

Neil Armstrong

Neil Alden Armstrong (an American astronaut working for NASA) is best known for becoming the first man to walk on the Moon in July 1969.

His Early Life

Born on 5th August 1930 in the state of Ohio, USA, Neil was the eldest of three children to Stephen Koenig Armstrong and Viola Louise. He developed an interest in flying at a young age when his father took him to the National Air Races as a toddler. At the age of six, Neil flew for the first time with his father. As a teenager, Neil had a part-time job and used the money he earned to pay for flying lessons. He earned his student pilot certificate on his 16th birthday and flew solo soon after – all before he had a licence to drive a car!

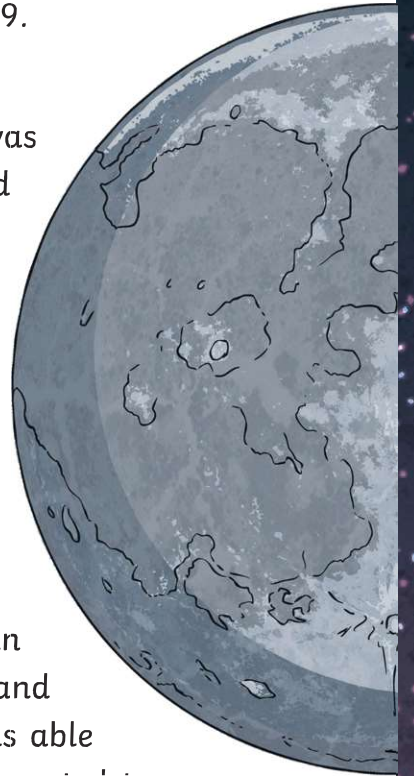
At the age of 17, Neil attended university to study **aeronautical engineering** and then went on to join the US Navy as an aviator. During his career, Neil flew more than 200 aircraft and was renowned for being calm and resilient, meaning he was able to fly in difficult situations. In September 1962, Neil was accepted to the **NASA** Astronaut Corps, which would eventually lead to the exciting task of landing on the Moon.

The Moon Landing

After carrying out much training and many trial missions, the day had arrived. On 16th July 1969 at 1:32 p.m., the powerful Saturn V rocket left the launch pad and carried Neil Armstrong and his crew mates, Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin and Michael Collins, into space for the Apollo 11 mission. The journey to the Moon took over three days to complete. During the journey, the astronauts were able to contact Earth.

Did You Know...?

None of the Apollo 11 crew suffered from space sickness as some members of previous crews had. Neil was especially glad about this as he had been prone to travel sickness as a child.



Once they reached the Moon's orbit, Michael remained in the rocket completing science experiments and taking photographs while Neil and Buzz entered the **lunar module** (nicknamed The Eagle) to descend to the Moon's surface. The descent did not go smoothly; when Neil noticed they were heading to an unsafe landing area, he took manual control of The Eagle and this took longer than expected. This meant that the module was running low on fuel by the time they landed on the surface of the Moon. At this point, Neil uttered the words, "**Tranquillity Base** here. The Eagle has landed."

Did You Know...?

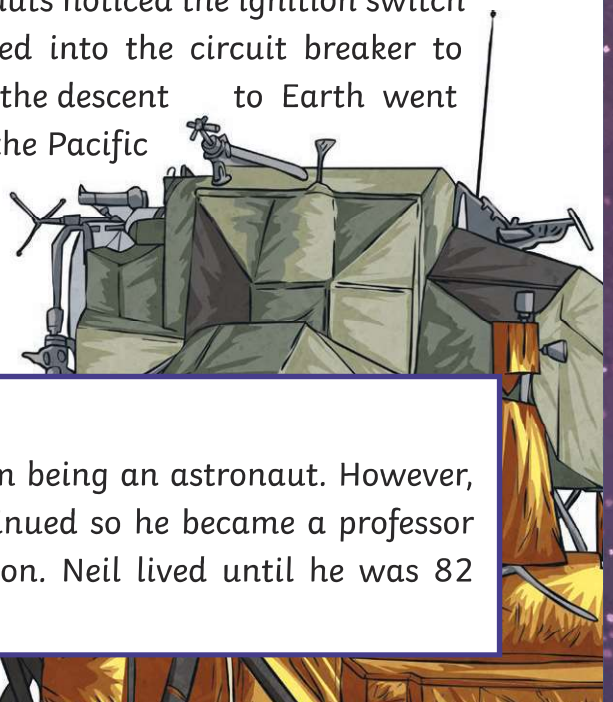
The Moon landing was shown on television around the world and viewed by an estimated 600 million people.

