Reading Comprehension and writing

Elon Musk's SpaceX capsule lifts off

A. Drag the word to the right definition

To lift off **a dummy** **being in orbit** **a crew**

A thruster **a capsule** **to splash down**

A large model of human

A small rocket engine on a spacecraft, used to make changes in its flight path

A group of people who work together on a spacecraft

The part of the spacecraft in which the people on it live

To land in the sea

To leave the ground

Travelling around a planet

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Now read the following article:

Elon Musk's SpaceX capsule lifts off

Monday, March 4th 2019

Elon Musk's SpaceX company has launched a capsule designed to carry people from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

There is no crew on this flight, but if it goes well, the American space agency NASA is likely to approve the system to take regular astronauts into space later this year. According to Musk, this could be the first step towards making space travel possible for commercial customers.

The US has not been able to put humans into space since it stopped producing space shuttles in 2011. In the past, NASA engineers fully designed, owned and operated the vehicles. However, since 2011, it has been paying to use Russian Soyuz vehicles instead and it is now paying Musk's company to produce spacecraft to take people to the International Space Station (ISS).

NASA officials still check every step, but the approach is regarded as more efficient and less costly. The agency's head, Jim Bridenstine, stressed on Saturday that using American transport again did not mean an end to cooperation with Russia.

"We want to make sure that we keep our partnership with Russia which has been very strong for a long period of time," he said.

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"But we also want to make sure we have our own capability to travel to the International Space Station, so that we can have this strong partnership where they can launch on our rockets and we can launch on their rockets."

SpaceX's Dragon capsule lifted off on Saturday 02 March at 02:49 EST (07:49 GMT). It took 11 minutes to reach orbit, and it arrived at the ISS on Sunday.

Because this is just a demonstration, there are no astronauts aboard but there is a "test dummy" dressed in a spacesuit and with special sensors.

These sensors are designed to collect useful data for human transport. The SpaceX dummy is called "Ripley" named after the main character in the Alien movies.

For the California company, this mission is a key moment in its short history. Mr Musk, a technology entrepreneur and engineer, set up the organisation in order to take people into space.

"It's been 17 years to get to this point, from 2002 to now. To be frank, I'm a little emotionally exhausted because it was super stressful," he told reporters immediately after the launch.

"Our focus has been on serving NASA's needs but once Dragon is in regular operation, I think we will look for commercial customers."

Mr Musk said those customers could include private citizens going to the ISS. Separately, the entrepreneur is developing a much bigger system which he calls the Starship and Super Heavy rocket to transport people to the Moon and Mars.

The Dragon crew capsule includes life-support systems and powerful thrusters to push it to safety if something goes wrong. It also has four parachutes to control the return to Earth. Dragon crew capsules will land in the Atlantic not far from Kennedy.

After reaching orbit, the Dragon makes its own way to the station using its thrusters. ISS astronauts will be watching closely to see that the capsule behaves as it should.

The Dragon is expected to stay at the station until Friday. According to the current plan, it will leave the ISS and and splash down at around 13:45 GMT.

Adapted from https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-47414390

B. Tick the right box

1. When was the last time America's space agency (NASA) sent humans into space?a) 2015 b) 2011 c) 2004
2. Which country has been providing space transport to NASA since it stopped producing shuttles?
   a) Russia b) China c) the United Kingdom
3. How long did the capsule take to reach orbit?
   a) 11 minutes b) 33 minutes c) 54 minutes
4. How long has Elon Musk worked on this project?
   a) 5 years b) 9 years c) 17 years
5. When is the capsule due to land on the sea?
   a) Friday 8 March b) Friday 22 March c) Sunday 31 March

C. Find words in the text which mean

a) Vehicles used for transporting people in space (plural noun, paragraph 3)

b) Clothes worn by a person who travels in space (noun, paragraph 8)

c) Honest (adjective, paragraph 10)

d) Someone who start their own business (noun, paragraph 12)

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