Apollo 13

The mission of NASA's Apollo 13 was to reach the moon. The mission failed, but it taught NASA and the world important lessons about team work and never giving up.

Blast Off

On April 11th 1970, Apollo 13 blasted off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA. There were three crew onboard, James Lovell, Fred Haise and John Swigert. Lovell had already been to the moon. He was the most experienced of all the crew.

There was bad luck from the beginning. One of the original pilots was replaced only two days before blast-off. This was because he had been exposed to a virus. NASA couldn't risk any of the crew getting ill in space.

The Apollo 13 was made up of two different spacecraft, the Odyssey and the Aquarius. They were connected by a tunnel. Odyssey was the main spacecraft and where the crew lived. The Aquarius was much smaller. It was for landing on the moon.

Apollo 13's mission was to investigate the surface of the moon by taking photographs and getting samples of the moon's surface. The crew were also going to film videos for television. Everything went well at first.

An Explosion

On the evening of 13th April, disaster struck. An explosion rocked the spacecraft.

Swigert reported the explosion to mission control in Houston, exclaiming, "Houston, we've had a problem here."

An oxygen tank had exploded and caused serious damage. From the window, the astronauts could see gas escaping into the atmosphere. This gas was oxygen.

Apollo 13 was in great danger. The crew were stranded in space with a damaged spacecraft.

visit twinkl.com

It would take a huge amount of teamwork and bravery to get the crew safely home.

The crew moved into the smaller Aquarius. It became their lifeboat. Odyssey was shut down to try and save as much power as possible for the journey home to Earth.

Life Onboard

Life in space was very difficult for the crew. All power was turned off, except for the essential systems. This made the spacecraft extremely cold. Water and food were rationed. The crew were cramped and couldn't sleep.

The crew felt anxious, but they were supported by mission control, who were working hard to rescue them. They had to work as a team, despite the distance between them.

To get back to Earth, the crew had to return to Odyssey. They hoped there was enough power left to get them home.

Returning Home

On 17th April, the Apollo 13 crew splashed into the Pacific Ocean. Millions of people watched on television as they landed. The whole world celebrated the crew's safe return.

Apollo 13 is thought of as a 'successful failure' for NASA.

Although the mission failed to reach the moon, the crew returned home safely.

Apollo 13 showed the world that by working together, even when miles apart, any problem can be solved.

visit twinkl.com

Apollo 13 Questions

1. Where did the Apollo 13 blast off from? Tick one.

   - ○ Kennedy Space Centre
   - ○ Houston Space Centre
   - ○ Washington Space Centre
   - ○ New York Space Centre

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened to the Apollo 13.

   - ☐ There was an explosion in an oxygen tank
   - ☐ Apollo 13 blasts off on April 11th 1970
   - ☐ The crew land in the Pacific Ocean
   - ☐ The crew radios mission control to report a problem
   - ☐ The astronauts are stranded in space

3. Three crew members were onboard Apollo 13. Which had already been to the moon?

   - ○ Fred Haise
   - ○ John Swigert
   - ○ James Lovell

4. Where was Aquarius meant to land in space?

   _____

5. What did the crew radio to mission control when the explosion happened?

   _____

   _____

6. Find and copy one word that shows someone is feeling worried.

   _____

visit twinkl.com

7. People have many different qualities, for example, they might be tall, short, serious or cowardly. What qualities do you think the astronauts needed to help them through the scary situation onboard the Apollo 13? Explain why the qualities you have chosen would have been helpful.

_____

_____

visit twinkl.com

Apollo 13 Answers

1. Where did the Apollo 13 blast off from? Tick one.

   ✓ **Kennedy Space Centre**
   ○ Houston Space Centre
   ○ Washington Space Centre
   ○ New York Space Centre

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened to the Apollo 13.

   1 Apollo 13 blasts off on April 11th 1970
   2 There was an explosion in an oxygen tank
   3 The crew radios mission control to report a problem
   4 The astronauts are stranded in space
   5 The crew land in the Pacific Ocean

3. Three crew members were onboard Apollo 13. Which had already been to the moon?

   ○ Fred Haise
   ○ John Swigert
   ✓ **James Lovell**

4. Where was Aquarius meant to land in space?

   On the moon

5. What did the crew radio to mission control when the explosion happened?

   "Houston, we've had a problem here."

6. Find and copy one word that shows someone is feeling worried.

   anxious

7. People have many different qualities, for example, they might be tall, short, serious or cowardly. What qualities do you think the astronauts needed to help them through the scary situation onboard the Apollo 13? Explain why the qualities you have chosen would have been helpful.

   The astronauts would need to be calm and brave, even if they were scared. They would need to not give up and be resilient. They would also need to be able to work well in a team and help each other.