

Landmark Events in American History



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The First Moon Landing

Teacher's Guide written by Susan Nations, M.Ed.

Series Overview:

The *Landmark Events in American History* series examines important events in the history of the United States. It explores the causes and significance of key moments and developments and takes a fresh look at both myths and heroes. The legacies of these events, whether good or bad, are also explained. Each book is 48 pages in length and includes both full-color photos and archival illustrations. In addition, each book uses an array of informational text features to bring alive these stories of the nation's past, from the cultures of ancient America to the turning points of recent times.

Features of Informational Text:

Each title in the series *Landmark Events in American History* is filled with such features as clear maps, charts, time lines, archival illustrations, and primary-source documents that enhance and supplement the running text. These important features of informational text invite student inquiry and investigation both in the classroom and independently.

The First Moon Landing:

It was an extraordinary moment for humanity when the *Eagle* lunar module of the *Apollo 11* mission landed on the Moon on July 20, 1969. This book looks at the space program of the 1950s and 1960s and examines the political and technological environment in which the Moon landing took place. It follows the exciting moments of the lunar descent and first steps on the Moon and offers an in-depth account of the entire Apollo program, before and after the Moon landing. The book also gives a clear overview of the space program since Apollo, examining such U.S. achievements as the Space Shuttle and Hubble Space Telescope. It also looks at international cooperation in space and the great advances in knowledge that have resulted.

The following three pages of the Teacher's Guide include:

- Discussion Questions and Inquiries for Readers
- Introduction and prediction
- Reading the Introduction
- Chapter-by-chapter discussion questions and conversation
- Conclusion discussion
- Time Line investigation
- Focus on Informational Text Features
- Vocabulary Building
- Critical Reading Strategies and Test Preparation

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Discussion Questions and Inquiries for Readers:

Introduction and prediction. Prior to reading the book, ask students to browse through each chapter, noticing the subheadings, photos, diagrams, quote boxes, and sidebars. Ask students to make at least one prediction, based on their browsing, about what they will read in this book. Each student should record his or her prediction(s) on a sticky note. Use these predictions during and after reading to guide your discussions. When you complete the book, let each student confirm or revise his or her prediction(s) based on the information read about the first Moon landing. Encourage students to use details and information from the text as confirmation.

Read the Introduction (pages 4–5). Students should read this section independently or with a partner. Remind them to read the photo captions as well as the text. Ask students to revisit their original predictions. Then discuss Buzz Aldrin’s quote from the quote box on page 5. Ask students to explain what “insatiable curiosity of all mankind to explore the unknown” means. (Note: You may need to refer students to a dictionary to define the word “insatiable” prior to this discussion.)

Chapter 1: The Space Race (pages 6–11). Prior to reading this chapter, ask each student to share what he or she thinks the chapter title—“The Space Race”—means. Students can then read the chapter independently or with a partner. After reading, ask each student to give a brief oral summary of the space race.

Chapter 2: The Apollo Program (pages 12–19). Invite students to browse through pages 12–19. As they skim and scan, ask them to note how the photos, captions, quote boxes, sidebars, and diagram enhance the text. Students can then read the chapter independently or with a partner. When they are finished, let each student select one of the informational text features listed above to discuss. Each student should explain how it enhances the reader’s understanding of the Apollo program.

Chapter 3: Apollo 11 (pages 20–29). Divide this chapter into parts using the subheadings. Assign one or more students to read each part. Ask each student to summarize his or her reading either orally or in writing. Remind students that a summary is a brief description. Then, as a group, study the diagram on page 24. Students should describe the *Apollo 11* mission using the diagram. Encourage them to use details, names, and dates from the running text to support their description.

Chapter 4: Exploring the Moon (pages 30–33). Students can read this chapter independently. Before reading, prepare a chart with two columns and six rows. In the first column, label each row with a flight number, starting with *Apollo 12* and ending with *Apollo 17*. After students read, ask them to identify and note in the second column at least one thing accomplished on each of the missions. Compare and contrast the group chart with the chart on page 30.

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Chapter 5: After Apollo (pages 34–41). Assign one or more students to read a page from this chapter, making sure all pages are assigned. Ask each student to write one or two questions that can be answered by reading his or her page. Students can share their questions with the remainder of the group. Other students can answer the questions by skimming and scanning the page involved.

