



NASA and SpaceX Prepare for Mission to ISS

What are NASA and SpaceX doing?

- NASA is working with a company called SpaceX to send two astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS).
- NASA is working with businesses to investigate how new spacecraft can be launched into space.

Set the controls and get ready for lift-off! NASA and SpaceX are working together to send two astronauts into space.

The mission is set to launch on 27th May from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. A spacecraft with people on board has not left the USA since 2011. This mission, though, will be particularly significant for other reasons.

It will be the first time that SpaceX will have sent two astronauts into space. The company wants to be able to launch commercial flights into space in the future. On its website, it says it has the goal of 'enabling people to live on other planets'.

The company has done a series of tests to check that the mission will be safe. Last year, they launched Demo 1, a spacecraft without a crew, to check their spacecraft was safe to use.

This mission, Demo 2, will have astronauts on board. Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley will be heading to the International Space Station (ISS) on a rocket called Falcon 9.

The ISS is a spacecraft that orbits Earth. It's about 250 miles above Earth and is a place where scientists carry out research into our Solar System.

The two astronauts are expected to reach the ISS the day after their launch, on 28th May. It's not clear yet how long the astronauts will spend on the ISS.



Photo: A SpaceX rocket being prepared.

NASA plans to send more astronauts into space to learn more about our Solar System. As part of a program called Artemis, it wants to send astronauts to the Moon by 2024. It will be the first time an astronaut has been to the Moon since 1972.

During the Artemis Program, a woman will walk on the Moon for the first time. NASA says that the astronauts will then use what they find out on the Moon to help them when they travel to Mars for the first time.

For now, though, all eyes will be set on seeing how this mission fares.

Glossary

spacecraft	A vehicle that travels through space.
commercial	To sell something in order to make a profit.
orbit	To travel around another object in space.
fares	How something turns out over a period of time.

Questions

1. 'This mission, though, will be particularly significant.'
Tick the word that is closest in meaning to 'significant'.

- exciting
- important
- interesting
- unusual

2. What was the main difference between Demo 1 and Demo 2?

3. 'They want to be able to launch commercial flights into space in the future.'
This suggests that...

- Only astronauts will travel in space in the future.
- People may be able to buy tickets to travel into space.
- There are no plans for people to go into space after this mission.
- Space travel for ordinary people will be impossible.

4. Find and copy two reasons why the Artemis program could be an important moment in history.

1. _____

2. _____

5. Do you think space travel will be more common in the future? Explain your answer.

6. Explain what the story is about in 15 words or fewer.

Answers

1. 'This mission, though, will be particularly significant.'
Tick the word that is closest in meaning to 'significant'.
 - exciting
 - important**
 - interesting
 - unusual
2. What was the main difference between Demo 1 and Demo 2?
Accept any answer which refers to this part of the story: Last year, they launched Demo 1, a spacecraft without a crew, to check their spacecraft was safe to use. This mission, Demo 2, will have astronauts on board.
3. 'They want to be able to launch commercial flights into space in the future.'
This suggests that...
 - Only astronauts will travel in space in the future.
 - People may be able to buy tickets to travel into space.**
 - There are no plans for people to go into space after this mission.
 - Space travel for ordinary people will be impossible.
4. Find and copy two reasons why the Artemis program could be an important moment in history.
It will be the first time that a woman will walk on the Moon and people will go to Mars for the first time.
5. Do you think space travel will be more common in the future? Explain your answer.
Accept any answer which refers to the story, e.g. I think space travel will be more common in the future as businesses are investigating how it could work.
6. Explain what the story is about in 15 words or fewer.
Accept any reasonable summary that is 15 words or fewer, e.g. NASA and SpaceX are working together to send two astronauts into space.