Space Elevator

What do you imagine?

Description

In this activity, kids imagine what the world might look like if we could build an elevator to space!

Suitable for kids ages 5 and up.

Materials

Paper

Markers

Images of artist renditions of Space Elevators (optional)

Time

Preparation: 5 minutes
Activity: 10 minutes or longer
Cleanup: 5 minutes

Safety

Use normal precautions while doing this activity.

Step 1

Grown-ups, get everything ready!

Take a few moments to look at the Space Elevators images and to read the suggested question prompts.

Step 2

Kids, start imagining! What if it were possible to take an elevator into space? Imagine what our world would be like.

Draw a picture of the future world you're imagining. What would we need in space? What kinds of plans would we have to make?

Step 3

Think about it! What might the world look like if we could build an elevator to space?

- How would the space elevator work? Would you need a power source?
- Who would get to use the space elevator? Where would your space elevator start?
- Where would you go in space? What would you need to bring with you?

What's going on?

It's fun to imagine what our lives might be like in the future—and it's also important. We have the things we do today because in the past, people thought about the kind of world they wanted and invented technologies to help make their dreams real.

Researchers really are working on creating a space elevator, including scientists at NASA and Google. They think that new materials like carbon nanotubes will make this technology possible.

If these scientists are successful, someday it might be easy to bring people and materials into space. We all need to think about the kind of world we want in the future, and begin planning for it. Do you think exploring and developing space is important? If so, what kind of society should we create there? Or do you think we should spend our time and money on something else, instead of a space elevator?

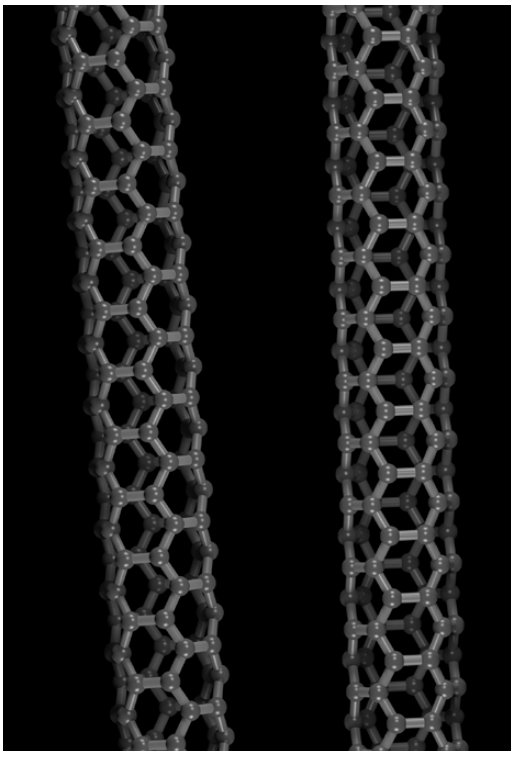
Artist illustration of a space elevator, NASA

How is this nano?

Technologies and society influence each other. People's values shape how nanotechnologies are developed and adopted.

Researchers think about the future world they would like to live in when they create new technologies. And when people decide to use new technologies, those technologies can change their lives in ways that are big and small.

New nanomaterials are making new technologies possible. For example, super strong, lightweight carbon nanotubes might allow us to make a cable that can support a space elevator. The space elevator is an old dream: people have been imagining the possibilities of taking an elevator into space since at least 1895!

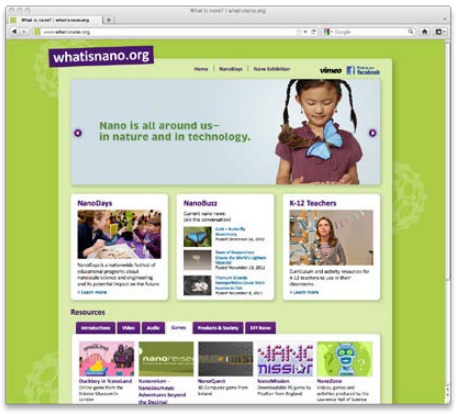


Carbon Nanotubes

Learn more

Learn more at:

www.whatisnano.org



Credits

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