



TOPIC: NORTHERN LIGHTS

PROJECT PERSONNEL: DR. PÅL BREKKE

GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT:

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS IS CAUSED BY LARGE ERUPTIONS ON THE SUN THAT SHAKES UP THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD. THIS CAUSES PARTICLES TO BE CHanneled DOWN INTO THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE WHERE THEY COLLIDE WITH ATOMS AND MAKE THEM GLOW.

TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW (VOCABULARY):

AURORA BOREALIS - NORTHERN LIGHTS

CORONAL MASS EJECTIONS - GAS ERUPTION ON THE SUN

SOLAR WIND - STREAM OF PARTICLES FROM THE SUN

MAGNETOSPHERE - AN INVISIBLE MAGNETIC SHIELD AROUND THE EARTH PROTECTING US FROM THE SOLAR WIND AND SOLAR STORMS

WHY ARE WE STUDYING THIS IN THE POLAR REGIONS?

THE AURORA IS MOSTLY SEEN IN THE POLAR REGIONS. ONLY DURING VERY STRONG SOLAR STORMS ARE THEY "PUSHED" FURTHER SOUTH AND CAN BE SEEN IN NEW YORK

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT US HERE IN THE UNITED STATES?

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS NEVER HURT ANYBODY HERE AT EARTH. HOWEVER SOLAR STORMS MAY DISRUPT THE ELECTRIC POWER GRIDS, DISABLE SATELLITES WE DEPEND ON, DISRUPT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS AND NAVIGATION SYSTEMS. SOLAR STORMS CAN ALSO BE DANGEROUS FOR HUMANS IN SPACE.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS TOPIC:

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ACTIVITY YOU CAN TRY: