

Exercise 10

Read the final part of the passage. Complete the notes. Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Overall, the Skylab mission proved a success, though it was not without its setbacks. Just 63 seconds after lift-off, a micrometeoroid shield worked loose and became separated due to atmospheric drag, which compromised the space station's usability and effectively cut off the majority of its electrical power. The first crew members were due to occupy the space station the following day, but their launch was delayed by ten days to allow for changes to be planned and put in place. The damage to the shield caused Skylab's internal temperature to rise to a dangerously high 52 degrees, but a three-and-a-half-hour spacewalk and the adept use of a pair of wire cutters attached to an eight-metre-long pole allowed the crew to cut a metal strap and bring the temperature back down to acceptable levels, rendering the space station habitable. This was the first time that a repair of this magnitude had been carried out in space.

Much attention was paid by NASA to ensuring that Skylab would be comfortably habitable for the astronauts. Whereas previous missions had been brief and undertaken in spacecraft with small volumes, Skylab was to be lived in for months at a time. With this in mind, NASA sent a scientist to the *Ben Franklin* submarine in the Gulf Stream in July–August 1969 to learn how a team of six people could live in an enclosed space for a four-week period. Skylab offered what a subsequent study would call 'a highly satisfactory living and working environment for the crews'. Sitting by its large window with a view of the Earth became the most popular way for the crew to relax in orbit.

Skylab orbited the Earth from 1973 until 1979. However, its decaying orbit meant that it would inevitably crash back down to Earth. Controllers in Florida endeavoured to minimise the risk of any debris from the space station landing in populated areas. NASA's target was a spot 810 miles off the coast of South Africa in the Indian Ocean. Many people reported seeing brightly coloured flares in the sky on 11 July 1979 as large pieces of the space station broke up in the Earth's atmosphere. Skylab did not in fact burn up as NASA had anticipated, and pieces of debris reached the Earth in Australia, but without any major mishaps.

- An accident during take-off meant that the space station had hardly any _____.
- Astronauts performed repairs to correct the _____ inside the space station.
- The living conditions in a _____ were studied to inform the design of a space station that would be easy to live in.
- NASA had intended the spaceship to fall into the sea near _____.