

Space Exploration

Space is an endlessly fascinating subject for many. What exists beyond our planet? What is it like to launch into space and walk on the moon? This text set dives into the history and lasting impact of space exploration.

Essential Questions

1. Why do humans choose to explore space?
2. Who has made contributions to space exploration? How have they done so?
3. How has technology changed over time to aid space exploration?
4. How has space exploration contributed to our knowledge on the topic? Why is that?

Introduction to the Theme

Watch the video [From Apollo 11 to Now](#). After watching the video, ask students to write down the steps NASA and the United States needed to accomplish before they safely put humans on the moon. Have students share their answers with the class. Then engage the class in a discussion of what first inspired U.S. space exploration. What is continuing to inspire space exploration now?

Informational Text

Below are a set of *TIME for Kids* articles that can be used to discuss the theme of space exploration.

1. **“Shooting for the Moon”** (September 13, 2019)
In 1969, the United States put the first man on the moon. Fifty years later, another race to the moon is taking place.
2. **“Moon Mission”** (September 14, 2018) A new NASA space station may soon allow astronauts to explore the moon in new ways.
3. **“Mission Ready”** (December 17, 2017) Astronaut Ricky Arnold gets ready to live and work on the International Space Station.
4. **“Eyes in the Sky”** (December 17, 2017) The James Webb Space telescope is set to look farther into space than ever before.
5. **“Cosmic Critters”** (December 17, 2017) Before astronauts, heroic animals, such as dogs and a chimpanzee, launched into space.
6. **“Suiting Up”** (March 3, 2017) NASA engineers design spacesuits for exploring Mars and beyond.

Literary Text

Below are a set of literary texts that can be used to discuss the theme of space exploration.

1. **Midnight on the Moon**, by Mary Pope Osborne. Jack and Annie are on a mission to the moon to find the last “M” thing that will break a spell.
2. **We’re Not From Here**, by Geoff Rodkey. Earth is no longer inhabitable and humankind has left to explore options in space. One family is charged with making friends with the inhabitants of Planet Choom. The only problem is, the Zhuri are not fans of humans. (see our Educator’s Guide for this book under Teaching Resources at [timeforkids.com](#))
3. **Oh No, Astro!**, by Matt Roeser. Astro the asteroid only has one request: stay out of his personal outer space. Along comes a satellite that knocks him out of orbit and causes chaos.
4. **Out of This World: Poems and Facts about Space**, by Amy Sklansky. A set of poems about space.

Optional Extension

Assign the class to build a time line of space missions. Each student should research a U.S. space mission (past or future). While researching, they should answer the following: Why has the mission been necessary? Did space technology need to improve for the mission? If so, why and how? What have been the effects (or planned effects) of the mission? Students should also gather photos related to the mission.

After completing their individual research, have the class create a classroom space mission time line on a wall in the classroom. Students should line up their research and photos in chronological order of the space mission dates. Once complete, lead students in a discussion of how different U.S. space missions are connected and how our understanding of space has changed over time.

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