

**A Unit on the History of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
With Concluding Project on Oral History and Space Flight**

Virginia SOLs: This lesson can be adapted for Middle School or High School English or History/Social Studies classrooms

Middle School

C/T 6-8.2, C/T 6-8.3, C/T 6-8.6, C/T 6-8.7

English – 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9

Emphasis on Interview techniques begins in 8th grade: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8

History – USII.1, USII.2(b), USII.8(b), CE.7, WHII.12(a)

High School

C/T 9-12.3, C/T 9-12.4, C/T 9-12.5, C/T 9-12.6 , C/T 9-12.8, C/T 9-12.9

English – 9.2, 9.4, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 10.1, 10.2, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.11, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.7, 11.8, 11.10, 12.1, 12.2, 12.4, 12.7, 12.8

History – USII.1, USII.2(b), USII.8(b), CE.7, WHII.12(a)

Background:

Space flight has captivated the American public throughout history. However, its popularity has varied over time. This lesson plan asks students to interview an adult about their memories of any of NASA's launches and work in teams within the classroom to understand the varied experiences of historic events. The lesson opens with a discussion of current events related to NASA by asking students to bring in articles as part of a homework assignment.

Lesson:

Section 1

- 1) Ask students to bring in two articles related to space flight or NASA's current projects. Ask students to summarize NASA's current role and their opinions of the space program. Who believes it is still relevant? Who only thinks of the Apollo 13 movie?
- 2) Outline the history of NASA's development including: founding of NACA and its transition to NASA, the space race and implications of Cold War hostilities, later programs including the Space Shuttle and Hubble Telescope. Ask students to research famous figures or projects as a homework assignment or extended research project resulting in a 5-10 page paper and brief class presentation using PowerPoint. Research topics can include: Warner Von Braun, Buzz Aldrin, Neil Armstrong, Sputnik and Luna, the Apollo missions, Saturn rockets, and the Hubble Telescope among many others.

Section 2

- 1) Now that the class has developed a familiarity with NASA and its programs, assign each student the task of interviewing a family member or friend about their memories of NASA launches and projects. Did they watch launches on TV? Do they remember their friends and family talking about space flight? If the student speaks with someone who does not recall any NASA events, then ask them to submit a paragraph suggesting why this may have been.

- 2) Ask students to prepare a series of interview questions in class and submit them for review.
- 3) Once the interviews are complete, ask students to prepare a report on their findings. Do they feel that NASA was ever noticed by their interviewee?

Section 3 (Best suited for Grades 8-12)

- 1) Divide the classroom into two sections to simulate a debate about creating new projects for NASA and how the public should learn about the agency's history.
- 2) As a group, students come up with suggestions for public education, then they must take turns justifying their ideas.