

ARTEMIS MISSIONS

GRADE 8 AND UP READING

Improve students'
literacy skills

Science
Applicability

Sub Plan



Teach With
Fergy

Reading Comment

Extremely satisfied - Great resource to work on student reading comprehension and it tied into the topic I was teaching. My students have been struggling with reading and I've been incorporating more reading into my lessons. Thank you for the resource.

SCROLL
to take a look inside!

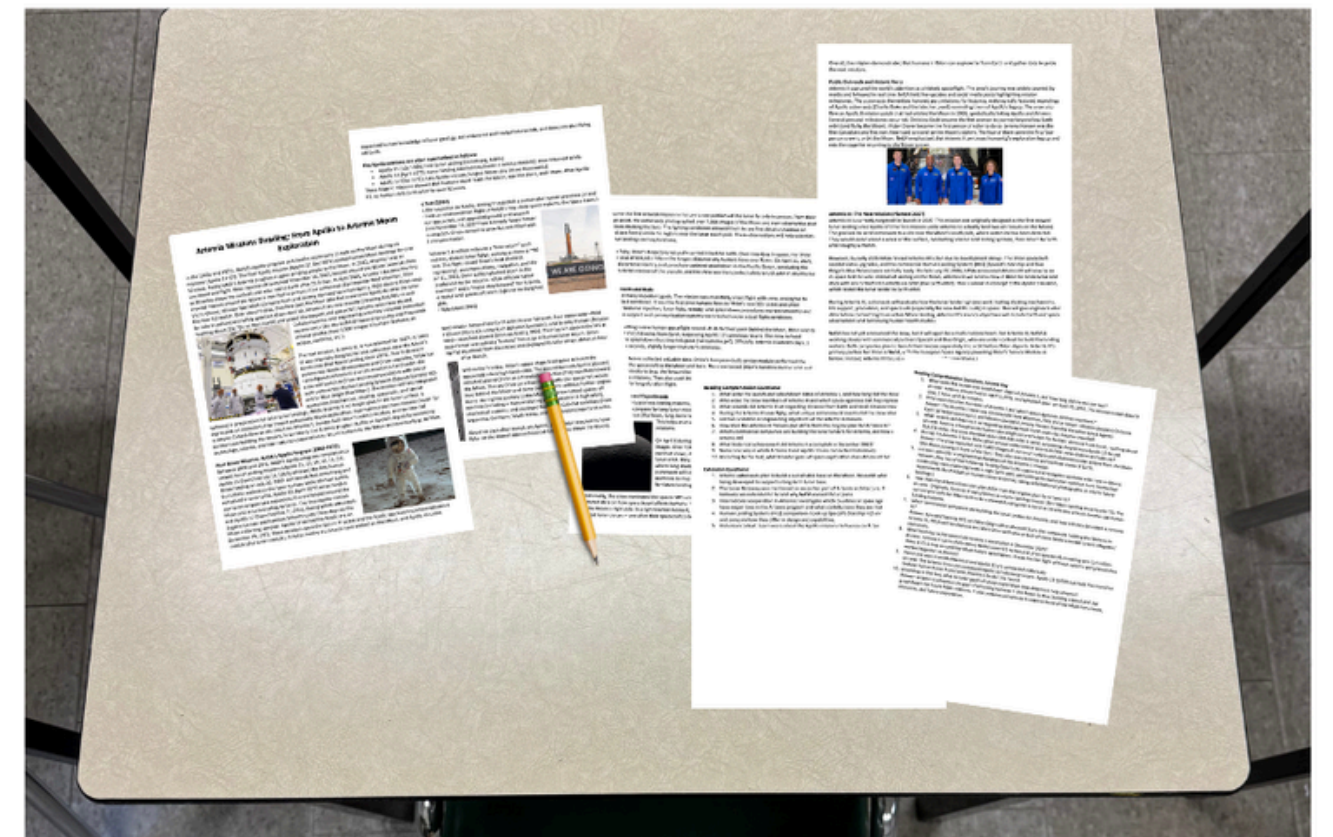
From Apollo to Artemis to the Moon

THE PROBLEMS YOU FACE

- Limited time to teach scientific literacy and strengthen students' reading and analysis skills.
- Need meaningful extension activities to engage fast-moving learners.
- Difficulty creating effective last-minute sub plans that still support student learning.

