



Unit 6: Space Travel Reading Comprehension Practice

Read the following text and answer the questions below with the information given.

Mankind has always had an amazing thirst for knowledge. The desire to see what is up in the heavens has been in the minds of men for a long time. In October 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration was created by the United States Government. It was described as 'an Act to provide for research into the problems of flight within and outside the Earth's atmosphere, and for other purposes.'

The formation of NASA was the direct result of the fact that the Russians had launched Sputnik 1 in October 1957. This was the world's first artificial satellite. Americans were astounded and believed that the United States was way behind in space technology. Therefore, the United States launched its first Earth satellite in January 1958.

NASA's first attempt to place humans in space was Project Mercury. This was a trial to see if men could endure a flight into space. On May 5, 1961, Alan Shepard, Jr., became the first man in space. On February 20, 1962, John Glenn orbited the Earth in a space capsule. Project Mercury sent up 4 more flights. They could send up and safely bring humans back from space.

Project Gemini allowed 2 men to ride together in a space capsule. In this project, NASA learned about weightlessness in space and worked on reentry into the Earth's atmosphere. In June 1965, Edward White became the first man to

conduct a space walk outside of the space craft.

NASA's greatest achievement after that was Project Apollo, designed for space exploration of the moon. In July 1969, Apollo 11 carried Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to the moon. They landed and returned safely. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon first.

In 1975, Russia and the United States each sent up a spacecraft. These docked together in space. They conducted experiments on the spacecraft for two days. In 1981, the first space shuttle was launched. It was different in that it looked like an airplane and landed like one upon reentry.

In January 1986, the orbiter Challenger with 7 crew members aboard blew up 73 seconds after takeoff due to a fuel leak. In September 1988, the Challenger returned after modifications and flew 87 successful missions. In February 2003, just 15 minutes before landing in Texas, the Columbia orbiter blew up, again killing 7 crew members.

In 2003, the Galileo mission completed a 14-year study of Jupiter by crashing it onto the planet. In 2005, NASA launched the space shuttle Discovery, the first manned craft since the Columbia disaster.

In recent years, a probe has landed on Mars, and the spacecraft Kepler has been sent to look for planets outside our solar system.



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1) In which of the following years was NASA created?

- ☐ A: 1986
- ☐ B: 2001
- ☐ C: 1905
- ☐ D: 1958

2) Which of the following projects focused on going to the moon?

- ☐ A: Apollo
- ☐ B: Columbia
- ☐ C: Gemini
- ☐ D: Mercury

3) By which of the following countries was the first artificial satellite launched?

- ☐ A: United States
- ☐ B: Russia
- ☐ C: France
- ☐ D: Germany

4) Which of the following is the name of the first artificial satellite?

- ☐ A: Discoverer
- ☐ B: Sputnik 1
- ☐ C: Lunar probe
- ☐ D: Soyuz 2

5) Which of the following was the first man to walk on the moon?

- ☐ A: Ed White
- ☐ B: John Glenn
- ☐ C: Neil Armstrong
- ☐ D: Thomas Jones

6) Which of the following projects had as its goal to put the first human in space?

- ☐ A: Project Gemini
- ☐ B: Project Mercury
- ☐ C: Project Galileo
- ☐ D: Project Columbia