



Read the passage about space exploration. Then answer the questions below.

Humans have been exploring space since 1957. Each passage focuses on a real mission, discovery, or astronaut story.



The Artemis Program: Returning Humanity to the Moon



The Artemis program represents NASA's ambitious plan to return humans to the Moon, not just for a brief visit, but to establish a sustainable presence. Named after Apollo's twin sister in Greek mythology, Artemis aims to land the first woman and first person of color on the lunar surface, paving the way for future human exploration of Mars. This program builds upon the legacy of the Apollo missions but with advanced technology and a long-term vision.

At the heart of the Artemis program are two powerful pieces of hardware: the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and the Orion spacecraft. The SLS is the most powerful rocket ever built by NASA, designed to carry astronauts and heavy cargo far beyond Earth orbit. The Orion capsule is where the astronauts will live during their journey to the Moon and back, offering a safe and advanced environment for deep space travel.



Beyond the initial lunar landings, Artemis plans to construct the Lunar Gateway, a small space station that will orbit the Moon. The Gateway will serve as a crucial outpost for astronauts, providing a place to live, conduct science, and prepare for descents to the lunar surface using specialized Human Landing Systems. This orbiting station will allow for more frequent and longer missions to the Moon's South Pole, an area believed to hold valuable water ice.



The Artemis program is more than just returning to the Moon; it's about learning to live and work in deep space. The experiences gained and technologies developed through Artemis will be vital for preparing humanity for the even more challenging journey to Mars. By establishing a sustained presence on the Moon, NASA aims to develop the capabilities needed for sending astronauts to the Red Planet in the coming decades.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- (1) **What is one of the main goals of NASA's Artemis program?** 🌕
- (A) To send probes to Jupiter
 - (B) To land the first woman and person of color on the Moon
 - (C) To build a permanent city on Mars
 - (D) To study black holes
- (2) **How does the Artemis program plan to support longer missions to the Moon compared to the Apollo missions?** 🚀
- (A) By using smaller rockets
 - (B) By sending more robots instead of humans
 - (C) By building the Lunar Gateway, an orbiting space station
 - (D) By only visiting the Moon's equator
- (3) **In the passage, what does the word "sustainable" mean in the context of the Artemis program's lunar presence?** 🏠
- (A) Able to be done only once
 - (B) Able to be maintained over a long period
 - (C) Requiring very little effort
 - (D) Requiring no new technology
- (4) **If scientists discovered a large amount of a rare mineral on the Moon's South Pole that required heavy equipment to extract, which part of the Artemis system would be most essential for launching that equipment from Earth?** 🛠️



- (A) The Orion spacecraft (B) The Human Landing System
(C) The Space Launch System (SLS) rocket (D) The Lunar Gateway

(5) Explain in your own words why the Artemis program is considered a "stepping stone" for future human exploration of Mars. 🚀

