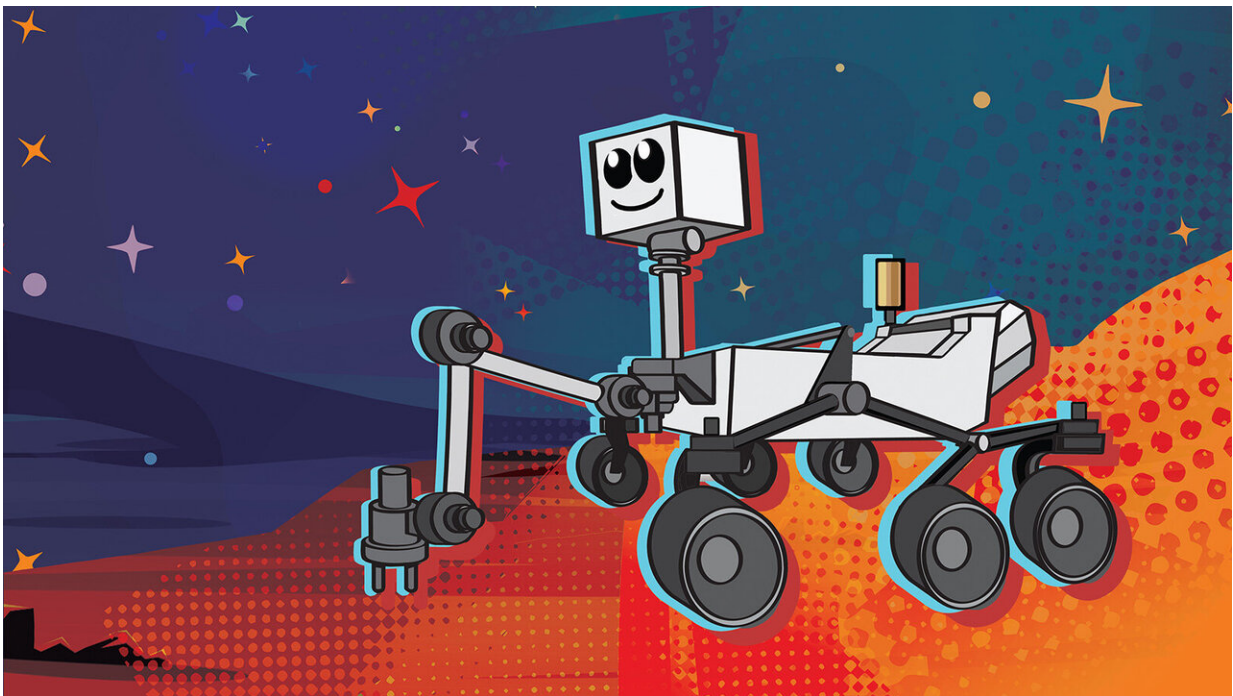


# NASA invites students to name Mars 2020 rover

August 29 2019

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This cartoon depicts NASA's next Mars rover, which launches in 2020. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Red rover, red rover, send a name for Mars 2020 right over! NASA is recruiting help from students nationwide to find a name for its next Mars rover mission.

Starting Tuesday, Aug. 27, K-12 students in U.S. public, private and

home schools can enter the Mars 2020 Name the Rover essay [contest](#). One grand prize winner will name the rover and be invited to see the spacecraft launch in July 2020 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

The Name the Rover contest is part of NASA's efforts to engage students in the STEM enterprise behind Mars exploration and inspire interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"This naming contest is a wonderful opportunity for our nation's youth to get involved with NASA's Moon to Mars missions," said NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine. "It is an exciting way to engage with a rover that will likely serve as the first leg of a Mars Sample return campaign, collecting and caching [core samples](#) from the Martian surface for scientists here on Earth to study for the first time."

The Mars 2020 rover is a 2,300-pound (1,040-kilogram) robotic scientist that will search for signs of past microbial life, characterize the planet's climate and geology, collect samples for future return to Earth, and pave the way for human exploration of the Red Planet.

"Our Mars 2020 rover has fully taken shape over the past several months, as the project team installed various components onto the chassis: the computer brain and electronics; wheels and mobility system; robotic arm; remote sensing mast; the seven science instruments; and finally, the sample caching system," said George Tahu, Mars 2020 program executive. "All that's missing is a great name!"

To enter the contest, students must submit by Nov. 1 their proposed rover name and a short essay, no more than 150 words, explaining why their proposed name should be chosen. The essays will be divided into three groups, by grade level—K-4, 5-8, and 9-12—and judged on the appropriateness, significance and originality of their proposed name, and

the originality and quality of their essay, and/or finalist interview presentation.

Fifty-two semifinalists will be selected per group, each representing their respective state or U.S. territory. Three finalists then will be selected from each group to advance to the final round.

As part of the final selection process, the public will have an opportunity to vote online on the nine finalists in January 2020. NASA plans to announce the selected name on Feb. 18, 2020—exactly one year before the rover will land on the surface of Mars.

The naming contest partnership is part of a Space Act Agreement between NASA, Battelle of Columbus, Ohio, and Future Engineers of Burbank, California, in educational and public outreach efforts.

## **Register to be a Judge**

NASA is seeking volunteers to help judge the thousands of contest entries anticipated to pour in from around the country. U.S. residents over 18 years old who are interested in offering approximately five hours of their time to review submissions should register to be a judge at: [www.futureengineers.org/register.../judge/nametherover](http://www.futureengineers.org/register.../judge/nametherover)

With all major elements onboard and initial functional checks complete, Mars 2020's Assembly, Test, and Launch Operations team is preparing the rover and its sky crane descent stage for the next big test: simulating the vibration dynamics of launch and the thermal environment the [rover](#) will experience on the surface of Mars.

**More information:** For complete contest and prize details, visit: [mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/participate/name-the-rover/](http://mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/participate/name-the-rover/)

Provided by Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Citation: NASA invites students to name Mars 2020 rover (2019, August 29) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-08-nasa-students-mars-rover.html>

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