NO-PREP - PRINT/UPLOAD

- **CLASSROOM READY - No Prep, Ready-to-Use:** Print or assign digitally with Google Docs, Microsoft Word, and PDF formats for flexible classroom use
- **Questions and Answer Key**
- **Includes Varied Question Types:** Knowledge, thinking, connecting, application, and open-ended questions.



What Will Your Students Learn?

READING COMPREHENSION ARTICLE & QUESTION BUNDLE

Article with
Comprehension
Questions

Grade 8 and Up

Print & Digital

- The Apollo Program and Moon Landings
- Apollo 11, Apollo 13, and Apollo 17
- Why Humans Stopped Going to the Moon
- Introduction to the Artemis Program
- Artemis I, II, and III
- Orion Spacecraft and SLS Rocket
- Human Landing Systems (SpaceX and Blue Origin)
- Lunar Flybys and Orbital Mechanics
- Scientific Experiments in Space
- Data Collection and Lunar Imaging
- International Cooperation (NASA, ESA, CSA, etc.)
- Commercial Space Partnerships
- Future Moon Missions and Mars Exploration

Comprehension Questions

1. List two scientific reasons and two strategic or economic reasons for building a moon base?
2. Why is the lunar south pole a favored location for a moon base?
3. What is in-situ resource utilization (ISRU), and why is it important for a lunar base?
4. Name three main components that a lunar habitat must provide.
5. What was the significance of NASA's Artemis II mission?
6. Describe the challenges astronauts face on the Moon that they do NOT face on Earth.
7. What are the benefits of a lunar base?
8. Define ISRU.
9. Why is the lunar south pole a favored location for a moon base?
10. Give one example of a lunar resource that can be used for ISRU.

Extension

1. Research the Apollo 11 mission. Write a short paragraph about the mission.
2. Interview a NASA scientist or engineer. Write a short paragraph about their work.
3. Read the article "The Next Mission: Artemis III" and write a short paragraph about the mission.
4. Write a short paragraph about the challenges of building a lunar base.

Artemis Missions Reading: From Apollo to Artemis Moon Exploration

In the 1960s and 1970s, NASA's Apollo program sent twelve astronauts to walk on the Moon during six missions (Apollo 11–17). The final Apollo mission (Apollo 17, Dec 1972) ended human Moon landings for over 50 years. Today NASA's Artemis program is again sending people to the Moon. In 2022, Artemis I was an uncrewed test flight: Orion spacecraft launched November 16, 2022, looped around the Moon twice (as close as 80 miles above the surface) and returned to Earth after 25.5 days. In April 2026, Artemis II will be an uncrewed mission around the Moon in over half a century. Four astronauts (Commander Reid Wiseman, Pilot Victor Glover, Mission Specialist Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen) launched April 1, 2026 aboard Orion atop the new SLS rocket. Over about 9 days, they flew past the Moon (the first crew since Apollo to view the lunar far side in person) and safely splashed down April 10. Artemis II set new records (traveling 694,481 mi and reaching about 252,756 mi from Earth) and tested life-support and spacecraft systems with crew aboard.



Detailed science and engineering activities included biomedical experiments (like the AVATAR tissue chip study) and thousands of lunar photos (over 7,000 images of surface features, an eclipse, earthrise, etc.).

The next mission, Artemis III, is now planned for 2027. Artemis III was originally designed to land astronauts near the Moon's south pole (first Moon landing since 1972). Due to delays in reconfigured Artemis III as a test mission in Earth orbit: the crew will launch in Orion and rendezvous/dock with one or both commercial Human Landing Systems (SpaceX Starship HLS and/or Blue Origin Blue Moon). The mission will test integrated operations (rendezvous, docking, spacewalks, and lander systems) in preparation for later lunar landings. While Artemis III no longer goes to the lunar surface, it represents an important step toward sustainable Moon exploration. International partners remain crucial: for example, Canada flew an astronaut on Artemis II, Europe built Orion's service module, and commercial partners are building the landers. In summary, the Artemis program builds on Apollo's legacy by advancing technology, science, and international cooperation to return humans to the Moon and eventually go to Mars.

