

Lesson Plan

Space Travel Timeline

Book: *Exploring Kennedy Space Center*

Series: Travel America's Landmarks

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice summarizing a text by creating a timeline.

Supplies

- *Exploring Kennedy Space Center* book
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read *Exploring Kennedy Space Center* out loud, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

The 1950s and 1960s were an exciting time for space research. The United States and the Soviet Union were competing against each other. Both countries wanted to be the first to send astronauts to the moon. Several key events in space research happened during these decades. Students should use the information in Chapter 2 ("Space Race") and Chapter 3 ("Space Missions") to create a timeline about NASA, its space travel program, and the Kennedy Space Center. Students should include at least six events. For each event, students should include the following pieces of information:

- The year
- A one-sentence summary describing what was significant about that year
- The name of the spacecraft or mission (if applicable)

Encourage students to be creative with their timeline designs. They should make sure to keep the timeline events in order and to choose a format that keeps the information about each event separate. Otherwise, students can use whatever shape or format they like.

Evaluation

Use the attached answer key to give students 1 point for listing the year and 1 point for summarizing the significance of each event, for a total of 12 points.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 4 (RI 4.1, 4.2, 4.3).

Answer Key (with all possible dates)

1958 – The US government created NASA (p. 10).

1961 – Alan Shepard was the first US astronaut in space. He left Earth in the *Freedom 7* spacecraft (p. 16).

1962 – NASA created a space center on land near Cape Canaveral (p. 10).

1963 – The space center was named Kennedy Space Center after President John F. Kennedy (p. 11).

1966 – Official bus tours of KSC began (p. 12).

1967 – The first visitor center at KSC opened (p. 12).

1967 – The rocket in the Apollo 1 mission caught on fire, killing the crew (p. 16).

1968 – *Apollo 8* was the first spacecraft to orbit the moon (p. 17).

1969 – Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon during the Apollo 11 mission (pp. 17–18).