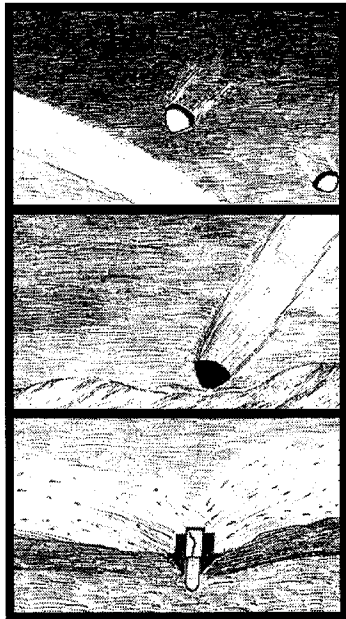


# Name the Mars Miniature Probes!

**T**wo brave explorers travel to a mysterious, distant world. They go where no one has gone before and boldly begin to explore. They discover new things about this world. In sharing this information they help to shape human understanding about our universe.

Who are these intrepid explorers? So far, they are nameless. But you can help to change that!

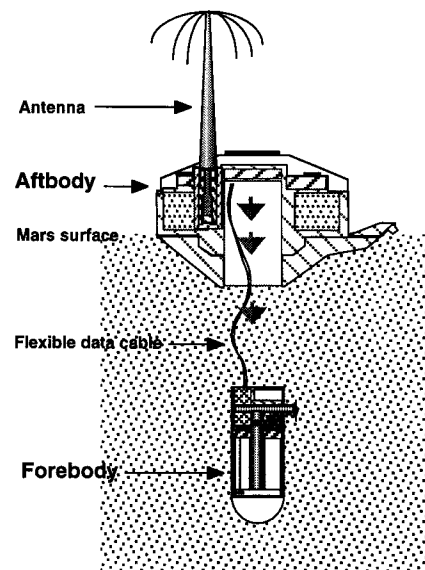
The explorers are the twin miniature probes of the Deep Space 2 mission to Mars being conducted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. The Mars miniature probes are riding piggy-back on another spacecraft, the Mars Polar Lander, launched in January 1999. When the spacecraft reaches Mars orbit, it will drop the two probes. They will plunge through the thin Martian atmosphere reaching speeds of over 200 meters per second (400 miles per hour) and hit the ground with an impact of 60,000 times the force of gravity on Earth.



A thin, basketball-sized aeroshell encases each probe to keep it from burning up in its fall through the Martian atmosphere and also to keep the probe right side up. When the aeroshell hits the ground, it will shatter, and part of the probe, called the forebody, will plunge a meter (about 3 feet) into the ground. It will remain attached by a data cable to the aftbody part of the probe, which will remain on the surface.

A small drill in the forebody will sample the soil under the surface and test for frozen water. It will send its findings through the data cable to the aftbody, which will then relay the data to the Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft, in orbit around Mars since September 1997. Surveyor will relay the probes' data back to Earth.

Like the Mars rover named for Sojourner Truth and the Carl Sagan Memorial Station that explored the surface of Mars during the Pathfinder mission in 1997, these new Mars explorers need names that will reflect something about their



difficult, first-of-a-kind mission and also tie them together as a pair. Thus, NASA is sponsoring a contest to pick the best names for the twin miniature probes. The names selected will be announced when the probes encounter the Martian surface in December 1999.

The Mars probes are attempting a feat never done before in space exploration. They will be the first probes to actually plunge beneath the surface of an alien world. They will be looking for frozen water.

From our previous Mars missions, we can see by the markings on the surface that water once flowed abundantly on the red planet. So one of the great mysteries of Mars is where did the water go? It might be frozen in the soil beneath the surface. If there is any water frozen in the soil at either of the two selected landing sites, the probes will detect it.

The Mars probes are also on a mission to test instruments and technologies being used for the first time in space exploration. If they work as expected, in the future several similar probes could be attached to a single spacecraft and released at different locations around a planet. This way we could get a better of idea of how conditions such as weather or seismic ("planetquake") activities vary from place to place.

**NASA invites you to help name each of the twin probes to reflect the importance of this first-of-a-kind mission.**

To enter the contest, choose two people (must be no longer living) from history, mythology, or fiction; or choose two

places or things that are in some way related or associated with each other. Your entry may also include a combination of these, such as a mythological person and a place that are associated with each other. Describe in a few sentences (100 words or fewer) why your entries would make good names for the miniature probes. The names should embody the spirit of exploration, of risk-taking pioneers breaking barriers, or of accomplishment under extreme conditions. Please do not send any acronyms (abbreviations using only the first letter of each word, like "NASA") as suggestions for names. Please do not send names of superheroes, such as "Batman" and "Robin."

You might consider these questions when picking the names or writing your essays:

1. Do you know of any historical brother or sister duos, partners, or couples (not living) that worked together to expand the world of science? How did these people contribute to space science, astronomy, or exploration? How do the names you have chosen reflect what will happen with the mission? Do the life stories of the people you have chosen show how they overcame barriers, opened up new frontiers, or explored extreme environments? Did these people push back the frontiers of knowledge? Did they take risks to achieve their goal? Was the goal in itself a great risk?
2. How do the mythological or fictional characters, places, or things symbolize our exploration of the universe?
3. Do the names of the people, places, or things stand for exploration, risk-taking, breaking barriers, technology, or a sense of discovery?

## Contest Rules

- Anyone (including employees and families of NASA and contractors funded to work on the Deep Space 2 project, as well as non-U.S. citizens) are eligible to submit one entry (with two names) naming the twin probes.
- Entries must include an essay of 100 words or fewer describing why the chosen names best represent the mission.
- All entries, whether submitted electronically or by regular mail, must be received by **April 30, 1999**.
- Entries must be submitted in English.
- Entries will be reviewed by a group of judges composed of NASA personnel and distinguished members of the American public with an interest in the space program. The judges will make a recommendation to NASA. In the case of duplicate names, the selection will be based on the written composition.



*Deep Space 2  
Project Manager  
Sarah Gavit checks  
progress on one of  
the miniature  
probes going to  
Mars.*

- All entries become the property of NASA.

Winners will be announced at the end of 1999 and will be contacted via regular mail. Their names will also appear on the Deep Space 2 web site. Because winners' names and essays may be featured in news releases and other media materials, by entering the contest you agree to the release of this information

## To Enter the Contest

- You may submit your entry electronically using an online form at <http://nmp.jpl.nasa.gov/ds2>.
- Alternatively, use the entry form included on the next page to submit your names for the probes, along with the reason for picking these names. Send by regular mail to the address on the form.

## Awards

- The contest winner will have the honor of naming the Deep Space 2 miniature probes. Check the Deep Space 2 web site (see above) for announcement of the selected names near the time of Mars encounter in December 1999.
- Twenty-five finalists will receive a beautiful Deep Space 2 poster signed by the project team.



# Name the Mars Miniature Probes

Send entry to:

**Deep Space 2 Naming Contest  
Jet Propulsion Laboratory  
4800 Oak Grove Dr.  
Mail Stop 301-235  
Pasadena, California 91109-8099**

Name for Probe 1:

Name for Probe 2:

Why these are good names (100 or fewer words):

Your name:

Age (optional):

Phone No.

Address:

Name of school (if student):

Name of local newspaper: