



COLD WAR SPACE RACE TIMELINE

Supplementary materials to be used with the Cold War Timeline materials.



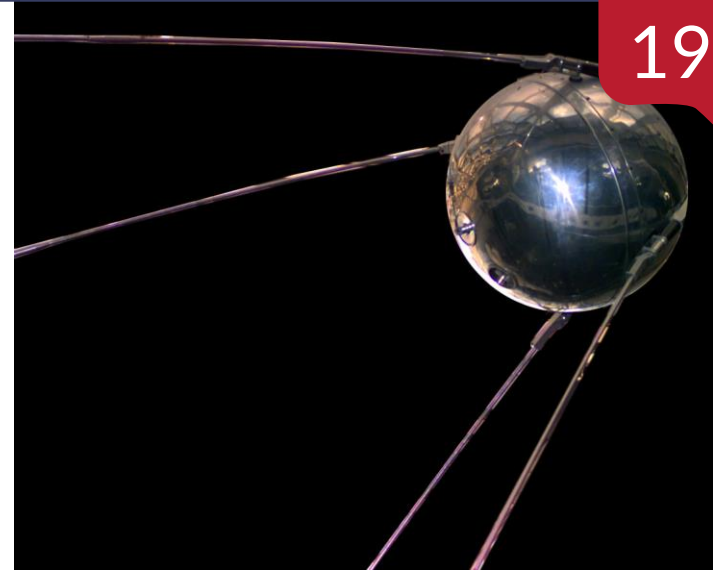
SPACE RACE

PRESIDENT: EISENHOWER

★
OCT 4
1957

SPUTNIK LAUNCHED

The Soviet Union launched its Sputnik satellite into space – the first manmade craft to successfully reach space. This event started the Cold War space race; the U.S. formed NASA the following year in response. The space race was one of many technological competitions between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.



Replica of Sputnik I. (NASA, undated)



SPACE RACE

PRESIDENT: KENNEDY

★
APR 2
1961

FIRST MAN IN SPACE

Russian Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space after a successful orbital flight. It was a major achievement for the Soviet Union and a significant setback for the United States, which had been working toward achieving the same feat.



The Vostok I capsule used by Gagarin in the first space flight, at the RKK Energiya Museum in Russia. (Public domain/SiefkinDR, 2010)



SPACE RACE

PRESIDENT: KENNEDY

★
FEB 20
1962

GLENN ORBITS THE EARTH

John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth. The successful flight renewed America's faith in the United States' ability to compete technologically with the Soviet Union. Glenn's achievement marked a turning point for the United States, which would soon outpace the Soviet Union in scientific advancements.



Glenn poses in front of the Mercury capsule, Friendship 7, which he used to orbit the earth. (NASA, 1962)



SPACE RACE

PRESIDENT: NIXON

★
JUL 20
1969

MOON LANDING

Buzz Aldrin, Neil Armstrong, and Michael Collins became the first people to land on the moon. During the mission, Armstrong and Aldrin both walked on the moon, making the U.S. the first—and only—country to have an astronaut walk on the moon. While historians generally agree that the space race ended when Armstrong walked on the moon, there is no consensus on who won the space race or how one would even determine a winner.



Aldrin walks on the surface of the moon. (NASA, 1969)



SPACE RACE

PRESIDENT: REAGAN

JAN 28
1986

CHALLENGER DISASTER

On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded just 73 seconds after takeoff, killing all seven crew members. This was the worst accident in the history of the American space program. Space flights stopped for 32 months, and NASA changed their safety and oversight protocols to prevent future accidents.



The crew of Challenger. L-R: first row: Mike Smith, Dick Scobee, Ron McNair. Back row: Ellison Onizuka, Christa McAuliffe, Greg Jarvis, Judith Resnik. (NASA, 1985)

THE COLD WAR: A TIMELINE

