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Activities

KABOOM!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Thunder gets our attention … so does a jet breaking the sound barrier. You'll find out all about sonic booms in this Planet Diary activity.

Directions

- Start with a look at Sonic Boom Basics from NOVA Online. Answer the onscreen question, then continue to find out how shock waves pile up when a plane breaks the sound barier. Answer questions 1 and 2 in the Workspace.
- Try the Sonic Boom Challenge from NOVA Online. Which of the situations cause sonic booms? Click to explore each of the situations, then answer questions 3 through 5.
- Check out this sonic boom animation. Read the caption, then answer the last question.

Workspace

1. Explain what happens when a plane breaks the sound barrier.

2. What happens inside the ear when there's a sonic boom?

3. How does a cracking bullwhip create a sonic boom?

4. How does lightning create a sonic boom?

5. Why are there two sonic booms when the space shuttle reenters the atmosphere?

6. What is a *Mach cone*?

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