

Name \_\_\_\_\_



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## The Space Race

By Sharon Fabian

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Sometimes a bad situation can have surprisingly good results. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was a bad situation and a very dangerous one. For years, citizens of both countries feared the outbreak of a terrible war between their countries. However, there were good results of the Cold War, at least in one area. In the area of space exploration, the Cold War spurred both the United States and the Soviet Union on to more and more discoveries. This so-called space race would never have happened if it hadn't been for the Cold War.

The space race resulted in great scientific discoveries for both countries. In the end, after the Cold War was finished, it also provided a project for both the United States and the Soviet Union to work on together.

It began in the 1950's, soon after the beginning of the Cold War. The United States was working on its first earth-orbiting satellite. At the time we didn't know it, but so was the Soviet Union.

We found out on October 4, 1957, the day when the Soviet Union launched its first satellite, Sputnik I, into space. An A-1 rocket boosted Sputnik into space from its base in the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. Its first orbit of the Earth took about 95 minutes traveling at a speed of 18,000 miles per hour. Sputnik stayed in space for 57 days.

This must have been a day to celebrate for the Soviet people, but in the United States it was a day of panic. If the Soviet Union could launch a scientific rocket, then it could also launch a military rocket. The big fear was that the Soviet Union would be able to fire a nuclear bomb all the way to the United States with this new technology.

Right away, the United States stepped up its own space program. By January 31 of the next year, the US was ready. Explorer I launched into orbit.

In 1958, the United States also passed the Space Act, which created NASA. Ever since then, NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, has been in charge of our space program. Another effect of Sputnik was that schools in the United States began teaching more math and science. Colleges began to offer courses in rocket science.

Meanwhile, the space race continued. The Soviet Union sent up more Sputniks, and the United States sent up more Explorers. Then both countries moved on to bigger challenges. For a while the Soviet Union was in the lead. One of its cosmonauts, Yuri Gagarin, became the first person in space. The Soviet Union also built the first space station. Later, the United States moved into the lead when it landed the first manned spacecraft on the moon.

At this time, the Cold War was still in progress, and both the Soviet Union and the United States also used their satellites for military purposes. Orbiting satellites, more advanced than the original Sputnik or Explorer, were now used by each country to spy on the other. These spy satellites looked for missiles and nuclear weapons. They were part of a more dangerous contest known as the arms race.

The Cold War was a time of suspicions and mistrust between the United States and the Soviet Union, but just like every other war, it finally came to an end. Then, both countries could look back and see what they had learned from the experience. Both countries had learned a great deal about space travel throughout the Cold War years.

Soon, the two countries would be combining their knowledge of space travel to work together on a great science project, the international space station.



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### Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. One result of the Cold War was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the space race
  - B. World War II
  - C. a peace treaty
  - D. World War I
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The space race was a competition between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the United States, Europe
  - B. the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan
  - C. the United States, North Korea
  - D. the Soviet Union, the United States
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The space race was a competition to excel in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. space discoveries and technology
  - B. finding life on other planets
  - C. putting a man on the moon
  - D. building a satellite to orbit the earth
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The first man-made satellite to orbit the Earth was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Explorer I
  - B. Sputnik I
  - C. A-1
  - D. Explorer II
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The first man in space was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Alan Shepard
  - B. Yuri Gagarin
  - C. John Glenn
  - D. Vladimir Putin
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Space Act of 1958 \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. created NASA
  - B. provided for an Earth orbiting satellite
  - C. started the space race
  - D. started the program to send up spy satellites
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Spy satellites were part of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. space race
  - B. arms race
  - C. both
  - D. neither
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. This article is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. a competition that was not taken seriously
  - B. a friendly competition
  - C. a competition that started a cold war
  - D. a competition that was a part of the Cold War

