

Name _____



Neil Armstrong

By Mary L. Bushong

Have you ever looked up at the moon and wondered what it would be like to go there? Following your dreams can take you many places. Neil Armstrong dreamed of flying, and he eventually landed on the moon.

Neil Alden Armstrong was born on his grandparents' farm in Wapakoneta, Ohio, on August 5, 1930. After taking his first airplane ride when he was six, he became very interested in flying. When he was fifteen, he worked odd jobs to pay for flying lessons. He got his pilot's license on his sixteenth birthday, before he had even learned to drive a car.



After graduation from high school in 1947, Neil received a scholarship from the U.S. Navy to study Aeronautical Engineering. His studies were interrupted in 1949, when the Navy called him to fight in the Korean War. Neil flew 78 combat missions in the war and was shot down once. He received three medals for his service, but it was four years before he was able to return to his college studies.

In 1955, Neil went to work for the NACA, (now NASA) at the Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratories at Cleveland, Ohio. He stayed there for seventeen years working not only as an engineer and test pilot, but also as an astronaut and an administrator.

When NASA chose him to be an astronaut in 1962, he was to be the back up command pilot for the Gemini V mission. Then in 1966, he was named the command pilot for Gemini VIII. They made the first rendezvous and docking in space with the Agena rocket, 298.7 km above the earth, but could only stay together a short time. The malfunction of a rocket thruster forced them apart. Neil was able to regain control of his Gemini craft and splash down safely in the Pacific Ocean.

On July 16, 1969, Neil Armstrong, along with Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins, blasted off for the moon in the Apollo XI rocket.

Four days later, the "Eagle," a lunar landing module, touched down on the moon. Armstrong climbed down from the module and took his first steps on the dusty surface. There he spoke his now famous words, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Together Neil and Buzz spent more than two hours putting out scientific equipment, taking pictures, and gathering samples of dust and rocks.

The next day, the Eagle lifted off again and met up with the Apollo orbiter to head back to earth. They had been gone for eight days when they splashed down in the Pacific Ocean on July 24. To guard against contamination from moon microbes, the three men were kept in quarantine for eighteen days. After that they toured 21 other countries, where they received honors and medals for their service. Armstrong received the Medal of Freedom, which was the highest award that the U.S. can give to a civilian. The accomplishments of the three men opened a new era of space exploration.

In 1971, Armstrong left NASA and went to teach Aerospace Engineering at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. He spent nine years there before taking a position as chairman of the board of Cardwell International, Ltd., a company that supplies oil field equipment. He has also held leadership positions in computer systems companies, where he is still active.

Neil Armstrong's dedication and drive in pursuing his goals were apparent even as a young man. His high school friends described him this way, "He thinks, he acts, 'tis done." By applying his mind to his dreams, he rose from the flat Ohio farmlands to walk on the moon.

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Questions

1. What childhood event made Neil Armstrong even more interested in flight?

2. How was Neil able to attend college?

- _____ 3. When Neil worked for NASA which job did he not do?

- A. Astronaut
- B. Test pilot
- C. Administrator
- D. Mission Control Specialist

4. What rocket malfunction caused the Gemini VIII mission to abort?

- _____ 5. During the Apollo XI mission, what was the name of the lunar module?

- A. Ostrich
- B. Eagle
- C. Falcon.
- D. Raven

6. How do you think Neil Armstrong felt when he first walked on the moon?

- _____ 7. What year did the "Eagle" land on the moon?

- A. 1966
- B. 1967
- C. 1969.
- D. 1968

8. Why were the three astronauts kept in quarantine for 18 days after the moon mission?

9. Why do you think Neil Armstrong left NASA after 17 years there?
