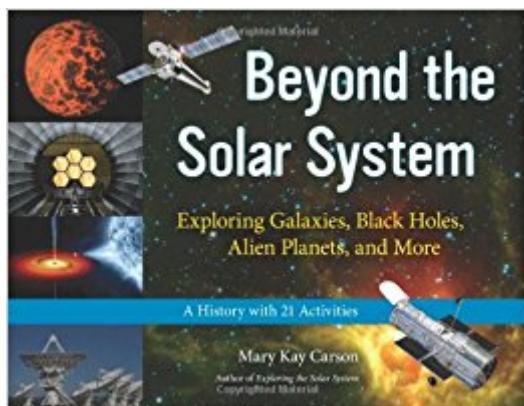


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# Beyond The Solar System: Exploring Galaxies, Black Holes, Alien Planets, And More; A History With 21 Activities (For Kids Series)



## Synopsis

Winner of: NSTA-CBC Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12 for 2014 list Humans have gazed into the night sky for thousands of years and wondered, What are those twinkling lights? Though the sun, moon, and planets moved across the background of stars, the stars themselves appeared immovable, forever fixed in constellations. Only when astronomers began taking a closer look did anyone realize what a fascinating, ever-changing universe lies beyond our solar system—red giant and white dwarf stars, spiral galaxies, wispy nebulae, black holes, and much more. In *Beyond the Solar System*, author Mary Kay Carson traces the evolution of humankind's astronomical knowledge, from the realization that we are not at the center of the universe to recent telescopic proof of planets orbiting stars outside our solar system. In addition to its engaging history, this book contains 21 hands-on projects to further explore the subjects discussed. Readers will build a three-dimensional representation of the constellation Orion, model the warping of space-time caused by a black hole, see how the universe expands using an inflating balloon, and construct a reflecting telescope out of a makeup mirror and a magnifying glass. *Beyond the Solar System* also includes minibiographies of famous astronomers, a time line of major scientific discoveries, a suggested reading list, a glossary of technical terms, and a list of websites for further exploration.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 980L (What's this?)

Series: For Kids series

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Chicago Review Press (June 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1613745443

ISBN-13: 978-1613745441

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 11 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (10 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #130,862 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Science & Math > Astronomy & Space Science > Solar System #87 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Astronomy & Space > Astronomy #2244 in Books > Children's Books > Science, Nature & How It Works

Age Range: 9 - 13 years

Grade Level: 4 and up

## Customer Reviews

The author, Mary Kay Carson, has a number of successful books in her "For Kids" series. One very engaging volume is *The Wright Brothers for Kids: How They Invented the Airplane, 21 Activities Exploring the Science and History of Flight* (For Kids series). Another, which has some content in common with this new volume, is *Exploring the Solar System: A History with 22 Activities* (For Kids series). Both of those books are described as aimed at 9 year olds, or fourth graders. While the content can be challenging, that seems about right, especially given the subjects, (airplanes, planets), and the types of activities proposed, (build a kite or glider, map out planet orbits)."Beyond the Solar System" seems to me to be on a slightly different plane. We start with prehistoric views of the cosmos, move through the early Greeks, and then bring astronomy all the way up to the present with discussions of dark matter, dark energy, mapping of cosmic background microwave radiation, and the like. This is a huge undertaking, and in the effort to provide both breadth and depth the book vacillates between being overly simplified in some parts and fairly technical elsewhere. (For example, the second activity consists of using paper plates to construct a demonstration of Ptolemy's system of epicycles within deferents, which Ptolemy used to explain why the Earth was the center of the universe. This established the basis for Ptolemy's incorrect explanation for why Mars moves in retrograde. I could be wrong, but that seems a little beyond what most 9 year olds would want to make.) In that same impulse of inclusiveness, there is so much historical background that we are actually more than one-third of the way through the book before we even get to the 1900's. This is fine by me.

Space has been a BIG theme in our house lately. My daughter Magda is three-and-a-half, which I think is also known as "the astronaut age," meaning that she really wants to be an astronaut. Plus all of those fantastic videos by Chris Hadfield have been making it an exciting time to be a young Canadian space fan. We even had a "Space Day" recently, which involved decorating the hallway with lots of silver and black wrapping paper, stars, astronaut posters and "star maps" made out of black bristol board and white paint, then dumping two tonnes of bubble wrap on the floor for a "moon walk." It was awesome. In preparation for Space Day, Magda and I went to the library to look for books about space, preferably ones that had lots of pictures, plenty of information that was both scientific and practical, and ideas for followup activities we could do at home. Most of the books we

found met one or two of those criteria, but not all. Then I remembered that the book I was looking for was already on my computer! It was the digital galley of Beyond the Solar System that I got from NetGalley. Huzzah! This book truly is fantastic. It checks all the boxes. It explains a lot about space, plus gives a history of space exploration that goes all the way back to ancient stargazers, plus it has activities that range from simple crafts to some pretty cool science experiments. It's a book that spans a lot of age ranges, though it's probably best suited for kids ages 8-14. My only complaint is that I only have the digital galley. I can't wait until this book is released because I really need to pick up a print copy so Magda and I can flip through it again and again. Also, visit my blog for a video of Chris Hadfield wringing out a wet cloth in space!

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