Past Moon Missions: NASA's Apollo Program (1969–1972)

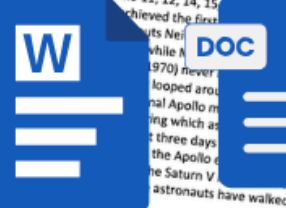
Between 1969 and 1972, NASA's Apollo program completed six crewed lunar landing missions (Apollo 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17). Apollo 11 (launched July 16, 1969) was the first mission to land humans on the Moon. Astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong became the first two people to walk on the Moon. Apollo 17 (launched December 14, 1972) was the last mission to land humans on the Moon. Astronauts Eugene S. Cernan and Harrison H. Schmitt were the last two people to walk on the Moon.

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Artemis Missions Reading: From Apollo to Artemis Moon Exploration

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Past Moon Missions: NASA's Apollo Program (1969–1972)

Between 1969 and 1972, NASA's Apollo program completed six crewed lunar landing missions (Apollo 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17). Apollo 11 (launched July 16, 1969) achieved the first human Moon landing on July 20, 1969. Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the lunar surface while Michael Collins remained in lunar orbit. Apollo 13 (April 1970) never landed due to an oxygen tank explosion; its crew looped around the Moon and returned safely to Earth. The final Apollo mission was Apollo 17 (launched Dec 7, 1972), during which astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt spent three days on the Moon collecting samples. Apollo 17 ended the Apollo era on December 19, 1972. These missions used the Saturn V rocket and the Apollo 11 module plus lunar module). In total, twelve astronauts have walked on the Moon.

Artemis II became the first crewed mission in history to see portions of the lunar far side in person. From their unique vantage point, the astronauts photographed over 7,000 images of the Moon and even observed a solar eclipse (the Moon blocking the Sun). The lighting conditions allowed them to see fine details (shadows on crater rims and lava flows) similar to regions near the lunar south pole. These observations will help scientists plan future lunar landings and explorations.

After the Moon flyby, Orion's trajectory naturally carried it back to Earth. Over nine days in space, the Orion crew traveled a total of 694,481 miles—the longest distance any humans have ever flown. On April 10, 2026, Orion performed a precise reentry and parachute-assisted splashdown in the Pacific Ocean, concluding the mission. US Navy divers recovered the capsule, and the crew was transported safely to USS John P. Murtha for medical checks.

Mission Achievements and Data

Artemis II achieved many important goals. The mission was essentially a test flight with crew, analogous to Apollo 7 and Apollo 8 combined. It was the first time humans flew on NASA's new SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft. The mission tested Orion's reentry, reentry, and splashdown procedures worked smoothly on systems were tested under actual flight conditions.

Orion's European-built service module performed well during the mission. The crew tested Orion's handling during reentry and splashdown, which protects Orion's parachutes before landing. Orion Crew Survival System suits and tested crew equipment.

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Overall, the mission demonstrated that humans in Orion can explore far from Earth and gather the next missions.

Public Outreach and Historic Firsts

Artemis II captured the world's attention as a historic spaceflight. The crew's journey was widely covered in media and followed in real time. NASA held live updates and social media posts highlighting historic milestones. The astronauts themselves honored past missions: for instance, wake-up calls from the Apollo astronauts (Charlie Duke and the late Jim Lovell) reminding them of Apollo's legacy. Orion's mission patch that had orbited the Moon in 1968, symbolically linking Apollo and Artemis. Several personal milestones occurred. Christina Koch became the first woman to journey beyond Earth orbit (and fly by the Moon). Victor Glover became the first person of color to do so. Jeremy Hansen became the first Canadian (and first non-American) to travel to the Moon's vicinity. The four of them were the first crew to orbit the Moon. NASA emphasized that Artemis II continues humanity's exploration of the Moon to stay.

Artemis III: The Next Mission (Planned 2027)

Artemis III is currently targeted for launch in 2027. This mission was originally designed as the lunar landing since Apollo 17 (the first mission under Artemis to actually land two astronauts on the Moon). The goal was to send astronauts to a site near the Moon's south pole, where water-ice has been detected. They would spend about a week on the surface, conducting science and testing systems, and then return to Earth after roughly a month.

