NEWS BREAK

Article: **Want to go to the moon? NASA's now hiring**

Section: **MAIN, A4**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, November 8, 2026,** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

Feel free to adapt this lesson for your students. For instance, some educators may assign this as a homework task, while others might facilitate the reading and discussion of questions within small groups or larger class discussions.

Please take a moment to review all NIE content before classroom use to ensure it is suitable for your students.*

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Learning Objectives:

After reading the article, students will explain NASA's Artemis program and its goal of returning humans to the moon and establishing a permanent lunar base. Students will examine the qualifications, training, and responsibilities required to become an astronaut and explore the challenges of preparing for long-term space exploration. Students will evaluate how advances in science, technology, and international space exploration could shape the future of human life beyond Earth.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted word means using context clues? A ***context clue*** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the meaning of the word.

"Bresnik and his three crewmates will blast into ***orbit*** next summer to practice docking their capsule with a pair of lunar landers, one built by Elon Musk's SpaceX and the other by Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin."

Orbit Guess:

Orbit Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. Want to fly to the moon and help build a permanent _____ _____?
2. NASA is accepting applications for a new astronaut class that will help grow the _____ program.
3. NASA's last call for new astronauts was _____ years ago.
4. More than _____ applied, with ____ making the final cut.
5. Officials announced the news Saturday during a Kennedy Space Center air show promoting _____ _____ as well as advances in aviation and technology.

6. With only _____ active astronauts, the space agency needs more recruits as it looks to expand humanity's presence beyond low-Earth orbit as quickly as possible.
7. NASA expects to make its final selection by late 2027, with the new candidates beginning their training by early 2028 — the same year that NASA intends to return astronauts to the lunar surface after an absence of more than _____ ___ _____.
8. Their mission will stick close to _____— no lunar flyby — and serve as a dress rehearsal for the following year's Artemis IV mission that will attempt to land two astronauts near the lunar south pole. The moon base will materialize as more rovers, robots, structures and power grids are launched.
9. _____ is essential for becoming an astronaut, noted Artemis III's Frank Rubio, whose 371 consecutive days in space is a U.S. endurance record.
10. Candidates must also be U.S. citizens with what two things?
    _____
    _____
11. The _____ years of mandatory training can be grueling, and it could take several more years on top of that before finally rocketing into space.
12. "It's important for them to realize most of that work is not going to the moon, right?" Rubio told the AP. "That will be about ___% of your experience. What you're doing is contributing to the mission of going to the moon."
13. This will be NASA's 25th astronaut class since the original Mercury Seven in _____.

<u>Class Discussion Questions:</u>

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?

Deeper-Dive "Connect & Explain" Comprehension Questions for Small Groups, Entire Classes or Journal Entries and/or Essay Prompts for Extended Enrichment

1. The article explains that NASA is recruiting a new class of astronauts to support its Artemis program and help establish a permanent human presence on the moon. Why do you think humans are interested in exploring space and returning to the moon? What scientific, technological, or economic benefits might come from exploring the moon? How could establishing a permanent lunar base change the future of space exploration?

2. The article describes how NASA received more than 8,000 applications during its previous astronaut recruitment process but selected only 10 candidates. Why do you think becoming an astronaut is such a competitive career? What educational backgrounds, personal qualities, and professional experiences might help someone succeed as an astronaut? What challenges might discourage people from pursuing this career?

3. The article explains that astronaut candidates must be U.S. citizens with college degrees and professional work experience. They must also complete at least two years of demanding training before becoming eligible for space missions. Why do you think NASA requires such extensive education and preparation? What physical, mental, and problem-solving skills would astronauts need to survive and work effectively in space? How might these qualifications compare with those required in other challenging careers?

4. The article describes how astronauts may spend years training and preparing for missions, even though only a small percentage of their overall experience may involve actually traveling to the moon. Why is preparation so important when carrying out dangerous and complex missions? How might patience, teamwork, discipline, and perseverance contribute to an astronaut's success? What other careers or personal goals require years of preparation before someone reaches their ultimate goal?

5. The article describes plans to build a permanent lunar base using rovers, robots, structures, and power grids. What resources and technologies would humans need to live and work on the moon for extended periods? How might living on the moon be different from living on Earth? Consider challenges involving food, water, oxygen, electricity, communication, and protection from extreme temperatures and radiation. Which challenge do you think would be the most difficult to overcome, and why?

6. Imagine you have been selected as a candidate for NASA's new astronaut class. You know that becoming an astronaut requires years of education, physical preparation, teamwork, and specialized training. What would motivate you to pursue this opportunity, and what challenges would you expect to face? Identify three skills or personal qualities you would need to develop and explain how you would prepare yourself for a future space mission.

7. The article explains that NASA is working with private companies, including SpaceX and Blue Origin, to develop spacecraft and lunar landers. Why might partnerships between government agencies and private companies be important for the future of space exploration? What advantages might private companies bring to these missions? What challenges could arise when different organizations work together on such expensive and complicated projects? Should space exploration be primarily funded by governments, private companies, or a combination of both? Explain your reasoning.

Extended Essay Prompts

Becoming an Astronaut: Preparation, Challenges, and Perseverance: The article explains that becoming an astronaut requires advanced education, professional experience, physical preparation, and years of specialized training. In your essay, examine the qualifications and personal characteristics needed to succeed in this demanding career. Consider the importance of teamwork, patience, discipline, problem-solving, and perseverance. Explain why preparation and practice are essential when working in dangerous and unpredictable environments.

Building a Permanent Base on the Moon: The article describes NASA's plans to establish a permanent lunar base supported by rovers, robots, structures, and power systems. In your essay, evaluate the challenges of creating a place where humans can safely live and work on the moon. Consider the need for food, water, oxygen, electricity, communication, transportation, and protection from the moon's harsh environment. Explain which technologies and resources would be most important for making a permanent lunar settlement possible.

Government and Private Companies in Space Exploration: The article explains how NASA is partnering with private companies such as SpaceX and Blue Origin to develop spacecraft and lunar landers. In your essay, evaluate the benefits and challenges of government and private-sector partnerships in space exploration. Consider the costs, technological advancements, competition, safety concerns, and potential economic opportunities. Explain whether you believe space exploration should be led primarily by government agencies, private companies, or a combination of both.

Life Beyond Earth: Preparing for the Next Generation: The article suggests that establishing a permanent presence on the moon could be an important step toward exploring Mars and other destinations in space. In your essay, imagine what life might look like for future generations who could live, work, or conduct research beyond Earth. Examine the technologies, skills, and resources humans would need to survive in space. Consider how space settlements could influence science, education, careers, and the future of humanity. Explain what responsibilities humans would have when establishing communities beyond Earth.

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