



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between "Education" and "Public Outreach"?

There are no rigorous definitions to differentiate between the two... Simplistically, "education" refers to efforts involving the formal education system and "outreach" to efforts intended to excite wider public interest. There are decided overlaps.

"Education" refers to products or sustained services associated with formal classroom learning such as curriculum development, professional development of teachers, or support for systemic reform efforts. Good science education products and services are characterized by accurate science, practicality of use in the classroom, and sound pedagogy, including awareness of common misconceptions and of what is developmentally appropriate at various ages. Exemplary education products and services are field tested and evaluated before broader dissemination.

"Public Outreach" may be thought of as referring to products or services that involve one-time or short-duration contact with the public -- contact that informs, excites interest, and arouses curiosity. Public Outreach sometimes has an element of entertainment, and it often involves ways of reaching out where the public is tuned in to hear or see. Public Outreach products and services include such things as science articles in the media and popular magazines, educational TV shows, radio programs, and Internet events. In many cases, a person need not move from their home to access or benefit from the outreach event.

Adapted from the *Explanatory Guide to the NASA Office of Space Science Education & Public Outreach Evaluation Criteria*,
http://ssibroker.colorado.edu/broker/eval_criteria/Guide/.