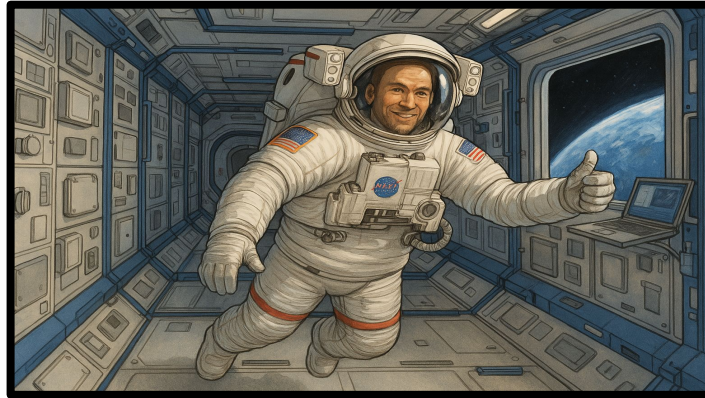


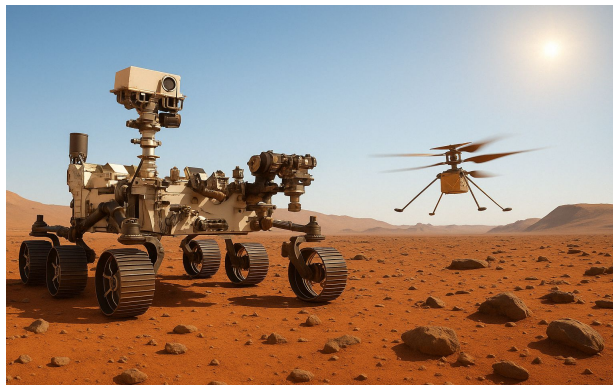
Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Compare and Contrast

Read the short story and answer each question.



What It's Like to Be an Astronaut

Astronauts are people trained to live and work in space. They wear special suits to protect their bodies and often stay on the **International Space Station (ISS)**, where they perform science experiments in microgravity. One astronaut said the hardest part was learning how to sleep while floating! To prepare, astronauts go through years of training. They practice swimming in large pools, train in fake space capsules, and even study Russian so they can work with international crews. Astronauts help us understand what it's like for humans to live in space. Their work makes future space travel, including trips to the Moon and Mars, possible.



Robots on Mars

Before people travel to Mars, robots go first. Mars rovers are robotic vehicles that explore the red planet. They take photos, collect samples, and send back data to Earth. The rover **Perseverance**, launched in 2020, is the most advanced rover ever sent. It even has a tiny helicopter called **Ingenuity** that flew above the Martian surface. Rovers help scientists study soil, weather, and signs of ancient life. Mars rovers can do a lot, but they don't replace astronauts. They can't make quick decisions or fix themselves if they break. But together, robots and people help us explore space more safely and completely.



Name: _____

What It's Like to Be an Astronaut & Robots on Mars

1. What is one way astronauts and Mars rovers both help explore space?

- A. They both live on Mars
- B. They both collect information and perform experiments
- C. They both speak Russian
- D. They both stay on the Moon

2. How are astronauts different from rovers?

- A. Astronauts can do flips in space
- B. Rovers live forever
- C. Astronauts can make decisions and fix problems
- D. Rovers write books

3. Fill in the blank:

Rovers explore by sending back data, while astronauts can also _____, observe, and fix problems in real time.

4. What are two ways astronauts and Mars rovers work together to help explore space?

5. How does reading both texts help you better understand how we learn about space?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: Q

Lexile Level: 735L-885L

Grade Level: 4th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Paired Informational Nonfiction – Space Exploration

Introducing the Text

“Today we’ll read two texts about how humans and robots explore space. One is about astronauts and what they do on the International Space Station. The other is about rovers sent to Mars. Together, these texts help us understand how we explore space using both people and machines.”

Vocabulary: astronaut, rover, Mars, microgravity, data

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you already know about space travel?
 2. What do you think robots can do in space?
 3. Why might scientists want both people and machines to explore space?
-

During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the job of an astronaut?
 2. What can rovers do that humans can’t?
 3. What are the limits of each?
-

After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from each text?
 2. How do the texts build on each other?
 3. Why is it important to compare both types of exploration?
-

Activity Idea

Have students complete a “Mission Planner” graphic organizer with two columns: one for tasks astronauts can do, and one for rovers. Then ask them to design their own “astro-rover team” that combines the best skills from each to explore a new planet.

