

## Celebrating the Magic of *The Magic School Bus*®

For 20 years now, Ms. Frizzle and her student passengers have explored the wily world of science on The Magic School Bus®, and kids have come along on their adventures by purchasing more than 58 million copies of authors Joanna Cole's and Bruce Degen's 131 beloved titles. In 1994, the Magic School bus crew made their debut in an animated TV series produced by Scholastic Media with support from the National Science Foundation. Starring Lily Tomlin as the voice of Ms. Frizzle, the series has received multiple awards, including a Daytime Emmy. Warner Home Video's seven Magic School Bus DVDs have sold more than five million units.

And, as it prepares to celebrate the series' 20th anniversary, Scholastic will release The Magic School Bus and the Science Fair Expedition, the 11th picture book in the series and the first in seven years. In order to incorporate breaking science news into their backlist titles, Cole and Degen, with the help of experts in specific fields, update the content and look of each Magic School Bus picture book every few years. The author reports that even after 20 years, she and Degen have no trouble coming up with new science ideas for their books. "There are so many ideas, and so little time to write them all," she says. "We try to choose subjects that fascinate us and that we hope will fascinate readers."

One of the biggest challenges in making learning exciting for young readers, Cole says, is simplifying complex material. "We have to make it simple enough for kids to understand, but not so simple that the meaning goes out of it." From Degen's perspective, key challenges are "keeping a good sense of humor, sifting through tons of information and keeping focus on the basic questions of the subject." Based on the positive response of parents, teachers and kids, the series' creators are meeting these challenges quite impressively indeed.

Find teaching guides, classroom activities and an interactive tour with games, quizzes, and a make your own scrapbook featuring Animals, Space, Human Body and more created especially for the Magic School Bus at:

<http://www.scholastic.com/magicschoolbus/parentteacher/>