Conclusion (pages 42–43). Before reading the conclusion, ask students to think about the question from the first subheading—“Was it worth the money?” Each student should answer the question using details and information from the text to support his or her opinion. When they are finished, read this section and compare their answers with those presented in the book. Then revisit the sticky note predictions students made prior to reading the text. Each student should confirm or revise his or her prediction(s).

Time Line (page 44). Compare and contrast the Time Line on page 44 with the time lines on pages 18 and 30 of the text. Discuss how the expanded time lines on pages 18 and 30 give the reader more information than the Time Line on page 44, because the expanded time lines list dates, key events, and people. Students should note how the events listed that took place prior to each flight supported each subsequent flight. For example, the time line on page 18 indicates that *Apollo 8* reached and orbited the moon, while *Apollo 9* went beyond that and began testing how the command module and lunar module could detach and dock.

Choose one of the following activities to invite students to revisit the text:

Focus on Informational Text Features: Summarizing information is an important part of comprehension. When a reader summarizes information, he or she is able to give the main ideas of the reading in a few sentences. The reader must remember that a summary is short and concise. Students can use the activity from the Critical Reading Strategies and Test Preparation below and page 4 of this guide to practice summarizing their reading.

Vocabulary Building: Ask students to browse through the Glossary on page 45 of the book. Each student should select four or five words or terms he or she would like to learn more about. Ask them to decide how they can locate the words in context. Students can use the Index or skimming and scanning to find out more about their selected words. Discuss how the Index helps. Explain that occasionally a word will not be listed in the Index. Ask students to discuss why or why not. Each student should explain why his or her selected words are or are not included in the Index of the text. Ask them to note if the words can be defined by reading in context or if understanding them requires going to an outside source.

Critical Reading Strategies and Test Preparation: Strategic readers can reread to find information within the text. They know that rereading by skimming and scanning helps them to locate information quickly. Strategic readers know how to identify what is most important to help them answer questions about a specific topic. Students should use page 4 of this guide to practice rereading, scanning for information, and highlighting facts.

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Finding Information

Directions: Read the article below and use a highlighter to locate information that will help you answer the questions.

Discoveries on the Moon

Apollo astronauts brought back rocks older than any found on Earth—one was nicknamed the “Genesis rock” because it was so ancient. Some rocks brought back from the Moon contained minerals never before seen. One was named “armalcolite” after the three *Apollo 11* astronauts (“arm” for Armstrong, “al” for Aldrin, “col” for Collins, and “ite” because it is a mineral). This mineral came from meteorites—rocks that move through space—that had hit the Moon’s surface. Later, it was found in craters left by meteorites that had hit Earth.

The Moon is very ancient, and its early history reveals information about the formation of Earth, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, including that the Moon and Earth had similar origins and were made of similar

materials. Volcanoes had erupted on the Moon, as they have on Earth. Many meteorites have slammed into the Moon’s surface. Earth has evidence of this kind of activity also.

Because the Moon has no atmosphere, there is no air and no temperature control—it is baking hot in the heat of the Sun and gets freezing cold at night. There are no living creatures, nor evidence that anything ever lived there. In 1998, however, hydrogen was detected at the Moon’s poles, which means that there may be water—and therefore potential for life—in the form of millions of tons of ice frozen in the Moon’s surface layer. Plans for a space station on the Moon have been discussed at NASA, and the presence of water would mean the possibility of growing food.

1. What is armalcolite? Where is it found? _____

2. How are the Earth and the Moon similar? _____

3. What is the importance of the discovery of hydrogen on the Moon? _____

Summarize Your Learning: Use all of the information that you read and your answers to summarize this article. Write two to three sentences on a separate sheet of paper that tell the main idea and key points about discoveries on the Moon.

Susan Nations, M.Ed., is a literacy coach, author, and staff developer living in Sarasota, Florida. She has worked with teachers around the United States on literacy development and instruction in the elementary classroom. She is the co-author of *Primary Literacy Centers: Making Reading and Writing STICK!* and *So Much Stuff, So Little Space: Creating and Managing the Learner-Centered Classroom*.

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