

1. Strange but true

This week's lesson is based on four recent stories related to space, or space exploration. Three of the stories are true and one has been invented.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Ask your students what they know about the history of space exploration. Do they know when, for example, an astronaut first walked on the Moon? Do they know anything about any country's plans for future space exploration? Do your students think space exploration is worth the money that is spent on it? Ask them to justify their answers.

2. Divide your students into pairs, then hand out Worksheet A and give them five to ten minutes to read through it. Encourage them to look up new vocabulary. Can they identify which three stories are true and which has been made up?

3. Check answers in open class, and encourage your students to explain what factors influenced their choices.

Answers: The true stories are 1, 2 and 4; the story of the missing flag (3) has been invented. (The US astronauts who made landings on the Moon between 1969 and 1972 did indeed leave flags planted in the lunar surface – but none of them has ever disappeared. Nor could they ever blow away, as there is no wind on the Moon.)

4. Keeping your students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet B and ask them to complete the crossword.

5. Check answers in open class.

6. Ask the students to turn over their copies of Worksheets A and B, and their glossaries. Keeping the students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet C, which contains most of the text from Worksheet A with ten incorrect words that the students have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are five other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write any additional words.

7. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. shrinking 2. speed 3. priorities 4. collected
5. man 6. Mars 7. smaller 8. nuts 9. tested 10. surface 11. orbit
12. contracting 13. landing

If the sentences have been completed correctly, *Neil Armstrong* will read from top to bottom.

Exercise 2

2. priorities 4. orbit 5. announcement 6. shrinking 8. core 9. astronomy
10. blackness 12. off 14. per 15. nets

Words in bold that are correct: 1. provide 3. rockets 7. contraction 11. disused
13. missions

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/aug/19/the-moon-is-shrinking>

An article from the *Guardian* (August 2010) on the very slight and very gradual shrinking of the Moon. Challenging for intermediate level.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/obama-consigns-moon-landings-to-history-1946398.html>

An article from the *Independent* (April 2010) on President Obama's announcement that the US space programme should prioritise a manned mission to Mars rather than a return to the Moon. Challenging for intermediate level.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/aug/22/pollution-litter-space-edde-darpa>

A short article from the *Observer* (August 2010) on the huge amount of man-made 'rubbish' orbiting the Earth, and the recent proposal about how to clear it up. Challenging for intermediate level.