However, by early 2026 NASA revised Artemis III's plan due to development delays. The Orion spacecraft needed extra upgrades, and the commercial Human Landing Systems (HLS) from SpaceX's Starship or Blue Origin's Blue Moon were not fully ready. On February 27, 2026, NASA announced Artemis III would be an in-space test mission. Instead of landing on the Moon, Artemis III will send a crew in Orion to orbit the Moon with one or both HLS vehicles in orbit (low Earth orbit). This is similar in concept to the Apollo 16 mission, which tested the lunar lander in Earth orbit.

During Artemis III, astronauts will evaluate how the lunar lander systems work: testing docking mechanisms, life support, propulsion, and spacesuits (especially the new AxEMU suits) in space. This will give engineers vital data before committing to an actual Moon landing. Artemis III's science objectives will include Earth and space observations and continuing human health studies.

NASA has not yet announced the crew, but it will again be a multi-national team. For Artemis III, NASA is working closely with commercial partners SpaceX and Blue Origin, who are under contract to build the landing rockets. Both companies plan to launch their landers separately into orbit before Orion departs. Artemis III's primary partner for Orion is NASA, with the European Space Agency providing Orion's European Service Module. Instead, Artemis III focuses on direct Orion-lander operations.)

Reading Comprehension Questions:

- What were the launch and splashdown dates of Artemis II, and how long did the mission last?
- Who were the crew members of Artemis II and which space agencies did they represent?
- What records did Artemis II set regarding distance from Earth and total distance traveled?
- During the Artemis II lunar flyby, what unique astronomical events did the crew observe and capture?
- List two scientific or engineering objectives of the Artemis II mission.
- How does the Artemis III mission plan differ from the original plan for Artemis III?
- Which commercial companies are building the lunar landers for Artemis, and how will they be tested in Artemis III?
- What historical achievement did Artemis I accomplish in December 2022?
- Name one way in which Artemis II and Apollo 13 are connected historically.
- According to the text, what broader goals of space exploration does Artemis II help advance?

Extension Questions:

- Artemis astronauts plan to build a sustainable base on the Moon. Research what being developed to support a long-term lunar base.
- The Lunar Gateway was mentioned as an earlier part of Artemis architecture. What was its intended purpose, and why was it revised?
- International cooperation in Artemis: Investigate which countries or space agencies have major roles in the Artemis program and what contributions they are making.
- Human Landing Systems (HLS) comparison: Look up SpaceX's Starship HLS and Blue Origin's Blue Moon HLS and compare how they differ in design and capabilities.
- Historical context: Learn more about the Apollo missions' influence on Artemis.

Reading Comprehension Questions: Answer Key

- What were the launch and splashdown dates of Artemis II, and how long did the mission last?
Answer: Artemis II launched on April 1, 2026, and splashed down on April 10, 2026. The mission lasted about 9 days, 1 hour, and 32 minutes.
- Who were the crew members of Artemis II and which space agencies did they represent?
Answer: The Artemis II crew was Commander Reid Wiseman (NASA), Pilot Victor Glover (NASA), Mission Specialist Christina Koch (NASA), and Mission Specialist Jeremy Hansen (Canada).
- What records did Artemis II set regarding distance from Earth and total distance traveled?
Answer: Artemis II became the human spaceflight record holder for farthest distance from Earth, reaching about 252,756 miles. The crew traveled about 694,481 miles in total, surpassing the previous Apollo 13 record.
- During the Artemis II lunar flyby, what unique astronomical events did the crew observe and capture?
Answer: The crew captured over 7,000 images of the lunar surface and observed a solar eclipse from the Moon (the Moon passing in front of the Sun). They also saw earthrise and earthset views of Earth.
- List two scientific or engineering objectives of the Artemis II mission.
Answer: (Any two of the following: Testing Orion's life support and navigation systems with crew on board; conducting manual piloting tests in high Earth orbit; performing the translunar injection burn; biomedical experiments like AVATAR on human tissue response; taking detailed lunar photographs to inform future landings.)
- How does the Artemis III mission plan differ from the original plan for Artemis III?
Answer: Originally, Artemis III was planned as a lunar landing mission (first Moon landing since Apollo 17). The current plan calls for Artemis III to be a crewed docking test in Earth orbit with one or both commercial Human Landing Systems.
- Which commercial companies are building the lunar landers for Artemis, and how will they be tested in Artemis III?
Answer: SpaceX (Starship HLS) and Blue Origin (Blue Moon HLS) are the companies building the landers. In Artemis III, NASA will rendezvous and dock Orion with one or both of these landers in orbit to test integrated operations.
- What historical achievement did Artemis I accomplish in December 2022?
Answer: Artemis I successfully tested NASA's new SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft, traveling over 1.4 million miles in 25.5 days around the Moon before splashdown. It was the first flight of these systems and proved they worked together as planned.
- Name one way in which Artemis II and Apollo 13 are connected historically.
Answer: The Artemis II mission surpassed Apollo 13's distance record. Apollo 13 (1970) had held the record for farthest human travel from Earth; Artemis II broke this record.
- According to the text, what broader goals of space exploration does Artemis II help advance?
Answer: Artemis II advances the goal of returning humans to the Moon to stay (building a base) and lays groundwork for future Mars missions. It also prepares astronauts to explore more of the Moon for science, resources, and future exploration.

