

## Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

March 3, 2016

**Article: “American astronaut returns to Earth after 340 days in space”**

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### **Pre-Reading:**

Read the title of this article. What do you know about astronauts, and what they do? What are some of the challenges of being an astronaut? What do you think it would be like to live in space for 340 days?

### **Vocabulary:**

As you read, look for the following vocabulary words that appear in today’s article. Write down what you think the words mean based on the “context,” or how the words are used in the sentence in which they appear. Next, look up the definitions in a dictionary and see how close your guess was for each word.

*astronaut*

*barren*

*bittersweet*

*capsule*

*contender*

*cosmonaut*

*expedition*

*gravity*

*identical*

*journey*

*orbital*

*radiation*

*relinquished*

*surgeon*

*toddler*

*unprecedented*

### **Comprehension:**

1. "The pair have traveled \_\_\_\_\_ miles through space, circled the world \_\_\_\_\_ times and experienced \_\_\_\_\_ orbital sunsets." **(Fill in the blanks)**
2. What nationality is Mikhail Kornieko, Scott Kelly's cosmonaut roommate on the International Space Station?
3. How long is a typical stay on the International Space Station?
4. What does NASA want to know about the human body before committing to Mars missions?
5. "A really smart person said to me one time, 'Teamwork makes the \_\_\_\_\_ in spaceflight' and space flight is the biggest team sport there is," Kelly said Monday." **(Fill in the blank)**
6. Why do NASA medical researchers consider Scott Kelly a 'bonanza'?
7. How does Scott Kelly describe his feelings on realizing that this is likely his last journey into space?

### **Post-Reading:**

Read the following passage from the article and discuss the following questions in a group:

***"As he relinquished command of the space station Monday, Kelly noted that he and Kornieko 'have been up here for a really, really long time' and have been jokingly telling one another 'We did it!' and 'We made it!'"***

***'A year now seems longer than I thought it would be,' Kelly confided a couple of weeks ago."***

Why do you think that Kelly felt like the time he spent on the space station was longer than he thought it would be? How do you think it would feel to spend a year in space? What would you miss most about living on Earth? If you were an astronaut and you could only bring one thing with you into space, what would you bring? What do you think it would be like to come back to Earth after living in space for a year? What would be the first thing you would do when you got back?

### **Building Language Skills:**

Read the following passage, and complete the activity below:

***"Kelly photographed the first five sunrises of his waking day Tuesday, posting the pictures on twitter before quipping, 'I gotta go' His final tweet from orbit came several hours later: "The journey isn't over. Follow me as I rediscover #Earth!"***

Pretend you are an astronaut in space, compose a few of your own tweets. What would you want to say to people back on Earth? Challenge yourself to see how many of the vocabulary words you can fit into your tweet (remember: a tweet can only be 140 characters!). Draw or find a picture online to include with your tweet. Share your tweets with your classmates – are there any trending hashtags within the classroom? You can find more of Scott Kelly's tweets from space [here](#).

### Comprehension Question Answers:

1. "The pair have traveled **144 million** miles through space, circled the world **5,440** times and experienced **10,880** orbital sunsets."
2. What nationality is Mikhail Kornieko, Scott Kelly's cosmonaut roommate on the International Space Station? **Mikhail Kornieko's nationality is Russian.**
3. How long is a typical stay on the International Space Station? **A typical stay on the International Space Station is 6 months.**
4. What does NASA want to know about the human body before committing to Mars missions? **NASA wants to know how well the human body tolerates long stays without gravity before committing to Mars missions.**
5. "A really smart person said to me one time, 'Teamwork makes the **dreamwork** in space flight' and space flight is the biggest team sport there is,' Kelly said Monday."
6. Why do NASA medical researchers consider Scott Kelly a 'bonanza'? **Scott Kelly is a bonanza for researchers because he has an identical twin so they can study the difference between the one who lived on earth and one who lived in space for the last year.**
7. How does Scott Kelly describe his feelings on realizing that this was likely his last journey into space? **Scott Kelly describes his feelings as bittersweet on realizing that this was likely his last journey into space.**