

# Apollo 13

## Blast Off

On April 11<sup>th</sup> 1970, three astronauts climbed onboard the Apollo 13. They blasted off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA.

The crew was made up of mission commander James Lovell and pilots, Fred Haise and John Swigert. Lovell had already been to the moon and was the most experienced on board.

The mission suffered bad luck from the beginning. One of the original pilots was replaced by Swigert just two days before blast-off. This was because he had been exposed to a virus. NASA couldn't risk any of the crew getting ill in space, so Swigert had only a couple of days to be ready for the mission.



## Odyssey and Aquarius

The Apollo 13 was made up of two different spacecraft, the Odyssey and the Aquarius. They were connected to each other by a tunnel. Odyssey was where the crew lived. The Aquarius was designed for landing on the moon.

The mission was to explore the surface of the moon by taking photographs and getting samples of the moon's surface. The crew were also going to film videos in space for television.

## An Explosion

On the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> April, disaster struck. An explosion rocked the spacecraft. Swigert reported the explosion to mission control in Houston. He exclaimed, "Houston, we've had a problem here."

An oxygen tank had exploded and caused serious damage. From the window, the astronauts could see oxygen escaping into the atmosphere.

The astronauts would need to be calm and brave even if they were scared.

They would need to not give up and be resilient. They would also need to be able to work in a team and help each other.

### **Difficult Conditions Aboard**

Life in space was very difficult for the crew. All power was turned off, except for the radio to mission control. This made the spacecraft extremely cold and caused condensation.



Water and food were strictly rationed. The cramped conditions made it hard for the crew to sleep as they couldn't lie down.

The crew were anxious but they felt supported by mission control. Mission control worked hard to rescue them.

Sadly, it was discovered that the spacecraft had too much carbon dioxide. Mission control helped the crew to build a special filter to fix the problem. They used some of the items they had onboard, including plastic bags, cardboard and a sock.

### **Returning Home**

To return to Earth, the crew had to return to the Odyssey. They hoped there was enough power to get them home.

On 17<sup>th</sup> April, the Apollo 13 crew splashed into the Pacific Ocean, near Samoa. Millions of people followed the Apollo 13's journey and watched on television as the crew landed. The whole world celebrated their safe return.

Apollo 13 is thought of as a 'successful failure' for NASA.

Although the mission failed to reach the moon, the crew returned home safely, making it a huge success.

Apollo 13 showed the world that by working together, even when miles apart, any problem can be solved.

# Apollo 13 Questions

1. Where did the Apollo 13 blast off from? Tick one.

- Kennedy Space Centre
- Houston Space Centre
- Washington Space Centre
- New York Space Centre

2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened to the Apollo 13.

- There was a sudden explosion in an oxygen tank
- Apollo 13 blasts off on April 11<sup>th</sup> 1970
- The crew splash land in the Pacific Ocean
- The crew radios, "Houston, we've had a problem here."
- The astronauts have to crawl into Aquarius

3. What were conditions like on board Aquarius? Tick two

- warm
- cold
- luxurious
- cramped

4. Match up the sentences

The Apollo 13

Mission control

The astronauts

were in touch with the crew from Earth

could see oxygen escaping into space

was a mission to the moon

## Apollo 13 Questions

5. Fill in the missing words.

Apollo 13 is thought of as a successful \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

6. Where is NASA's mission control based?

---

7. How do you think the crew felt when they saw oxygen escaping into space?

---

---

8. People have many different qualities, for example, they might be tall, short, serious or cowardly. What qualities do you think the astronauts needed to help them through the scary situation onboard the Apollo 13? Explain why the qualities you have chosen would have been helpful.

---

---

# Apollo 13 Answers

1. Where did the Apollo 13 blast off from? Tick one.

- Kennedy Space Centre**
- Houston Space Centre
- Washington Space Centre
- New York Space Centre

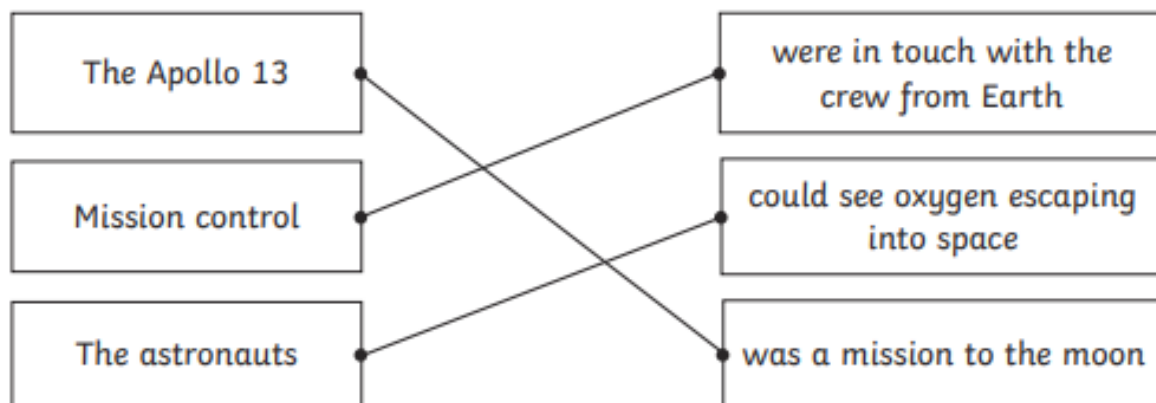
2. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened to the Apollo 13.

- 1** Apollo 13 blasts off on April 11<sup>th</sup> 1970
- 2** There was a sudden explosion in an oxygen tank
- 3** The crew radios, "Houston, we've had a problem here."
- 4** The astronauts have to crawl into Aquarius
- 5** The crew splash land in the Pacific Ocean

3. What were conditions like on board Aquarius? Tick two.

- warm
- cold**
- luxurious
- cramped**

4. Match up the sentences



5. Fill in the missing words.

Apollo 13 is thought of as a successful **failure** for **NASA**.

6. Where is NASA's mission control based?

**Houston, USA**

7. How do you think the crew felt when they saw oxygen escaping into space?

**They felt very frightened because humans need oxygen to survive. There is no oxygen in space, so the crew needed the oxygen in the tanks.**

8. People have many different qualities, for example, they might be tall, short, serious or cowardly. What qualities do you think the astronauts needed to help them through the scary situation onboard the Apollo 13? Explain why the qualities you have chosen would have been helpful.

**The astronauts would need to be calm and brave even if they were scared. They would need to not give up and be resilient. They would also need to work well in a team and help each other.**