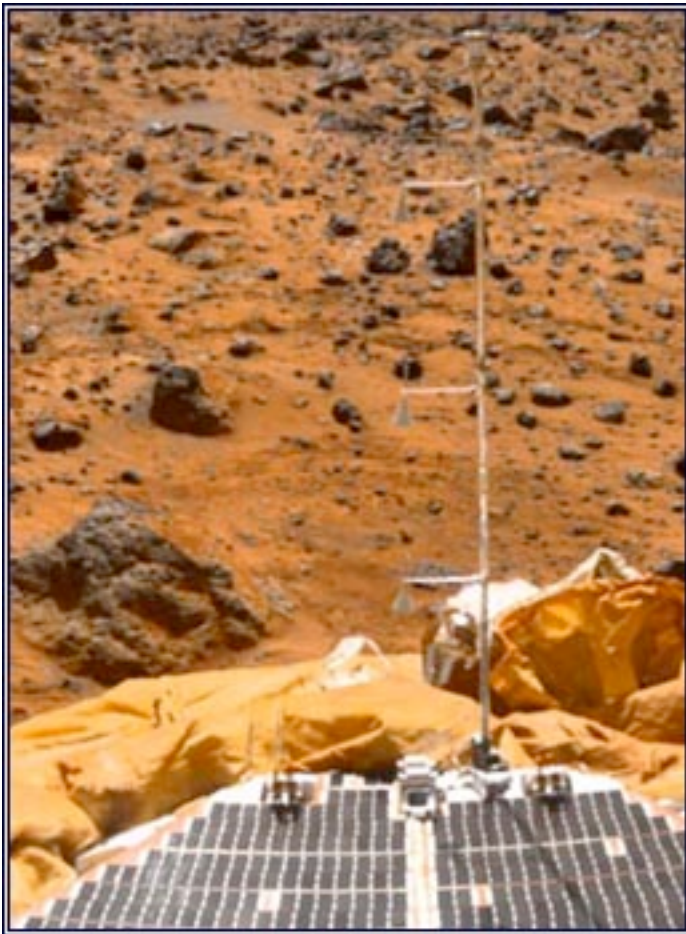


THE WHITE HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Classroom: Grades 9-12

President as Visionary: "Others Ask Why Not?"

Activity - Quick, Quick! Yea or Nay: Will Man Live on Mars?



The surface of Mars – NASA

In 1989, in a speech marking the twentieth anniversary of the first walk on the moon, President George Bush committed Americans to return to the moon, send explorers to Mars, and begin the "permanent settlement of space." The cost of such a mission could be as much as \$500 billion over a period of thirty years. Bush said, "Our goal is nothing less than to establish the United States as the preeminent spacefaring nation." 10

After reading the paragraph above, write a one-page reaction paper, keeping in mind that yours will be a quick, almost "gut-level" response. You do not have to weigh your answers quite as much as you would in a more formal writing assignment. So what do you think it would mean to begin "permanent settlement of space" in the

next thirty years? Do you think this could happen? Why or why not? After you finish your paper, exchange your response with four or five others. Did they agree with you? Did they make some arguments that you didn't think of? Do you want to revise your position? Yea or nay?

A follow-up

Find one article from a newspaper, magazine, or Internet source that supports your point of view. Post the article in class, and say, "See!" – good-naturedly, of course! Add more articles to strengthen your position as you find them.