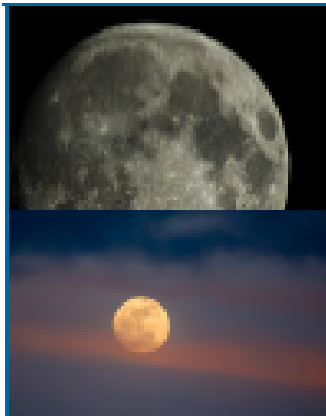


The Moon

Do you ever look up in the sky at night and see the spherical Moon lighting up the night-time town? Do you sometimes ponder what it would be like to visit the Moon or wonder why it shines so bright? Well here's some facts and figures that might interest you...

Moon and Sun

The Moon shines extremely brightly but is only reflecting the rays of the Sun whilst it is round the other side of the Earth. The Moon cannot make its own light as it is not a star, like the Sun. When we rotate back towards the Sun for our daytime, we assume the Moon goes away but it doesn't, it's just harder to see because it is so bright. Sometimes, if you look carefully, you can see the Moon in the sky during the daytime.



Did you know?

- Average surface temperature in the day: 107°C
- Average surface temperature at night: -153°C
- Distance from Earth: 238 857 miles
- Diameter: 2160 miles
- Length of day: 708 hours
- Selenophobia is fear of the Moon.

Orbit

The Moon is the Earth's only natural satellite (an object that orbits a larger object). It takes the Moon approximately 28 days to orbit the Earth once, this is referred to as a lunar month. During this time, we only ever see the same side of the Moon as it rotates slowly whilst it moves around us. The Moon is not quite spherical and is slightly heavier on one side, so gravity keeps the heavier side facing us.

During its orbit, the angle between the Earth, Moon and Sun changes so the part of the Moon that is lit up can not always be seen from Earth. This is what gives us the phases of the Moon, when it is waxing (getting bigger) and waning (getting smaller) with shapes including crescent and gibbous.

Moonwalking

Only 12 people have ever walked on the Moon! The first person to do this was Neil Armstrong on 20th July 1969. There were two other astronauts on the mission: Buzz Aldrin, who also walked on the moon, and Michael Collins, who stayed to orbit around the moon, travelled on the Apollo 11 spacecraft.

You may have seen footage of astronauts walking on the moon and you will notice it looks bouncy. This is because the Moon's gravity is only that of one sixth of the Earth's so people take longer to return to the surface when they are up in the air.

R:

1. How many people were on the first moon landing mission? (1 mark)
2. What is a satellite? (1 mark)
3. How much colder is the moon at night than in the daytime? (1 mark)
4. How far did Neil Armstrong travel to get to the moon? (1 mark)
5. How long is a lunar month? (1 mark)

I:

6. Who was the second man on the moon? How do you think he felt? (2 marks)
7. People refer to 'the dark side of the moon'. What do you think this means? (2 marks)

C:

1. Read the following sentence "Only 12 people have ever walked on the moon!" Why has an exclamation mark been added to this sentence? (2 marks)
2. Why does the text start with asking questions? (2 marks)
3. What choices has the author made to organise this text? How do they help the reader? (2 marks)
4. Suggest a new section which could be added to the text. Explain the reasons for your choice. (3 marks)
5. The title of this text is 'The Moon'. Suggest a better title, giving reasons for your choice. (2 marks)