

Reading and Use of English Part 6

1 You are going to read a newspaper article about a future expedition to the planet Mars. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A–G the one which fits each gap (1–6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

- A They are looking for applicants who are healthy, smart enough to learn new skills and able to function in a small group.
- B The viewing figures and income they brought in were also influential.
- C One would have to agree with their reaction, given that the privately-financed plan does not involve a return journey.
- D Applications had been expected to be around the one million mark, however.
- E The pioneers will also face lethal hazards such as high doses of cosmic radiation and potentially toxic Martian dust.
- F This is the number of people who have so far offered to join an ambitious private mission to send a group of four men and women to Mars in 2023.
- G And the final total could rise even higher before the deadline for applications is reached.



Mars. [3] The quality of the applicants is very high, according to Bas Lansdorp, the Dutch entrepreneur who dreamed up the scheme last year.

Lansdorp's plan is to create a media event which is 'exciting, inspiring and beautiful', just like the Olympic Games, which gave him his idea. [4] The estimated £4bn cost of the Mars mission will be met by television rights and other kinds of media sponsorship, and although Big Brother creator, Paul Romer, is one of those sitting on the Mars One board, the event will not be a TV reality show.

A selection committee will begin to sort the applicants in the coming weeks, and shortlists will be drawn up in the coming year. [5] Nearly a quarter of the applicants live in the United States. The space nations of China, Brazil, India and Russia come next on the list of the 140 countries where the applicants live. Britain comes in 6th place with about 7,000. The plan is to build teams of four people, each from a different continent, who will live and train together for seven years before the first manned launch in 2022, arriving the following year.

Rockets carrying cargo, food and living modules will be sent to Mars a few years in advance of the manned landing. A further crew of four people will arrive two years after the first astronauts have landed. Lansdorp insisted that the mission was viable, even though drinking water will have to be collected from the Martian soil by robotic explorers before the astronauts are able to land. [6]

But perhaps the biggest obstacle of all will be the psychological anxiety of knowing there is no return journey no matter what happens. 'They will only step into the rocket if they really want to go. The risk is theirs and they can't change their mind once they are on the way,' Mr Lansdorp said.

A one-way ticket to another planet where there is no air, no water or food – and certainly no return home – may not sound like a lot of fun. However, to the 165,000 applicants, the opportunity to live permanently on Mars has been too tempting to ignore. [1] They will be the first intrepid pioneers for a permanent space colony on the Red Planet.

The organizers of the Mars One mission said they were surprised by how many people had offered to become the first astronauts to land and live on Mars. [2] This is not because it would be impossible, but because of the technical difficulty and cost of fuelling the trip home.

Each applicant has had to pay on average \$25, depending on their country, to cover the administrative fees of the selection process. Nevertheless, even this small financial penalty has failed to dissuade the tens of thousands who dream of going to