

# Mission to The Moon

**Directions:** Read the following information and answer the questions below.

Have you ever looked up at the moon and wondered what it would be like to walk on its surface? While it may be hard to believe, several people have actually explored the moon. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong was the first human to set foot on the moon. This represented one of the greatest scientific accomplishments in the history of mankind. Let us take a quick look at how this amazing scientific accomplishment was achieved.

In 1959, the Soviet spacecraft Luna 3 took the first picture of the far side of the moon. Up to this point no one had ever seen the moon's far side. Motivated by the success of the Soviet Union, the United States set a course for a mission to the moon. In 1961, the Apollo project began with its goal to put people on the moon by 1970. The distance to the moon is 300,000 meters, 100 times the distance from New York to Los Angeles. The Soviets had a similar goal, and the race was on to see who could land on the moon first.

In the 1960's there were a number of Apollo missions leading up to landing on the moon. The numerous Apollo missions were designed to get the people and technology prepared for landing on the moon. There were many successful launches and experiments. There were also setbacks. On January 27, 1967 a terrible tragedy on Apollo 1 occurred during a routine training exercise when a fire ripped through the command module killing three astronauts.

In December of 1968, astronauts first orbited the moon on Apollo 8 for over 20 hours. Finally, in July of 1969, Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin made the first footprints in the lunar soil. After Armstrong made the first step from the lunar module he said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Over the next several years, five more United States missions landed on the moon. From these explorations a great deal of information was obtained about the moon's surface, seismology, atmosphere, and geology.

## Questions:

1. What was the Apollo Project?
2. What was the purpose of the Apollo Missions and what was one of the setbacks?
3. Who was the first person to land on the moon and when did this occur?
4. What do you think Neil Armstrong meant when he stepped on the moon and said, "One small step for man, and one giant leap for mankind"?