

Climbing Space



(Excerpt from President John F. Kennedy's Speech Given at Rice University in Houston, Texas on the United States Space Effort)

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 many 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.

It is for these reasons that I regard the decision last year to shift our efforts in space from low to high gear as among the most important decisions that will be made during my incumbency in the office of the Presidency.

[. . .]

The growth of our science and education will be enriched by new knowledge of our universe and environment, by new techniques of learning and mapping and observation, by new tools and computers for industry, medicine, the home as well as the school. Technical institutions, such as Rice, will reap the harvest of these gains.

[. . .]

To be sure, all this costs us all a good deal of money. This year's space budget is three times what it was in January 1961, and it is greater than the space budget of the previous eight years combined. . . . But if I were to say, my fellow citizens, that we shall send to the moon, 240,000 miles away from the control station in Houston, a giant rocket more than 300 feet tall, the length of this football field, made of new metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented, capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced, fitted together with a precision better than the finest watch, carrying all the equipment needed for propulsion, guidance, control, communications, food and survival, on an untried mission, to an unknown celestial body, and then return it safely to earth, re-entering the atmosphere at speeds of over 25,000 miles per hour, causing heat about half that of the temperature of the sun . . . and do all this, and do it right, and do it first before this decade is out-then we must be bold.

[. . .]

Many years ago the great British explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mount Everest, was asked why did he want to climb it. He said, "Because it is there."

Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there. And, therefore, as we set sail we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.

Thank you.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where does John F. Kennedy want America to go?

- A. Mars
- B. the moon
- C. Mount Everest
- D. Venus

2. What does John F. Kennedy try to persuade the listener of?

- A. the necessity of increasing the space budget next year
- B. the necessity of cooperating with other nations
- C. the importance of sending astronauts to the moon
- D. going to the moon is as important as climbing Mount Everest

3. At the time of this speech, the United States placed great importance on the space program. What evidence from the speech supports this conclusion?

- A. "Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there."
- B. "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?"
- C. "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."
- D. "This year's space budget is three times what it was in January 1961, and it is greater than the space budget of the previous eight years combined. . ."

4. What is a reason why John F. Kennedy may have given this speech?

- A. to get students at Rice University excited about the space program
- B. to convince members of Congress to increase the space budget
- C. to tell scientists about the exciting new technology they will soon have
- D. to explain the goals of the space program and the plan to achieve them

5. What is the main message of this speech?

- A. Going to the moon is difficult and expensive.
- B. America needs to beat Russia to the moon.
- C. Going to the moon is a worthy and important pursuit.
- D. Rice University can help America land on the moon.

6. Read the following sentence: "The growth of our science and education will be **enriched** by new knowledge of our universe and environment, by new techniques of learning and mapping and observation, by new tools and computers for industry, medicine, the home as well as the school."

As used in this sentence, what does the word "**enriched**" mean?

- A. made better
- B. made worse
- C. repelled by
- D. taken from

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ going to the moon will be difficult and dangerous, it is still a worthy pursuit, says Kennedy.

- A. As a result
- B. Initially
- C. Above all
- D. Even though

8. Why did explorer George Mallory say he wanted to climb Mount Everest?

9. According to Kennedy, how will going to the moon help science?

10. What is Kennedy's answer to the question, "Why the moon?" Support your answer using information from the speech.
