



Read the story again. Then answer each question using your own thinking and details from the text.

## Moon Mission



Zara had wanted to be an astronaut since she was five years old. She kept a jar of rocks on her windowsill — one from every park she had ever visited. She told her mum they were "practice moon rocks."

At fourteen, she applied for the Junior Space Academy. Of 3,000 applicants, only twelve were chosen. Zara studied late into the night for three months before the selection test. When the acceptance letter arrived, she read it four times before she believed it.

Moonbase Stella sat on the southern rim of Shackleton Crater. The base was smaller than Zara had imagined — six white pods connected by glass tunnels. But through every window, the stars were impossibly bright.

On her second day, Mission Commander Osei brought the crew to the surface in their suits. The ground crunched under Zara's boots. She bent down and picked up a small grey stone.

At the end of the mission, Commander Osei handed Zara a small clear case. Inside was a moon rock — not a training sample, a real one. "Keep this," she said. "It's a reminder that dreams don't just happen in your head — they happen when you work for them."

Zara held the rock to the window and watched the Earth glow below her. She smiled so hard it hurt.



(1) Why did Commander Osei give Zara the moon rock at the end of the story?

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(2) Zara collected rocks from parks on Earth. How does this detail connect to what happens at the end of the story?

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(3) Commander Osei says dreams "happen when you work for them." What does this tell you about what she believes?

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(4) Why do you think studying "late into the night for three months" was important for Zara to include in the story?

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(5) How would the story's message change if Zara had been randomly chosen for the mission instead of earning her spot?

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