



Design the face of South Africa in space

Hello teachers, this is SANSA!

The South African National Space Agency (SANSA) has launched a nationwide competition inviting learners in Grades 8-11 to design a mascot that represents South Africa's place in space. This toolkit has been put together to help you introduce the competition to your class, build excitement, and guide your learners through the entry process – with as little extra admin as possible.

In this toolkit, you'll find:

- An overview of the competition
- Reasons it's worth your class's time
- Guidelines on how to enter
- Simple classroom activities to spark ideas
- Print-ready poster for your classroom
- Messages for parents and guardians

Wait... South Africa is in space?!

Yebo! Since the 1970s, South African engineers and scientists have built satellites and tracked all sorts of spacecraft and space phenomena.

Now SANSA needs a mascot to represent that legacy – and it could be your learner's design!

To learn more, visit:
www.sansa.org.za



Overview of the Competition:

Task	Design an original mascot celebrating South Africa's place in space.
Eligibility	Any learner in Grade 8, 9, 10 or 11 at a registered public or independent school in South Africa.
Application	Submit a design (JPEG, PNG or PDF, max. 5MB) plus a written explanation (max. 200 words) via the online portal: mascot.sansa.org.za
Cost	Free to enter.
Closing Date	Midnight on Monday, 14 September 2026
Prizes	Cash prizes for the Top 3 learners, merchandise hampers, and a share of R100k in educational vouchers for schools.
Consent	Learners under 18 need a parent or guardian to sign the online consent form available on the submissions portal.

Why get your class involved?

This competition is a simple way to bring space science, engineering, creativity and national pride into your classroom. Here are a few reasons it's worth making time for:



No design experience needed – creativity is all that matters!



It naturally connects to **Natural Sciences, Creative Arts, EMS and Social Sciences.**



The winning design becomes **SANSA's official mascot**, with the creator credited for life.



The **Best Participating School** wins a SANSA Science Outreach visit, so every entry helps!

What our judges are looking for:

- **100% original** – not copied or adapted from an existing character or brand; not AI-generated.
- **Represents South Africa** through language, landscape, wildlife, culture, etc.
- Has a clear **connection to space**, even if the design isn't realistic.
- **Appropriate for all ages.**

Good to know:

- Learners keep credit for their design, but if they win, they'll be asked to **formally transfer ownership** of the design to SANSA so it can be developed into the official mascot.
- **Personal information** collected for the competition is protected under South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and won't be shared without consent.
- SANSA's judging panel **decisions are final.**
- **Direct any questions you can't answer** to us directly via: mascot@sansa.org.za or www.sansa.org.za.

How to enter:

1

Come up with a character – whether they're based on a person, animal, robot, alien, or something nobody has ever seen before.

2

Draw your idea either by hand or using a computer. There are no limits on style!

3

Upload your design, along with a short explanation of their idea, through SANSA's official entry portal: mascot.sansa.org.za

4

We review every entry and select the stand-out designs.

5

Watch your idea come to life as the winning design is professionally developed into SANSA's official mascot.

What does the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) do?

SANSA is South Africa's national space agency, operating within the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI). Its role is to use space science and technology to support economic development, improve people's lives, and strengthen the country's scientific and technological capabilities.

While SANSA does not launch rockets or send astronauts into space, it plays an important role in the global space sector. The agency helps design and operate satellites, tracks spacecraft on international missions into the cosmos, monitors space weather, and provides satellite images to organisations across the country.

While based in Pretoria at the CSIR, SANSA has facilities across South Africa: At Hartebeesthoek, SANSA operates a satellite tracking and data facility that supports missions from around the world. In Hermanus, the Agency runs its space weather centre, which monitors the Sun's activity and its effects on Earth's magnetic field. SANSA is also building a deep space communications station at Matjiesfontein, which forms part of an international network that communicates with spacecraft exploring the Solar System.

To learn more about SANSA, visit:
www.sansa.org.za.

Ideas for the classroom

Learners don't need a full lesson to get started. Here are a few quick and adaptable options:



Spark Curiosity (~10 minutes)

Open with a short **class discussion** or **video** on space. Ask your students what they know of space, and of South Africa's role in it. **Top Tip:** Kurzgesagt has a great [YouTube playlist](#) of age-appropriate animated videos on all sorts of space-related topics!



Brainstorm (~20 minutes)

Using the whiteboard, classroom computer or a sheet of paper, create an **ideas board** by asking learners for their thoughts on the following questions:

- (a) What would make for a good mascot name?
- (b) Is it a person, animal, robot, alien or something new?
- (c) What South African elements could I include (culture, landscape, wildlife, etc.)?
- (d) How does it connect to space?
- (e) What personality or values does it represent?



Design Time (~30 minutes)

If there's still time, hand out blank sheets of paper and encourage learners to **start sketching**. After all, there's no time like the present!

Message for parents and guardians (Email)

Subject: Help Your Child Design South Africa's Space Mascot 🚀

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The South African National Space Agency (SANSA) has launched a nationwide competition, inviting learners in Grades 8-11 to design an official mascot representing South Africa in space.

No design experience is needed – just imagination! Winning entries can earn cash prizes, merchandise hampers, and a certificate signed by the SANSA CEO. The winning design will become SANSA's official mascot, with the learner credited as its creator.

We'll be supporting learners in class to develop their ideas. If your child is under 18 and would like to enter, they will need your permission via a short consent form on SANSA's online entry portal when they submit.

Entries close at midnight on Monday, 14 September 2026. For more information, visit www.sansa.org.za and enter at mascot.sansa.org.za.

Warm regards,
[Your name / school name]

Message for parents and guardians (WhatsApp)

🚀 * **SANSA Mascot Design Challenge** *

Good day parents,

The South African National Space Agency (SANSA) is running a competition for Grades 8-11s to design South Africa's official space mascot. No art experience needed, with awesome prizes up for grabs.

We're supporting learners in class – but if your child enters, they'll need your online consent as they're under 18. Closing date is midnight on Monday, 14 Sep 2026.

For more information, go to: www.sansa.org.za or enter at mascot.sansa.org.za.

Warm regards,
[Your name / school name]

Printable Classroom Poster

Print this page and display it on your classroom wall or school notice board.

CALLING ALL LEARNERS IN GRADES 8 TO 11!

DESIGN THE FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA IN SPACE

- > **Create an original character** to represent South Africa's national space programme.
- > **Cash, merch and commendations** for the winning learners and runners up.
- > **R100,000 in educational vouchers** for the winning schools!



Visit **mascot.sansa.org.za** for more information.

 science, technology & innovation
Department: Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

 **15** YEARS **SANSa**
South African National Space Agency
IN THE PURSUIT OF SPACE SOVEREIGNTY

Download the poster here: <https://bit.ly/4fUwPvx>