



Reading

Gex. B2-1ED-U3

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The trip of a lifetime?

Are you getting fed up with your normal, everyday life and looking for a challenge? Perhaps you fancy living somewhere different with a complete change of lifestyle? This is exactly how 200,000 other people felt when they applied to take part in a unique competition. The prize? A one-way trip to the planet Mars!

Mars has been in the scientific news a lot in recent years after the landing of the robot 'Rover' which is travelling round the surface of the planet sending pictures back for analysis here on Earth. The idea of putting humans on the planet no longer seems so unrealistic. However, few people expected the first manned space mission to Mars to be related to a TV reality show!

The idea, currently called *Mars One*, will cost around four billion pounds and it will take ten years to send the first astronauts to the red planet. One of the brains behind the project is Paul Romer, co-creator of one of the most popular reality TV shows ever broadcast: *Big Brother*. He views the project as a combination of reality TV and talent show. However, this particular show will have no ending and the viewers will be the entire population of Earth.

So just what does the project involve? People from more than 140 countries have applied to become the first astronauts to travel through space to Mars. They will go through a long and careful selection process after which just twenty-four individuals will be chosen. The successful applicants will go through a very long period of training before the first group of four astronauts is sent to Mars. Once there – after a journey of seven or eight months – they will set up a colony where they will live and work. Every two years another team of four astronauts will join them and the colony will grow and strengthen.

The media will be involved at various stages. Initially, parts of the selection process will be broadcast as a type of global talent show. Applicants will have to demonstrate different skills needed for the challenge, including how good **they** are at adapting to new situations, working in a team, finding creative solutions and so on. When the astronauts finally travel to Mars, their lives will be filmed and broadcast 24/7/365 – a never-ending TV reality show, or perhaps a non-stop soap opera?

Unfortunately, the current plans do not provide for a return trip as spacecraft capable of making the journey back to Earth are not available yet. So perhaps the expression 'the trip of a lifetime' should be rephrased as 'the trip *for* a lifetime'!

Read the text and choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

- 1 Current scientific research related to Mars involves
 - A filming different robots on the planet's surface.
 - B studying geological pictures sent from the planet.
 - C preparing astronauts to land on the planet.
 - D planning a TV series about the planet.
- 2 How will the Mars reality show be different from ones we watch now?
 - A Fewer people will watch it.
 - B It will be made by scientists.
 - C There won't be a time limit for the programme.
 - D It will feature very intelligent contestants.
- 3 What will be part of the process for the successful candidates?
 - A They will be chosen within seven to eight months.
 - B They will be well-prepared for their trip to Mars.
 - C They will leave the colony on Mars every two years.
 - D They will live in a colony that has been constructed before their arrival.
- 4 What does *they* refer to in paragraph 5, line 23?
 - A the skills
 - B the challenges
 - C the situations
 - D the applicants
- 5 Why will the astronauts not be returning to Earth?
 - A The astronauts will not want to come back to Earth.
 - B The reality TV producers won't let them return.
 - C There are no spaceships to bring them back home.
 - D The astronauts want to spend their whole lives there.