Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Analyze Multiple Accounts

Read the short story and answer each question.

Mission to Mars: What Will It Take?

Mission to Mars: What Will It Take?

In 1969, humans first walked on the Moon. Now, scientists are preparing for a much more difficult journey—sending humans to Mars. But getting to Mars is no simple task. It takes careful planning, advanced technology, and answers to some tricky problems.

Challenge #1: Distance Mars is about 140 million miles away from Earth. While it only took three days for Apollo 11 to reach the Moon, a trip to Mars could take anywhere from six to nine months. That means astronauts will be in space for over a year, including the return trip. Scientists must plan for food, water, and exercise to keep the crew healthy for the entire journey.

Challenge #2: Survival on Mars Unlike Earth, Mars has a thin atmosphere made mostly of carbon dioxide. Humans can't breathe it. Temperatures on Mars can drop below -100°F at night, and powerful dust storms can last for weeks. To survive, astronauts will need pressurized habitats, oxygen systems, and strong materials that can handle the harsh Martian weather.

Challenge #3: Communication Because of the distance, messages between Earth and Mars can take up to 22 minutes one way. That means astronauts must be trained to solve emergencies on their own without waiting for advice from Mission Control. NASA is already designing smart systems that can help crews make decisions faster and more safely.

Challenge #4: Energy and Power Solar panels work well on Earth, but Mars is farther from the Sun. Scientists are developing new types of energy systems, like compact nuclear reactors, to provide electricity for tools, computers, and life-support systems.

What's Happening Now? NASA, SpaceX, and other space organizations are building and testing parts of future Mars missions. In fact, NASA's Artemis program aims to return to the Moon first, using it as a testing ground for longer missions like one to Mars. Some experts believe the first humans could walk on Mars by the 2030s.

A Glimpse into the Future As more companies and countries join the race to explore Mars, new technologies and ideas continue to emerge. Will we build cities on Mars someday? No one knows for sure. But one thing is clear: the mission to Mars is one of the greatest challenges humans have ever faced—and it's getting closer every day.

Name:

Mission to Mars: What Will It Take?

1. What is one reason astronauts need to train for emergencies before going to Mars?

A. They won't be able to get immediate help from Earth because of the long communication delay.

B. Mars has strong gravity and no breathable air.

C. Mars has a shorter day than Earth, so planning is harder.

D. They will be launching from the Moon, not Earth.

2. Why do scientists want to return to the Moon before going to Mars?

A. To build permanent cities on the Moon

B. To use the Moon as a practice area for longer space missions

C. Because it is easier to grow food on the Moon

D. To test Earth's new solar panel technology

3. Fill in the blank:

To survive on Mars, astronauts will need _____ that can protect them from the cold, thin air, and dust storms.

4. Why is creating new energy systems so important for a mission to Mars?

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5. How does the long travel time and communication delay affect the planning for a Mars mission?

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Parent and Teacher Guide

Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading Level: T
Lexile Level: 900L–1050L
Grade Level: 5th Grade
Genre: Informational Text / Science & Technology

Introducing the Text

"Today we're going to read about one of the biggest goals in space exploration—traveling to Mars. As we read, we'll look at the many challenges astronauts and scientists must solve to make the mission successful. We'll also practice using different parts of the text to find answers quickly and solve real problems."

Vocabulary: atmosphere, pressurized, compact, mission, reactor

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you already know about space travel or NASA?
2. Why do you think scientists want to explore Mars?
3. What kinds of problems might people face on another planet?

During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does the text say about the dangers of Mars's weather?
2. How do different sections of the article help you understand the main challenges?
3. Why might new technologies be needed for energy on Mars?

After Reading Discussion Questions

1. Which of the challenges do you think is the hardest to solve, and why?
2. How does this article help us understand what the future of space travel might look like?
3. If you were part of the Mars planning team, what problem would you want to help solve?

Activity Idea

Challenge students to design their own Mars habitat using cardboard, paper, or a digital drawing app. They should label parts like oxygen supplies, energy systems, and protection from weather. Have students present how their design helps solve specific problems mentioned in the article.