rockets and engines to determine which will perform best in space.
  - They are researching the health risks of living at altitudes similar to those of a space station.
  - They are building equipment in a hostile environment that is supposed to be like Mars.
  - They are studying how people react to spending large amounts of time in space.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **2.** What makes the trip to Mars especially challenging for astronauts, as explained in “Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!”?
- Powering the spacecraft requires advanced technology.
  - The trip takes more than eight months each way.
  - Getting supplies to the astronauts is not easy.
  - Deep space is too cold to be comfortable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **3.** What happens to the human brain when a person is bored for long periods of time, according to “Danger! This Mission to Mars Could Bore You to Death!”? Choose **two** options.
- It sleeps.
  - It daydreams.
  - It gains intelligence.
  - It becomes depressed.
  - It becomes unconscious.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Why might chronic boredom be dangerous on a space mission?
- Astronauts might decide to shorten the length of the mission.
  - Astronauts might get frustrated and stop working with one another.
  - Astronauts might take risks that jeopardize the safety of the entire crew.
  - Astronauts might stop taking care of themselves and become unable to work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What is one way that astronauts can combat extreme boredom when living in an isolated environment?
- by eating and drinking more often
  - by counting the days until they go home
  - by occupying themselves with a lot of work
  - by communicating continuously with people

FIRST READ: **Concept Vocabulary**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Which of the following is the **best** definition of *chronic*?
- continuing for a long time
  - originating in the brain
  - causing physical pain
  - existing since birth
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. If Sofia's leg injury can correctly be described as *excruciatingly* painful, then which of the following **must** be true? Base your answer on the meaning of *excruciatingly*.
- Sofia's pain comes and goes.
  - Sofia can play sports despite her pain.
  - Sofia should soon be able to walk without pain.
  - Sofia's medical problem involves pain that is intense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What is the **most likely** meaning of *monotony* in the following sentence?
- Jamal became bored by the monotony of his job, delivering newspapers day in and day out.
- difficult challenges
  - unexpected tasks
  - lack of variety
  - low pay