

MCDONALD OBSERVATORY STUDENT FIELD EXPERIENCE

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Observatory, Domes, and Telescopes

Grades K-5

Introduction

During their visit to McDonald Observatory, students walked through the Harlan J. Smith 2.7-meter telescope dome or into the HET visitor gallery to see giant research telescopes. This post-visit activity helps students frame McDonald Observatory as a system by composing a story.

Related TEKS and NSES

Related TEKS: K.2, K.4A, K.6D, 1.2, 1.4B, 1.6D, 2.2, 2.6(A+B), 3.2, 4.2, 4.5B, 5.2, 5.5B, 5.8B

Related NSES: Science and Technology: understanding about science and technology.

Activity

Grades K-2: Students compose a pictorial “comic strip” or story board about their exploration of McDonald Observatory that emphasizes the relationships between an observatory, domes, and telescopes. They may include people who they met working at the Observatory during their visit.

Grades 3-5: Student can compose elaborate “comic strips”, story boards, or include pictures in a written story about their exploration of McDonald Observatory. The stories in whatever form should clarify the relationships between an observatory, domes, and telescopes for an audience that has not yet visited McDonald Observatory. Students may also include people they met during their visit.

Assessment

The post-visit student presentations should show improvement over the pre-visit activity that relates *observatory*, *dome*, and *telescope*. Look for the following characteristics:

General relationships among *observatory*, *dome*, and *telescope*:

Domes enclose telescopes. Domes and telescopes, as well as the Astronomer Lodge, physical plant, water tanks, and residential houses are collectively called McDonald Observatory and operate as a system. These facilities extend across two mountaintops: Mt. Locke and Mt. Fowlkes.