

English Language Worksheet

How to Become an Astronaut

1. Mariah took a deep, calming breath and tried to focus on the woman addressing the seniors at the Space Sciences Academy. This was the day all students looked forward to with eagerness and worry—the day of the Qualifying Exam. The woman, Commander Freeman of the American Space Agency, was preparing them for what lay ahead.
2. "As you know," Commander Freeman said, "the Qualifying Exam will determine your future in space exploration. A committee of your teachers and other space professionals will evaluate your performance. The committee will decide which students will go on to train as astronauts, mission control specialists, and mechanics."
3. She reminded students that without mechanics, shuttles would not fly. Without mission control specialists, space stations could not communicate with Earth. Each job is vital to the space agency because all the specialists are needed to run the space program. Mariah knew this well. Still, she treasured the thought of being chosen for astronaut training. Glancing over at her friend Vina, she could see that the same thoughts were on her mind. Then the Commander began to explain the details of this year's exam.
4. "As you all know, the air filtration system prevents dangerous gases from mixing with the air in space stations. This is central to the welfare of the astronauts aboard the stations. Without air filtration, the astronauts' health will suffer. So for today's Qualifying Exam, you will construct an air filtration unit. Use mechanical parts you find in this room, and install your unit in our mock space station."
5. "Oh no," Mariah groaned to Vina. "I can't do this! The air filters have to be built right, or else they won't work. I'll never qualify for astronaut training!" Vina, however, did not seem to share Mariah's anguish. In fact, she had a big, sunny smile on her face.
6. "No, Mariah, this is perfect! I know what you're worried about. You're not good at putting together tiny, delicate parts, and air filters are full of really small pieces. But remember, I have a hard time lifting big, bulky things, and these filters are really hard to pick up. So instead of doing this separately, we'll do it together. They always taught us to work together on difficult tasks."
7. "You're right! Let's build our filters together," Mariah replied. After a few minutes of planning, Mariah and Vina got to work.
8. First, they found all the necessary parts for making two air filtration units. Then Vina carefully assembled all the tiny, breakable parts. Next, both students inspected their

units to make sure they had been put together correctly. Last, Mariah and Vina carried the units into the mock space station. There, Mariah hefted the first unit into place while Vina connected it to the power supply. The second unit was quickly installed, and the two friends carefully inspected their work. Perfect! It felt good to know they had done well.

9. Three days later, Mariah and Vina were called to appear together before Commander Freeman and the grading committee.
10. "Congratulations!" she said. "You have both been chosen to train as astronauts. Your plan to work together was a shrewd one. It showed that you are both capable of thinking ahead and planning."
11. Mariah felt proud as the Commander continued.
12. "Astronauts are not solitary workers. On the space station, you are part of a team, and members must cooperate, just as you did on the exam. It was your teamwork that enabled you to do such a good job." The commander reached out to shake their hands. "Congratulations, astronauts of the future!"

I. Reading Comprehension:

A. Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. How did the two girls work to achieve their goal? Explain.
2. What is the author's **purpose** from writing the passage? Justify your answer.
3. Pick from paragraph 5 a **figure of speech**, identify its type then explain it.
4. Draw a **character sketch** of Mariah. Give at least two character traits to each and justify your answer.
5. What kind of **conflict** did Mariah face? Explain.

6. What would you do if you were in Mariah's place? Would you work with Vina? Why or why not?

B. The following sentences misinterpret information from the text. Rewrite them correctly.

1. The Qualifying Exam will determine the students who will be trained as scientists.
2. Vina didn't want to be chosen for astronaut training.
3. Vina wasn't good at putting together tiny delicate parts together.
4. Vina and Mariah were chosen to train as astronauts.

C. Put the following events in the correct order.

- ___ Mariah and Vina were asked to build air filters.
- ___ The two friends cooperated and were chosen to train as astronauts.
- ___ Vina suggested to work with Mariah as a team.
- ___ Commander Freeman told the girls that they must pass Qualify Exam to train as astronauts.

D. Use context clues to find text words that have the same meaning as:

1. The state of being happy, healthy, or successful (paragraph 4,5)
2. Extreme suffering; anxiety (paragraph 5,6)
3. Smart; marked by clever awareness (paragraph 9,10)
4. Done by a person who is alone (paragraph 11,12)