

EXPLORING THE COSMOS

Stars, planets, infinite stretches of empty black space, and the question of whether there is life beyond Earth—the universe continues to hold great mystery for us humans.

The First Explorers of Space

The invention of rockets made the exploration of the extraterrestrial possible. The first journey into outer space was made by the Soviet Union (now called Russia) in 1957 with the launch of Sputnik 1, a satellite. It spent 92 days orbiting the Earth, measuring the temperature in space for the first three weeks. Soon after, living creatures were shot into space as well.



A month after Sputnik 1 was launched, the small Russian dog Laika became the first dog to reach the Earth's orbit, but sadly lost her life during the flight. Two years later, two monkeys called Able and Baker, who were part of a U.S. mission, were the first living creatures to survive a return journey to Earth.

1961

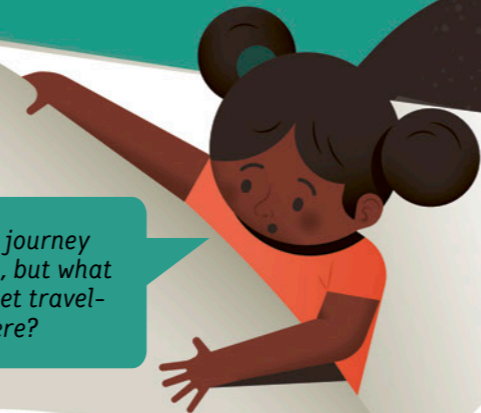
Into the Void

Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin came from a simple farming background before becoming world-famous as the first human to travel into space. In 1961, he flew around the world in 108 minutes in his spaceship, the Vostok 1.

YURI GAGARIN



This is another journey around the world, but what happens if you get travel-sick up there?



1963

VALENTINA TERESHKOVA



Flight of the Seagull

After Gagarin's flight, the enthusiastic skydiver Valentina Tereshkova also wanted to try her hand at being a cosmonaut. At only 26, and just one year after finishing training, she journeyed for three days into space and circled the Earth 48 times. To this day, she remains the only woman to have traveled solo into space.

Tereshkova's call sign was Chaika, which is the Russian word for "seagull."



That looks like bungee jumping. It's a good thing that the rope was able to hold up!

1965

A Stroll in Space

Russian Alexei Leonov was the first person to leave their spacecraft. Attached by a single cord, he spent 12 minutes floating in space. After this mission, he was due to travel to the Moon, but the project was canceled after astronauts from the U.S. space program reached it first.

