ABOUT YOU

Answer the questions and compare your ideas.

1 Which do you think would be more interesting – to travel into space, to the bottom of the sea or to the centre of the earth?

2 In your opinion, what makes people want to make dangerous journeys to strange, unknown places?

3 Why do you think many governments spend a lot of money on exploring space and under the sea?

The story is a kind of science fiction story. It imagines technology that makes it possible to do things that are, or were, impossible. It is set in the Mojave Desert, the driest desert in North America, which is located in the southwestern United States.

1 Read the text. As you read, think about this question.
Which emotions are the characters feeling?

Four Miles Within (2010)

Anthony Gilmore

A strange **spherical** monster stood in the moonlight on the silent Mojave Desert. In the ghostly grey of the sand its metal surface **glimmered** slightly —an amazing object to be found on that lonely spot. But there was only pride and anticipation in the eyes of the three people who stood a little way off, looking at it. For they had constructed the strange sphere, and they were soon going to trust their lives to it.

"Professor," said one of them, a young man with a cheerful face, "let's go down now! There's no use waiting till tomorrow. It's always dark down there, whether it's day or night up here. Everything is ready."

The white-haired Professor David Guinness smiled **tolerantly** at the speaker, his partner, Phil Holmes. "I'm kind of eager to **be off**, myself," he admitted. He turned to the third person in the little group, a dark-haired girl. "What do you say, Sue?"

"Oh, let's, Father!" came the quick reply. "We'd never be able to sleep tonight, anyway. As Phil says, everything is ready."

"Well, I guess that **settles** it," Professor Guinness said to the eager young man.

"Good!" Phil cried. "Good! I'll just go and get some more water from the truck."



The heavy silence of the desert night **settled down** once more after he left. As his figure became part of the shadows in the distance, the elderly scientist **murmured** aloud to his daughter,

"You know, it's good to realize that my dream is about to become a reality. If it hadn't been for Phil … Or no—I really ought to thank you, Sue. You're the one responsible for his participation!" And he smiled **fondly** at the slim girl by his side.

"Phil joined us just for the scientific interest, and for the excitement of going four miles down into the earth," she answered at once, in spite of the blush her father saw on her face.

Suddenly, they heard the distant sound of a gun being fired. And it came from the direction of the truck.

GLOSSARY

spherical	round, like a ball
glimmered	to shine with a weak light or a light that is not continuous
tolerantly	willing to accept behaviour and beliefs that are different from your own
be off	to leave or begin a journey
settles	to reach a decision or an agreement about something
settle down	to become quieter
murmured	to speak or say something very quietly
fondly	in a way that shows love or great liking

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 **Read the text again and answer the questions.**

1 Where are they planning to go in the *strange sphere*?

.....

.....

2 What could be the explanation for the sound of a gun?

.....

.....

3 How important are Sue and Phil to making the Professor's dream 'a reality'?

.....

.....

4 What do you think is going to happen next?

.....

.....

VOCABULARY

3 **Replace the words in italics in the sentences with a word or expression from the glossary, changing the form of the word if necessary.**

1 She *told me* the answer, but *very quietly* so that nobody could hear her.

2 After everybody left the party things *became* quiet and *calm* again.

3 Flights to Paris are very cheap this week – so *that's decided* – we're going there!

4 I'll just tidy up my desk and then we *can leave*!

4 **Complete the text with words from the glossary.**

The astronauts looked up at the [1] ..... shape of their home planet in the sky. It [2] ..... in the night sky, like a candle, far, far away. The captain watched his crew [3] ....., he understood how they felt, such a long way from home. They stared [4] ..... at the place they called home. "We might never go back", he [5] ..... to himself, and he felt a deep sense of sadness.

WRITING

5 **Work in a small group. With your group, discuss ideas about what happens after they hear the gun being fired. Write another 10-12 lines of dialogue based on your ideas. You can introduce new characters if you want to.**

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SPEAKING

6 **You are going to perform the script you wrote in Activity 5. Decide who is going to play the parts of the characters. Practise your script in preparation for performing it to the rest of the class.**

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LIVEWORKSHEETS