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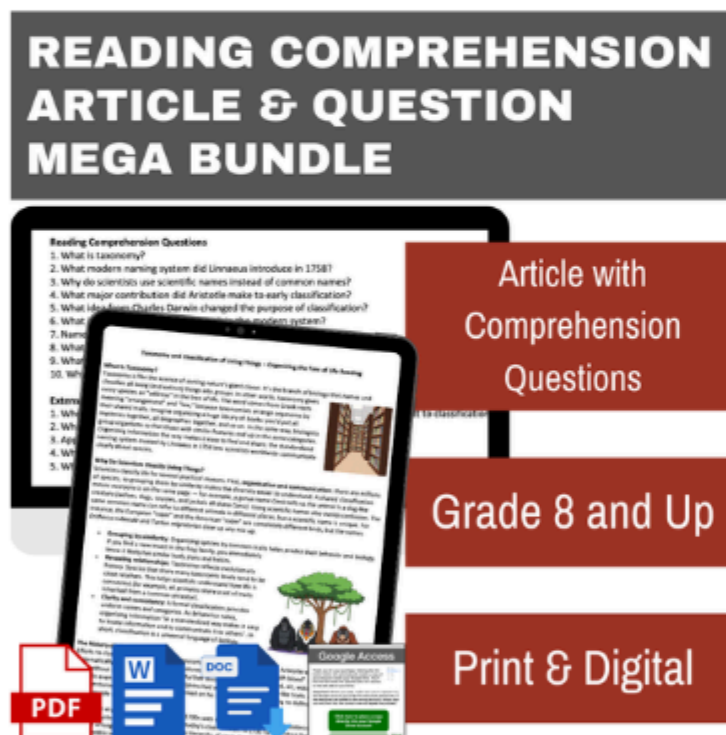
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NASA has not yet announced the cost, but it will again be a multi-national team. For Artemis III, NASA is working closely with commercial partners SpaceX and Blue Origin, who are under contract to build the landing rockets. Both companies plan to launch their landers separately into orbit before Orion departs. Artemis III's primary partner for Orion is NASA, with the European Space Agency providing Orion's Service Module before. Instead, Artemis III focuses on direct Orion-lander operations.)

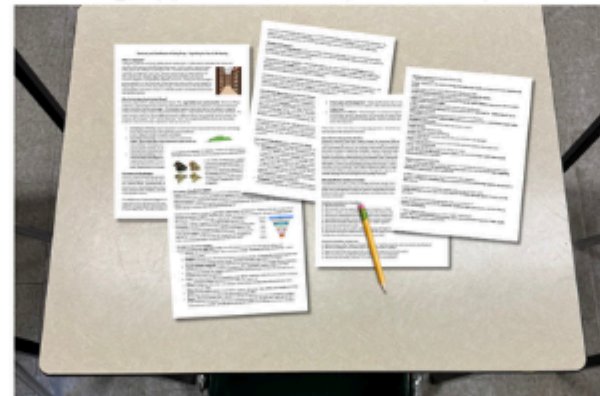
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★★★★★ Extremely satisfied - It is a good supplemental activity either for review and at the same time introducing some concept. I also use this for sub plan. It is well presented, organized and interesting.

★★★★★ Extremely satisfied - This a great resource. I used this for a sub plan. It was fun and engaging for my students.

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*Let's
Connect!*

