

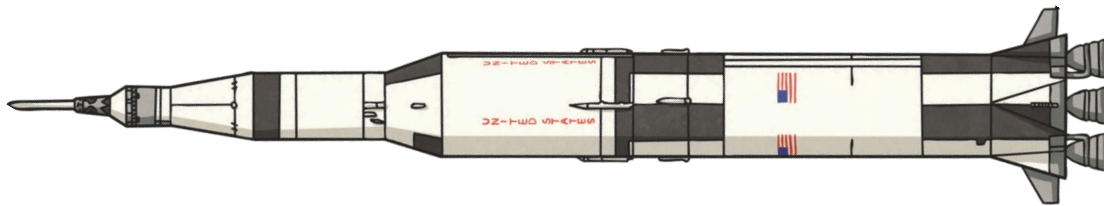
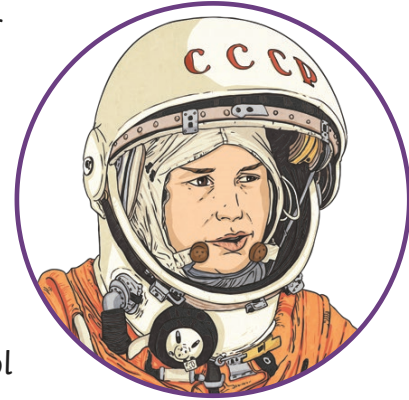
Valentina Tereshkova

Valentina Tereshkova is a famous Russian engineer and **cosmonaut**. She is best known for being the first woman to fly in space.

Valentina's Early Life

Valentina was born on 6th March 1937 in the country that is now called Russia but was then called the USSR. She grew up in a poor family but she dreamt of a life of adventure. Valentina left school at just 16 and worked in a factory but she never gave up on her dreams.

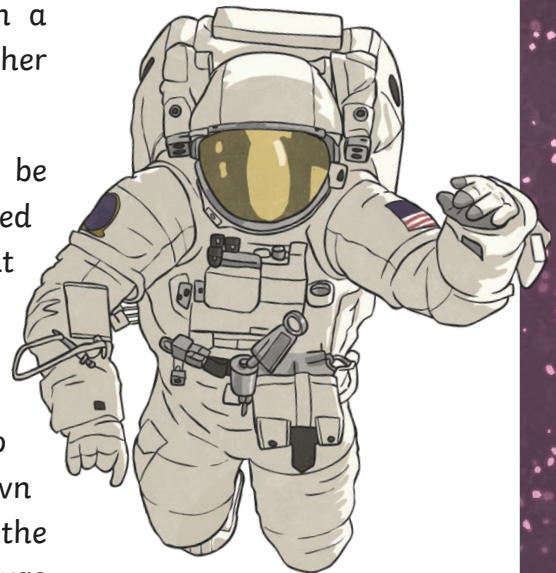
Valentina joined a skydiving club in her spare time and soon learnt that she was a natural. In 1959, Valentina made her first skydiving jump.



The Space Race

At this time, the USSR were in a race against the United States to be the first country to send a woman into space. Valentina applied to be in a space programme and was chosen because of her skydiving skills.

Five women were picked to be trained to be cosmonauts but only one of them would be selected to go to space. Valentina was determined that it would be her and worked extremely hard to secure a place. The training was very difficult, involving weightless tests in zero-gravity and long periods of time alone. The women had to keep their training a secret – even from their own families. After many difficult exams, only two of the women passed the programme and one of them was Valentina. Finally, Valentina achieved her goal and was chosen to go into space alone.



Adventures in Space

One month later, on 16th June 1963, Valentina was launched into space on a shuttle called Vostok VI. This made her the first woman ever in space. She **orbited** the Earth 48 times setting a new world record. She also took incredible photographs in space that helped scientists understand Earth much better.

After three days in space, she returned to Earth but her journey home nearly ended in disaster! There were problems with the ship's programming meaning it nearly crashed. Feeling sick and dizzy, Valentina managed to correct the problem before passing out. Her training had come in handy and she survived with only a few bruises on her face. She proved that women could react every bit as well as men to the challenges of **spaceflight**.

After her flight, Valentina became an engineer and then a doctor. She has worked with the cosmonaut programme to help to train many more cosmonauts. She now works for world peace and her new goal is to go to Mars.



Glossary

cosmonaut: The Russian word for astronaut.

orbited: Having circled the Earth.

spaceflight: A journey through space.



Questions

1. What did Valentina do **before** she became a cosmonaut? **Tick one.**

- ☐ worked in a shop
- ☐ engineer
- ☐ worked in a factory
- ☐ doctor

2. What did Valentina's training involve? **Tick two.**

- ☐ weightless tests in zero-gravity
- ☐ watching television
- ☐ long periods of time alone
- ☐ writing a book about space

3. Draw lines to show different things that Valentina did at different stages in her life.

young adult

She had to keep things secret from her family.

cosmonaut

She joined a skydiving club.

during her training

She corrected a problem to stop her ship from crashing.

4. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened in Valentina's life. The first one has been done for you.

- ☐ Valentina passed the space programme.
- ☒ 1 Valentina was born on 6th March 1937.
- ☐ Valentina left school at just 16.
- ☐ Valentina wants to go to Mars.
- ☐ Valentina became the first woman to go to space.

5. Find and copy **one** phrase that describes the competition between the USSR and the United States.

Questions

6. Fill in the missing word in this sentence.

On her first flight, Valentina set a new _____ and took _____ that helped scientists.

7. Why was Valentina chosen to be in the space programme? Give **two** reasons for your answer.

8. What do you think has been the most important achievement of Valentina's life so far? Give reasons for your answer.
