

# Race to Space

**Neil Armstrong** (born August 5, 1930) is an American test pilot and a former astronaut. He is most famous for achieving his ambition of becoming the first human to set foot on the Moon.



## Early Life

After going to University, Armstrong joined the Navy and flew planes during the Korean War. He then went on to become a test pilot, flying newly developed aircraft. During his career he flew over 200 different types of aircraft! His experiences as a test pilot inspired him to become an astronaut and, in 1957, he was selected to join the USA's Space Race team.

## The Space Race begins

In 1949 Albert II was the first monkey in space. Albert went into space 14th June, 1949 in a specially adapted American V2 rocket.

In November 1957, the Russian space dog Laika became the first animal to orbit the earth. By 1959 both Russia and USA were in a race to land an astronaut on the Moon.

In April 1961, Russian astronaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space. He was in space for around 2 hours and then returned to Earth. He did not land on the Moon so the race had not yet been won.

The first woman in space was Russian astronaut Valentina Tereshkova, in 1963. Even though she didn't land there, a crater on the far side of the Moon is named after her!



Yuri Gagarin

In 1963 John F. Kennedy, President of USA, promised the world that the US would land men on the moon before 1970. Before risking people's lives, NASA sent a robot spaceship to the Moon, to make sure they could land safely.

On 20th July 1969, American astronauts Neil Armstrong, and then Buzz Aldrin, took "one small step" and became the first men on the moon. The first words said on the moon were "the Eagle has landed". Their spaceship, Apollo 11 worked perfectly, flying them 250,000 miles to the moon, and bringing them all the way back safely to earth. They all survived the journey meaning that USA were victorious and had won the race.