

Name: _____

First Men on the Moon

In July of 1969, three brave American astronauts blasted off in a rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Their names were Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins. The name of the Mission was Apollo 11. The three astronauts were headed into space, to a destination mankind had never been - the moon.

A rocket called Saturn V blasted two smaller spacecraft beyond the Earth's atmosphere. The first spacecraft was a lunar module, which was named the *Eagle*. The *Eagle* would take two of the three astronauts to the moon's surface and then blast off of the moon to return the astronauts to space.

The second spacecraft was a command module, which was named *Columbia*. It was a larger spacecraft that did not land; it stayed in space and orbited the moon. Michael Collins' job was to stay in *Columbia* throughout the mission. He would be all alone in space while Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed and explored the moon's surface. It was a lonely job, but an important one. Collins had to take care of the command module, which would return the astronauts to Earth.



On July 20th, the *Eagle* had landed safely on the moon's surface. Neil Armstrong was the first astronaut to exit the lunar module. There was a video camera on the spacecraft that was filming the event for everyone on Earth to see. When he set foot on the moon's surface, he remarked, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." He was the first human being to ever set foot on another world.

Buzz Aldrin exited the *Eagle* next. The two men discovered that the moon's surface was covered in a powdery dust. The two astronauts found it easy to move around on the moon, even in their bulky space suits, because the moon's gravity was less than Earth's. Aldrin and Armstrong placed an American flag on the moon. Next, they set up equipment for scientific experiments. The two men also collected rocks and dust samples that would be brought back to Earth for scientific study. They even got to talk to President Nixon from the surface of the moon.

After two and a half hours on the moon's surface, the *Eagle* blasted off from the moon's surface. Since the *Eagle* was not built to return the astronauts to Earth, they had to rejoin Michael Collins in the *Columbia* command module that was orbiting the moon. When all three astronauts were inside safely, they headed back to Earth.

When they returned, the three astronauts received a hero's welcome. There were celebrations and parades all over the country. President Nixon awarded them Presidential Medals of Freedom. Their bravery and skills have earned them a place among history's most distinguished figures.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

First Men on the Moon

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. How many astronauts were in the *Eagle* spacecraft when it landed on the moon?

2. Describe Michael Collins' job.

3. Was it easy or difficult for the men to move around on the moon? Explain.

4. Name four things the astronauts did while on the moon's surface.

5. Give one reason why being an astronaut would be a fulfilling career. Also, give one reason why being an astronaut might not be a good career choice.

First Men on the Moon - ANSWERS

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. How many astronauts were in the *Eagle* spacecraft when it landed on the moon?

There were two astronauts in the *Eagle* spacecraft when it landed on the moon.

2. Describe Michael Collins' job.

Michael Collins stayed inside the *Columbia* command module while the *Eagle* landed on the moon. (Columbia was needed to return the astronauts to Earth.)

3. Was it easy or difficult for the men to move around on the moon? Explain.

It was easy for the men to move around because the moon has less gravity than Earth.

4. Name four things the astronauts did while on the moon's surface.

While on the moon, the astronauts planted a flag, collected dust samples, talked to President Nixon, and set up scientific experiments.

5. Give one reason why being an astronaut would be a fulfilling career. Also, give one reason why being an astronaut might not be a good career choice.

Answers will vary.

Possible answer: It would be fun to be an astronaut because you could explore outer space and do things very few people will ever experience. It might not be a good career choice because it is a very dangerous job.