



Blast Off!

History has been made as two NASA **astronauts** have safely boarded the *International Space Station* (ISS). Space missions are usually sent by a country's government. However, this mission is the first time that astronauts have been sent to space on a rocket owned by the private company, *SpaceX*.

It has been nine years since astronauts last blasted off from American soil. NASA stopped using their own space shuttles in 2011.

The mission launched from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on Saturday 30th May - the same launch pad used during the historic *Apollo 11* moon landing in 1969. Originally the mission had been planned to take place on Wednesday 27th May, but bad weather meant the launch had to be rescheduled for Saturday.

Eventually, even after bad weather forecast threatened to delay the mission again, astronauts Doug and Robert were blasted off into space at 17,000mph (27,000kmph) - 22 times the speed of sound. The crew's *Dragon* module was launched into space using a Falcon 9 rocket for lift off. The *Falcon 9* rockets are unique, in that rather than being discarded in space, they can actually land back on Earth.

After reaching orbit, astronauts Doug Hurley and Robert Behken decided to give their *Crew Dragon* spacecraft a name as a tribute to the first space shuttle they had both had flown aboard: *Endeavour*.



Astronauts Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley before the mission.

The mission is important for future exploration, like the upcoming *Artemis* mission, which aims to put the first woman and next man on the Moon by 2024. Now NASA will use *SpaceX* as a 'taxi' service to send people into space, rather than using their own rockets.

President Donald Trump, who went to Florida to watch the launch said: "We once again proudly launched American astronauts on American rockets - the best in the world - from right here on American soil."

SpaceX's part in the mission will last until the astronauts are safely returned home at some point between the end of June and September. If the *Crew Dragon* capsule performs as expected when they land in the Atlantic Ocean, then NASA will approve the company for more manned missions in the future.

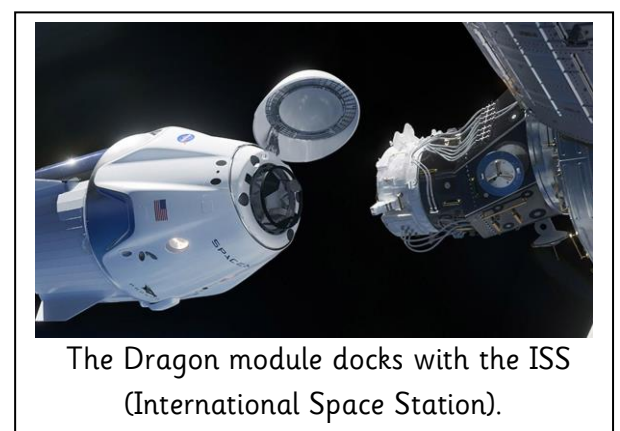
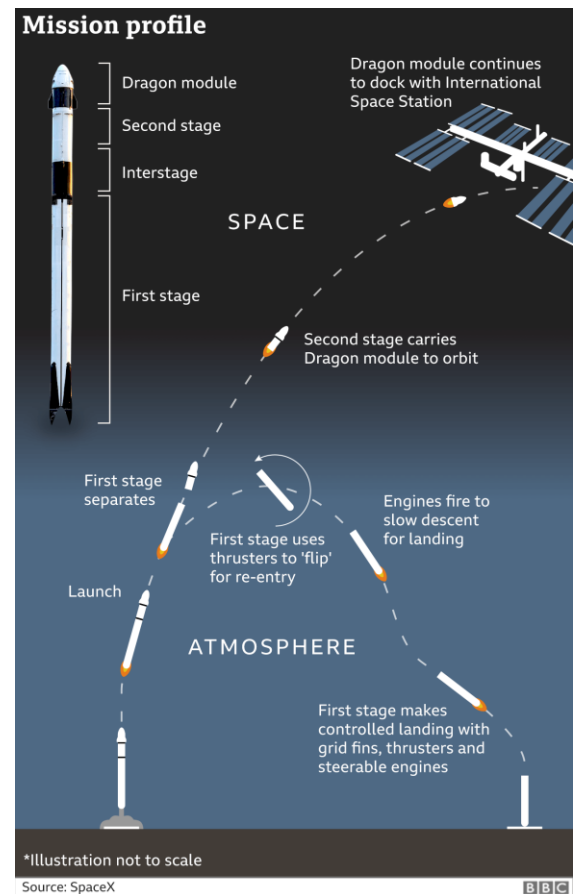
What is SpaceX and who is Elon Musk?

Elon Musk is an inventor who owns the company *Tesla* as well as *SpaceX*, and he made a lot of money by selling the online payment service PayPal to eBay. *SpaceX* is a private space company which wants to make carrying stuff into space cheaper - and one day wants to run space tourism trips into orbit and the Moon.

Who are the astronauts and what will they be doing?

Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley are two of NASA's most experienced astronauts. They have both been to space twice before, and are both married to other astronauts!

Robert and Douglas are also wearing some pretty cool new spacesuits which were custom designed by Jose Fernandez, a costume designer who worked on the Batman, X-Men and Thor movies.



The Dragon module docks with the ISS (International Space Station).

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52526849>

SpaceX

Day 1 Activity

LO: I can retrieve information from a text.	What I think	My teacher thinks
<i>I can remember to:</i>		
read the questions carefully.	☐	
use words found in the text to help you find your answers.	☐	
write the letter of the right answer.	☐	

1. When did the first SpaceX mission launch?

- A. 1969
- B. 2011
- C. 2020
- D. 2024

2. Which part of the rocket holds the astronauts?

- A. SpaceX
- B. Tesla
- C. Dragon module
- D. Falcon 9

3. Who designed the astronauts' spacesuits?

- A. Neil Armstrong
- B. Elon Musk
- C. Donald Trump
- D. Jose Fernandez

4. How many times have Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley both been into space?

- A. One
- B. Two
- C. Three
- D. Four

5. What is the name of the next mission to space?

- A. Apollo
- B. Hermes
- C. Artemis
- D. Demeter

SpaceX

Day 2 Activity

LO: I can create based on what I've read.	What I think	My teacher thinks
<i>I can remember to:</i>		
look closely at what the astronauts are wearing.	☐	
think about what an astronaut might need with them.	☐	
draw and colour your own design.	☐	



The SpaceX astronauts getting ready to board the rocket in their spacesuits.

Can you design your own spacesuit for the astronauts of your own space travel company?

SpaceX

Day 3 Activity

LO: I can comment on a text.	What I think	My teacher thinks
<i>I can remember to:</i>		
reread the text carefully and watch the launch video.	☐	
consider how you would feel in that situation.	☐	
share your own opinion.	☐	

Imagine that you were one of the astronauts.

How would you feel in the countdown to lift-off?

How would your feelings **change** as the rocket launched and you left the Earth on your journey to space?

Explain why you think you would feel that.
