

First Man Teacher's notes

B1+

B2

This article about Neil Armstrong's mission offers an insight into the race to the Moon. Not only does it focus on his life and give us the opportunity to learn more about this quiet man, but it also sheds light on how challenging and time (and money!) consuming the adventure to conquer the Moon was.

The movie *First Man* could be then watched as follow up.

Vocabulary and structures

- heroes, pioneers, trailblazers, ...
- to show the way, to pioneer, to blaze a trail
- to admire, to look up to, to be a role model, to inspire
- linkwords : cause and consequence (*in order to...*) + contrast (*whereas, yet...*)
- preterite vs past perfect
- suppositions in the past and present (*must / may / might + bv OU have v-en*)
- chronological links

Background information

<https://history.nasa.gov/brief.html>

■ The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), is responsible for unique scientific and technological achievements in human space flight, aeronautics, space science, and space applications that have had widespread impacts on our nation and the world. Forged in response to early Soviet space achievements, NASA was built on the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), and other government organizations, as the locus of U. S. civil aerospace research and development. When NASA opened for business on October 1,

1958, it accelerated the work already started on human and robotic space flight

Reading, speaking, writing

- We suggest starting with the pictures so as to appeal to their knowledge : even if most students won't be able to name the astronauts or maybe even the year it happened, they know American astronauts have walked on the Moon. What's more, it will be a good transition with the first sentence of the article and the main point about Neil Armstrong : he was a quiet man, hardly anyone knows his face!
- Have the students describe the pictures and react, then move on with the spidergram: some will know the name of the mission, others the famous quote or even the date or other details. The aim of the first activity is to show the students they know a lot of things about this mission and also prepare them to work in teams, taking notes and not writing full sentences
- The article revolves round two main topics: Neil Armstrong's life and how he became part of the Apollo 11 team; and the lunar mission itself, i.e. the different steps it took to make it a success. We have suggested therefore having your

class work in groups, one of them looking for the information about Armstrong, the other about the mission, and creating timelines. This could enable you to practise differentiated teaching as one timeline is slightly easier to complete than the other one.

- The final project is linked to the movie *First Man*. (More about the movie in this article: <http://www.speakeasy-news.com/filming-first-man>)

Going Further: Listening

■ If you would like to work more on the Space Race with your students, we've provided two audio extracts of speeches by President Kennedy about the decision to go to the Moon, in addition to the short quote in the article.

■ The first extract is from his speech to Congress on 25 May, 1961, asking for the budget to fund the Moon Mission.

■ The second is from a speech he made on September 12, 1962, at Rice University in Houston, Texas, home to NASA. It is more complex and geopolitical and would particularly suit an SES class.

Transcripts

May 25, 1961: President Kennedy to Congress (1 minute extract)

If we are to win the battle that is now going on around the world between freedom and tyranny, the dramatic achievements in space which occurred in recent weeks should have made clear to us all, as did the Sputnik in 1957, the impact of this adventure on the minds of men everywhere, who are attempting to make a determination of which road they should take.

I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.

September 12, 1962: Rice University Stadium, Houston, Texas (2"20" extract)

We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people. For space science, like nuclear science and all technology, has no conscience of its own. Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends on man, and only if the United States occupies a position of pre-eminence can we help decide whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace or a new terrifying theater of war. I do not say the we should or will go unprotected against the hostile misuse of space any more than we go unprotected against the hostile use of land or sea, but I do say that space can be explored and mastered without feeding the fires of war, without repeating the mistakes that man has made in extending his writ around this globe of ours.

There is no strife, no prejudice, no national conflict in outer space as yet. Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind, and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation may never come again. But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic?

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

SOLUTIONS

1.a. This man looks like/ must be an astronaut, he must be American since there is the US flag on the sleeve. He's holding a helmet on his lap. He's smiling, he looks pleased and happy because he may be on a new mission: he is impatient / he can't wait / he's eager to discover / explore space
I don't know his name / I know his name because I read the tag on his chest. It's Armstrong (will they know the first name ??)
b. Same sentences, but for the names... : they may never have heard of Collins and Aldrin
c. They were the first men to go to the moon. One of them is more famous than the other two: Armstrong, that may account for the singular form.
d. Date/Place: July 1969 (July 16 for blast-off, 20 July for the Moon landing). Houston, Texas / Space / the Moon
People: Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, Michael Collins
Equipment: a spacecraft / Apollo / a lunar lander: the Eagle
Duration: 8 days (21 hours on the Moon)
Distance travelled: more than 1.5 million km

2. Read

TEAM A : Neil Armstrong's timeline

1930: Birth in Ohio

1936: first flight with father

between 1936-1946: worked to pay for flying lessons

1946: got his pilot's license (before his driving license)

studied aeronautical engineering

1949-51: stopped studies : navy pilot in Korean war

resumed studies

1962: chosen by NASA

1966: 1st time into space

July 20, 1969: 1st man on the moon

1971: left NASA

2002: interview with science writer for bio

2005: bio published

2012: death

Character: -quiet : "didn't show off in the media"

-gifted : pilot's license before driving

Suggested answers for Armstrong being considered a hero:

He was a hero because he was courageous enough to launch into the adventure when he knew he could get killed. What's more, he was a pioneer that everyone admired and still admires. People can look up to him and he has been a role model for several generations

Hard work and perseverance helped him achieve his goal and become a "first man".

TEAM B: "Mission to the Moon" timeline

1961-62: JFK announces Moon mission

1966: Gemini 8 : Neil Armstrong + Dave Scott

May 68: failed mission/ 2 deaths

Oct 68: Apollo 7

July 20 1969: moon landing

Extra information: dangerous (people died)

-expensive

Suggested answers for the Myths and Heroes

notion.

It made people dream, it was hard to achieve
but they did it anyway

Not an ordinary job but a real feat.

The “myth” of conquering space / sending
Man into space made real.

Armstrong is considered a heroic figure as a
type or concept, not as the real man.

4. Your Mission

Possible answers for Linkwords:

Chronology

first, then, finally, after that, after/before +
V-ing

Cause/Consequence

since, because, as
as a consequence, consequently, therefore,
insofar as...

Contrast/Paradox

yet, contrary to, on the contrary, despite, in
spite of, whereas, nevertheless, nonetheless,
although, even if, though...