

Race to the Moon

Put twelve years of the Space Race in order, then decide what mattered most.



NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____

LEARNING GOAL

I can sequence events on a timeline and explain why some mattered more than others.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- ☐ I can place events on a scaled timeline by date.
- ☐ I can work out the gap in years between events.
- ☐ I can judge significance using criteria.

1 Complete the timeline

5 marks

Three are done for you. For each card below, find its marker by **date** and **shape**, then write the date and event in that callout.

3 USA

25 May 1961

Kennedy asks Congress to aim for the Moon *"before this decade is out"*.

Why it mattered: a public goal.

6 USA

DATE _____

EVENT _____

7 USA

December 1968

Apollo 8 is the first crewed flight to orbit the Moon. The crew photograph *Earthrise*.

8 USA

DATE _____

EVENT _____

1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970

1960s

1 USSR

4 October 1957

Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite, orbits Earth.

Why it mattered: it shocked the USA.

2 USSR

DATE _____

EVENT _____

4 USSR

DATE _____

EVENT _____

5 USSR

DATE _____

EVENT _____

■ USA square, above ◆ USSR diamond, below □ Outline: you complete it | Long tick: new decade

✂ EVENT CARD BANK Jumbled! Check the date and the shape on each card.

■ USA

20 July 1969

Apollo 11 lands on the Moon. Armstrong and Aldrin walk on it.

◆ USSR

16 June 1963

Valentina Tereshkova is the first woman in space (Vostok 6).

■ USA

27 January 1967

A fire in an Apollo 1 launch rehearsal kills three astronauts.

◆ USSR

12 April 1961

Yuri Gagarin is the first human in space (Vostok 1).

◆ USSR

18 March 1965

Alexei Leonov makes the first spacewalk (Voskhod 2).

What mattered most?

Use your finished timeline to weigh events and make a judgement.



2 Weigh the significance

6 marks

Choose the **three** most significant events. Write **Yes**, **Partly** or **No** for each criterion, then justify using a criterion word.

REMARKABLE

Amazing or shocking **at the time**?

CHANGED THINGS

Changed lives or **later events**?

STILL REMEMBERED

Marked or taught **today**?

EVENT	R	C	S	WHY IT IS SIGNIFICANT
Model: Sputnik 1	Yes	Yes	Partly	It was remarkable because nothing made by people had orbited Earth before. It changed things : the USA set up NASA in 1958 to catch up.

3 Turning point

6 marks

Look at the shapes on your timeline. Who was ahead?

a Before 1966: _____ **b** After 1966: _____A **turning point** is a moment after which events head in a new direction. Which event was the turning point? Say what changed **before** and **after** it.

The turning point was ... because ...

Before this, ... ; after this, ...

Some might argue ... ; however, ...

4 Chronology check

4 marks

Number these from **1** (earliest) to **4**. Try it from memory first.

- ☐ Apollo 8 orbits the Moon. ☐ Sputnik 1 orbits Earth.
- ☐ Valentina Tereshkova flies in Vostok 6. ☐ Kennedy sets the Moon goal.

Find the gap in years. Show the subtraction.

- a** Sputnik 1 to Apollo 11: _____ years
- b** Kennedy's speech to Apollo 11: _____ years
- c** Was that "*before this decade is out*" ? **Yes / No**



GO FURTHER

The USSR never landed a person on the Moon. Did it **lose** the Space Race? Give one reason for and one against.



Answers, criteria and teaching moves

Mark scheme (21 marks)

TASK	ACCEPT	MARKS
1	Callout 2: 12 April 1961, Gagarin, first human in space. 4: 16 June 1963, Tereshkova, first woman in space. 5: 18 March 1965, Leonov, first spacewalk. 6: 27 January 1967, Apollo 1 fire. 8: 20 July 1969, Apollo 11 lands on the Moon. One mark each for the right event with its date.	5
2	Up to 2 marks per event: 1 for criterion judgements that fit the event, 1 for a justification that names a criterion and gives a specific consequence or detail. Accept any three events if the reasoning holds.	6
3	a: the USSR (satellite, man, woman and spacewalk all came first). b: the USA (Apollo 8 and Apollo 11). 1 mark each. Judgement, up to 4: names an event; says what was different before and after; supports with a date or detail; weighs an alternative. Strong choices: Sputnik 1 (race begins), Kennedy's speech (the Moon becomes the goal), Apollo 8 (the USA overtakes).	6
4	Order down the list: 4, 1, 3, 2 (two marks; one with a single pair swapped). a: 1969 minus 1957 = 12 years (accept 11 years 9 months). b: 1969 minus 1961 = 8 years. c: Yes, July 1969 is before 1970. One mark for a and b together, one for c.	4

THE THREE CRITERIA

Remarkable asks how people saw it at the time. **Changed things** asks about consequences, for lives or later events. **Still remembered** asks about its place in memory today. An event can score highly on one and low on another; that tension is what makes a judgement.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- **"The USA was ahead from the start."** The USSR achieved the first satellite, first human, first woman and first spacewalk. Point to the diamonds clustered left of 1966.
- Confusing Gagarin (first in space, 1961) with Armstrong (first on the Moon, 1969).
- Thinking Apollo 8 landed. It orbited the Moon only.
- Thinking Apollo 1 crashed in space. The fire happened on the launch pad during a test.

SUPPORT AND STRETCH

- **Support:** cut out the five cards and lay them on the line before writing; for task 2, choose the three events with the pupil first.
- **Stretch:** add Alan Shepard (first American in space, 5 May 1961) to the timeline and explain why it did not win the "first human" title.

DEBATE QUESTION

"The Apollo 1 fire was more significant than the Moon landing." How far do you agree?

LESSON FLOW (ABOUT 60 MINUTES)

- **Starter, 5 min:** show the 1957 to 1970 line with no events. Ask: who do you think got to space first?
- **Task 1, 15 min:** pairs place the cards, then compare with another pair before writing.
- **Tasks 2 and 3, 25 min:** model the Sputnik row aloud, then pupils judge independently.
- **Plenary, 10 min:** vote on the turning point; take one reason from each side.

MORE DATES FOR EXTENSION

- 31 January 1958** Explorer 1, the first US satellite.
1958 NASA is set up.
5 May 1961 Alan Shepard, the first American in space.
20 February 1962 John Glenn, the first American to orbit Earth.