



















Timeline of Space Exploration

- 1957**  **Oct. 4** - USSR launches Sputnik 1.
-  **Nov. 3** - USSR launches Sputnik 2 which carried a small dog named Laika into orbit.
- 1958**  **Jan. 31** - Explorer 1, the first American satellite to reach orbit, is launched. It carried scientific equipment that led to the discovery of the Van Allen radiation belt.
-  **Mar. 5** - Explorer 2 is launched but it fails to reach orbit.
-  **Mar. 17** - The Vanguard 1 satellite is launched. It continues to function for 3 - years.
-  **May 15** - Sputnik 3 is launched.
-  **Oct. 1** - The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is formed, it replaces the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics (NACA).
-  **Oct. 11** - Pioneer 1 is launched to a height of 70,700 miles.
- 1959**  **Jan. 2** - Luna 1 is launched by the USSR. It is the first man-made object to orbit the Sun.
-  **Mar. 3** - Pioneer 4 is launched on a Earth-Moon trajectory. It passed within 37,000 miles of the Moon before falling into a solar orbit.
-  **Apr. 2** - The "Mercury Seven" astronauts are selected by NASA.
-  **Sep. 12** - Luna 2 is launched. It impacts the Moon on September 13, becoming the first man-made object to do so.
-  **Oct. 4** - Luna 3 orbits the Moon and photographs 70% of its surface.

- 1960**  **Apr. 1** - Tiros 1, the first successful weather satellite, is launched.
-  **Aug. 18** The US launches Discoverer XIV, its first camera equipped spy
- satellite.
-  **Nov. 8** - John F. Kennedy is elected the 35th President of the United States.
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- 1961**  **Apr. 12** Yuri Gagarin orbits the Earth once and becomes the first man in
- space.
-  **May 5** - Alan B. Shepard becomes the first American in space.
-  **May 25** President John F. Kennedy addresses Congress and challenges the
- nation to go to the Moon before the end of the decade.
-  **Jul. 21** - Gus Grissom is launched on a sub-orbital flight. His Liberty-Bell
capsule is lost when it fills with water and sinks after splashdown.
-  **Aug. 6** - Gherman Titov spends a day in space aboard Vostok 2.
-  **Dec. 7** - NASA announces the Gemini Program.
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- 1962**  **Feb. 20** - John Glenn orbits the Earth three times.
-  **May 24**
- Scott Carpenter repeats John Glenn's flight aboard "Aurora 7".
-  **Sep. 12** - President Kennedy gives a speech at Rice University reaffirming the
importance of the Moon program.
-  **Sep. 17** - NASA selects its second group of astronauts.
-  **Oct. 3** - Walter Schirra orbits the Earth six times.
-  **Dec. 14** - Mariner 2 flies past Venus and enters a solar orbit.

- 1963**  **May 15** L. Gordon Cooper spends 34 hours in space. He is the last American
- to fly in space alone.
-  **Jun. 16** - Cosmonaut Valentin Tereshkova becomes the first woman in space.
-  **Oct. 17** - A third group of NASA astronauts is selected.
-  **Nov. 22** - President Kennedy is assassinated
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- 1964**  **Jul. 31** - Ranger 7 transmits the first close range images of the Moon.
-  **Oct. 31** - Astronaut Theodore Freeman dies in a plane crash.
- 1965**  **Mar. 18** Alexei Leonov spends 12 minutes outside of his Voskhod spacecraft
- performing the first spacewalk.
-  **Mar. 23**
- Gus Grissom and John Young fly the first manned Gemini spacecraft.
-  **Jun. 3** - Ed White performs America's first spacewalk. Jim McDivitt remains
in the Gemini capsule.
-  **Jul. 14** - Mariner 4 returns close range images of Mars.
-  **Nov. 16** Venus 3 is launched. It becomes the first man made object to impact
- Venus on March 1, 1966.
-  **Dec. 4** - Frank Borman and James Lovell begin a two week stay in Earth orbit
aboard Gemini 7.
-  **Dec. 15** - Walter Schirra and Thomas Stafford, in their Gemini 6 spacecraft,
make the first space rendezvous with Gemini 7.

- 1966**
-  **Feb. 3** - Luna 9 becomes the first spacecraft to soft-land on the Moon.
 -  **Feb. 28** - Astronauts Charles Bassett and Elliott See die when their plane crashes in bad weather.
 -  **Apr. 3** - Luna 10 becomes the first satellite to orbit the Moon.
 -  **Jun. 2** - Surveyor 1 soft-lands on the Moon.
 -  **Aug. 14** Lunar Orbiter 1 enters orbit around the Moon and takes the first - picture of the Earth from that distance.
 -  **Nov. 11** Gemini 12, the last flight of the Gemini Program, launches with - James Lovell and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin aboard.
- 1967**
-  **Jan. 27** - Gus Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee are killed when a fire ignites in their Apollo 1 capsule while performing a test on the launch pad.
 -  **Apr. 24** Cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov is killed when the parachutes of his - Soyuz 1 capsule fail to open properly following re-entry.
 -  **Jun. 6** - Astronaut Edward Givens is killed in an automobile accident.
 -  **Oct. 5** - Astronaut Clifton Williams is killed in a plane crash.
 -  **Oct. 18** - Venera 4 transmits data about the atmosphere of Venus.
- 1968**
-  **Mar. 27** - Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, dies in a plane crash.
 -  **Sep. 15** - Zond 5 is launched. It carried a biological payload (including two turtles) around the Moon and returned to Earth six days later.
 -  **Oct. 11** - The crew of Apollo 7 begin a 10-day mission to study the new spacecraft.
 -  **Dec. 21** - Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders begin the first manned journey from the Earth to the Moon. On Christmas Eve they take turns reading Genesis in a broadcast heard around the world.

1969



Jan. 16 - Soyuz 4 & 5 perform the first Soviet spacecraft docking.



Jul. 20 - Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin become the first men to walk on the Moon while crewmate Michael Collins orbits around the Moon alone.



Nov. 19 Pete Conrad and Alan Bean perform the first precision lunar landing,
- touching down just 600 feet from the Surveyor 3 probe that arrived two years earlier.