Finally, following rest, checks and preparation, the astronauts opened the hatch on 20th July 1969 and Neil made his way down the ladder first. As Neil set his left foot on the surface of the Moon, he was heard saying the now famous words, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Buzz joined Neil after around 19 minutes and they completed various missions, including planting the flag of the United States. The pair spent two and a half hours on the Moon; this time was limited because NASA were unsure how long the spacesuits would cope with the high temperatures (up to 100 degrees Celsius) on the Moon.

When it was time to leave the Moon, the astronauts noticed the ignition switch was broken so they used part of a pen pushed into the circuit breaker to activate the launch sequence. The remainder of the descent to Earth went smoothly and the astronauts arrived home, in the Pacific Ocean, on 24th July 1969. Following 18 days in quarantine in case of infection, they were released to tour the country.

Later Life

Soon after returning home, Neil retired from being an astronaut. However, his enthusiasm for space and aircraft continued so he became a professor in order to share his knowledge and passion. Neil lived until he was 82 years old.



Glossary

aeronautical engineering: The primary field of engineering concerned with the development of aircraft and spacecraft.

lunar module: A small craft used for travelling between the Moon's surface and an orbiting spacecraft.

NASA: Abbreviation of National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

quarantine: Isolation in case of infection.

Tranquillity Base: The site on the Moon where humans landed and walked for the first time.



Questions

1. What were the names of the other astronauts on the Apollo 11 mission? Tick **two**.

- ☐ Stephen Koenig Armstrong
- ☐ Viola Louise
- ☐ Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin
- ☐ Michael Collins

2. Join the boxes to match each fact to the section of the text it appears in.

| |
|---|
| Neil flew more than 200 aircraft. |
| Neil became a professor in order to share his knowledge and passion. |
| Neil said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." |

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|------------------|
| Early Life |
| The Moon Landing |
| Later Life |

3. **Find** and **copy one** word or phrase from **The Moon Landing** section which tells you that things didn't all go to plan.

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Due to high _____ on the Moon, NASA limited the time spent there to _____.

5. Give **three** things that Neil did as a teenager.

6. Why do you think Neil wanted to join NASA?

7. In your own words, explain what is meant by **quarantine**.

8. How do you think it would have felt to watch someone walk on the Moon for the first time live on television? Explain your answer.

9. Why do you think the astronauts planted a flag of the United States on the Moon?

Answers

1. What were the names of the other astronauts on the Apollo 11 mission? Tick **two**.

- ☐ Stephen Koenig Armstrong
- ☐ Viola Louise
- ☒ **Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin**
- ☒ **Michael Collins**

2. Join the boxes to match each fact to the section of the text it appears in.

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| Neil flew more than 200 aircraft. | | Early Life |
| Neil became a professor in order to share his knowledge and passion. | | The Moon Landing |
| Neil said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." | | Later Life |

3. **Find and copy one** word or phrase from **The Moon Landing** section which tells you that things didn't all go to plan.

Accept any one of the following: didn't go smoothly; this took longer than expected; the ignition switch was broken. Also accept 'The remainder of the descent to Earth went smoothly' as this shows a change in fortune.

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Due to high **temperatures** on the Moon, NASA limited the time spent there to **two and a half hours**.

5. Give **three** things that Neil did as a teenager.

Accept any three of the following: Neil had a part-time job; he had flying lessons; he earned his student pilot certificate; he flew solo in a plane; he attended university to study aeronautical engineering.

6. Why do you think Neil wanted to join NASA?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Neil wanted to join NASA because he had an interest in flying from a young age and was a calm and resilient aviator.

7. In your own words, explain what is meant by **quarantine**.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Quarantine is a period of segregation due to the risk of disease.

8. How do you think it would have felt to watch someone walk on the Moon for the first time live on television? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that I would have been fascinated and nervous because it was the first time it has ever happened so nobody knew how safe it was going to be.

9. Why do you think the astronauts planted a flag of the United States on the Moon?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the astronauts planted this flag as a memento of their visit to the Moon which any future astronauts would be able to see.