
Space stories

WORKSHEET A

The stories below all concern recent events related to space, or space exploration. Three of them are true; one has been invented. Can you identify which of the stories is not true?

1. In April this year, President Obama had surprising news for the many NASA scientists who expected the US government to provide the money to put American astronauts on the Moon again: Obama turned down NASA's requests, and the reason he gave was that they had already been there.

Obama believes the US space program should have other priorities. He said the US should develop rockets that could put astronauts on Mars. He suggested that by the mid 2030s, NASA could send humans to orbit Mars and return them safely to Earth. And he predicted that a landing on Mars would follow.

2. In August this year, NASA scientists made a surprising announcement: the Moon is shrinking. A NASA spacecraft that is orbiting the Moon had taken pictures showing huge cracks caused by the contraction of the Moon's surface as its core becomes cooler.

The scientists are particularly interested in the cracks because they have occurred recently, and are probably still getting bigger. In the language of astronomy, though, "recently" never means last week or last month: in this case it means in the last 800 million years.

3. A NASA spacecraft orbiting the Moon answered a question recently that many people have been asking for more than thirty years: what happened to the US flag that the American astronauts left on the Moon's surface after the first manned lunar landing in 1969?

In 1979, NASA suddenly noticed that the flag wasn't there. Having survived the winds on the Moon's surface for almost ten years, the scientists guessed the flag had finally been blown away by a particularly strong lunar storm – but where had it ended up?

Pictures taken on May 19th this year finally revealed the flag's position – upside-down and in a crater about fifteen kilometers from the site of the 1969 landing.

4. If you imagine that all there is between here and the Moon is empty blackness, you'd be wrong. For one thing, there is a lot of trash.

NASA estimates that there are around 18,000 pieces of man-made debris orbiting the Earth, from disused satellites to nuts and bolts that have fallen off spacecraft.

Any of these objects, however small, could be dangerous for satellites and future space missions – because they are all traveling at almost 30,000 kilometers per hour.

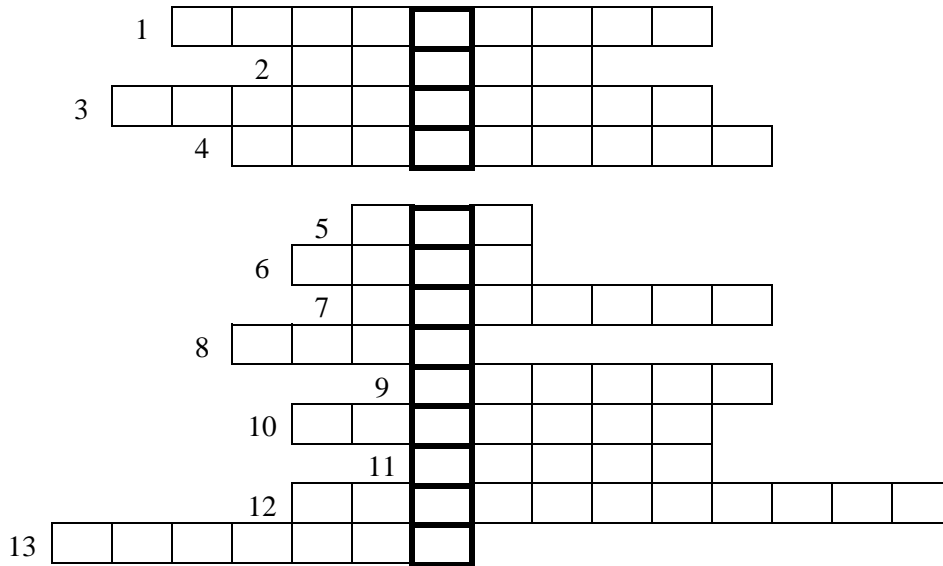
The solution recently suggested by a US company was to send up small spacecraft with special nets attached to them. Scientists say these spacecraft could collect all the larger pieces of junk in about seven years. A test flight is expected in 2013.

Space stories

WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Complete the crossword below. If all the words are correct, the name of the US astronaut who in 1969 became the first human being to step on the Moon will read from top to bottom.



1. The Moon is _____ extremely slowly.
2. Any of these pieces of debris orbiting the Earth could be dangerous because of the _____ at which they are traveling.
3. President Obama said that one of NASA's _____ should be to develop a rocket that could send astronauts to Mars.
4. Scientists think that a lot of the junk orbiting the Earth could be _____ by special spacecraft with nets attached to them.
5. There are many thousands of _____-made objects traveling around the Earth.
6. American astronauts have been to the Moon, but they have never been to _____.
7. NASA scientists say the Moon is getting _____.
8. The smaller pieces of "junk" orbiting the Earth include _____ and bolts that have fallen off spacecraft.
9. The spacecraft that might be able to clean up the junk could be _____ in 2013.
10. There are very big cracks in the _____ of the Moon.
11. If it is possible for astronauts to _____ Mars, it might also be possible for them to land on the planet.
12. NASA scientists say the Moon's surface is _____.
13. The first manned _____ on the Moon was in 1969.

Space stories

WORKSHEET C

Exercise 2

Most of the text from Worksheet A has been copied below, but contains some mistakes. Ten of the words in bold are incorrect, and five are correct. Decide which are incorrect, and correct them.

1. In April this year, President Obama had surprising news for the many NASA scientists who expected the US government to (1) **provide** the money to put American astronauts on the Moon again: Obama turned down NASA's requests, and the reason he gave was that they had already been there.

Obama believes the US space program should have other (2) **prioritads**. He said the US should develop (3) **rockets** that could put astronauts on Mars. He suggested that by the mid 2030s, NASA could send humans to (4) **bit** Mars and return them safely to Earth. And he predicted that a landing on Mars would follow.

2. In August this year, NASA scientists made a surprising (5) **announce**: the Moon is (6) **sinking**. A NASA spacecraft that is orbiting the Moon had taken pictures showing huge cracks caused by the (7) **contraction** of the Moon's surface as its (8) **more** becomes cooler.

The scientists are particularly interested in the cracks because they have occurred recently, and are probably still getting bigger. In the language of (9) **astrology**, though, "recently" never means last week or last month: in this case it means in the last 800 million years.

3. If you imagine that all there is between here and the Moon is empty (10) **black**, you'd be wrong. For one thing, there is a lot of trash.

NASA estimates that there are around 18,000 pieces of man-made debris orbiting the Earth, from (11) **disused** satellites to nuts and bolts that have fallen (12) **on** spacecraft.

Any of these objects, however small, could be dangerous for satellites and future space (13) **missions** – because they are all traveling at almost 30,000 kilometers (14) **par** hour.

The solution recently suggested by a US company was to send up small spacecraft with special (15) **networks** attached to them. Scientists say these spacecraft could collect all the larger pieces of junk in about seven years. A test flight is expected in 2013.