

Evening News

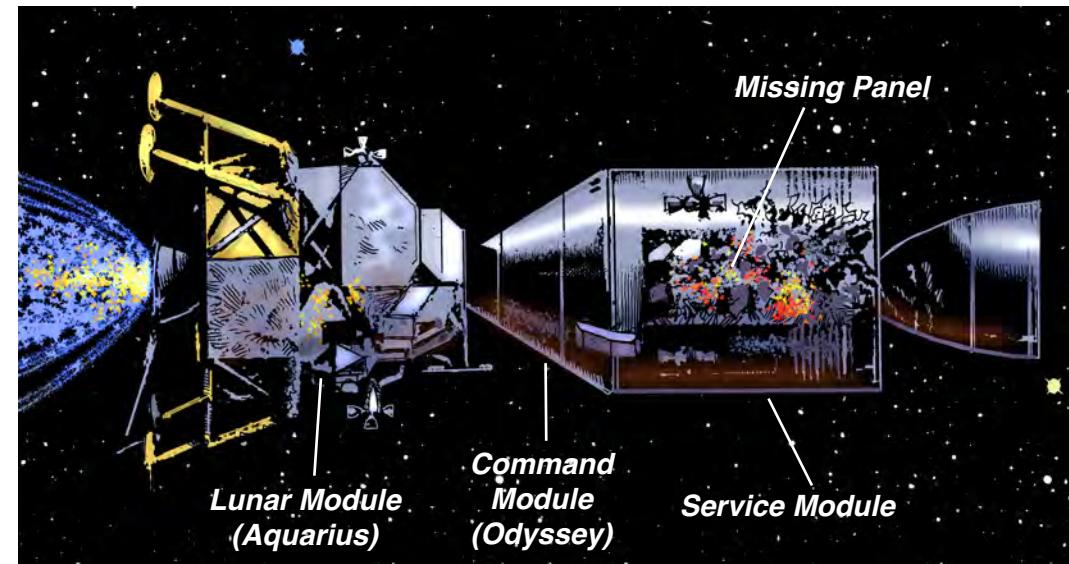
Astronauts Return to Earth After Horrific Explosion

Apollo 13, the third moon mission, has successfully returned its crew of three astronauts to the earth after an explosion wrecked their spacecraft. The command module splashed down in the Pacific Ocean four miles from the recovery ship, USS Iwo Jima, after being lowered through the sky by three enormous parachutes. Considering what they had been through, the crew returned in excellent condition.

Apollo 13 was the third Apollo mission intended to land on the moon. On April 11th 1970, at 13:13, the craft was successfully launched towards the moon. On the way, approximately 200,000 miles from the earth, mission control asked the crew to turn on the hydrogen and oxygen tank stirring fans. Ninety three seconds later the astronauts heard a loud 'bang' and all the lights flickered. The astronauts

thought a meteorite had hit them. They radioed back to earth, "Houston, we have a problem!" In fact, the number two oxygen tank in the Service Module had exploded. This left the Command Module with limited battery power. The crew had no choice but to shut down the Command Module and move into the Lunar Module and use it as a 'life boat'. The damage made a safe return from a moon landing impossible, so the flight director immediately aborted the mission. The problem was, how to get the men back alive!

It was thought that the main engine had been damaged so the crew used the smaller engine on the lunar module to change direction to a flight path that would 'swing them' round the moon and send them back in the direction of earth.



Low power levels made radio contact with mission command in Houston, Texas, very difficult. Also, the Lunar Module was only designed to keep two people alive for two days, not three people for four days. To keep the radio and life support systems in the Lunar Module working everything was switched to the lowest levels. This made the Lunar Module very cold inside. For four days the astronauts travelled through space in their disabled spacecraft never sure that it would function well enough to return them to the earth. On the fourth day they crawled back into the now almost frozen up Command Module and began the unpractised operation of restarting the systems in the capsule. Once power was restored, they released the damaged service module into space. As it floated away they saw for the first time that a large panel

had blown off the side of the spacecraft.

Next the Lunar Module, their 'life boat', was released into space, leaving the three men in the Command Module to commence re-entry through the earth's atmosphere. It was possible that the explosion had damaged the heat shield on the capsule. In addition, a normal lunar re-entry was accompanied by four minutes of communications blackout.

The suspense was terrible. After four minutes and ten seconds, nothing was heard. Another ten seconds, still nothing. Finally, after 33 seconds longer than normal, Odyssey regained radio contact and splashed down safely in the Pacific. The ordeal for the three men was finally over!

Reported by: SPC Enthusiast

Astronauts Return to Earth After Horrific Explosion

Section A

Choose the best word or group of words to fit the passage and put a ring around your choice.

On April 11th, 1970, Apollo

- 1 ten eleven twelve thirteen

was launched towards the moon. After turning on the oxygen tank stirring fans they heard a loud bang and all the

- 2 stars dials lights instruments

flickered. The crew radioed to earth to say they had

- 3 finished. been shaken up. a problem. exploded.

The crew had to move into the

- 4 Service Module Command Module
Lunar Module Odyssey

and use it like a life boat. They changed direction to travel back to the

- 5 Earth. Mars. Moon. Sun.

To save power everything was switched to the lowest levels making the Lunar Module very

- 6 hot. warm. cold. dark.

On the fourth day they crawled back into the Command Module and parachuted back to earth.

Section B

1 Where was Apollo 13 heading for?

2 Name the three parts of the Apollo 13 spacecraft.

3 What exploded in the Service Module?

4 Why do you think that the Lunar Module was described as a 'lifeboat'?

5 Which part of the spacecraft was the only part to return to the earth?

6 What does the phrase 'aborted the mission' mean?

7 How do you think the astronauts would have felt when they heard a large bang?

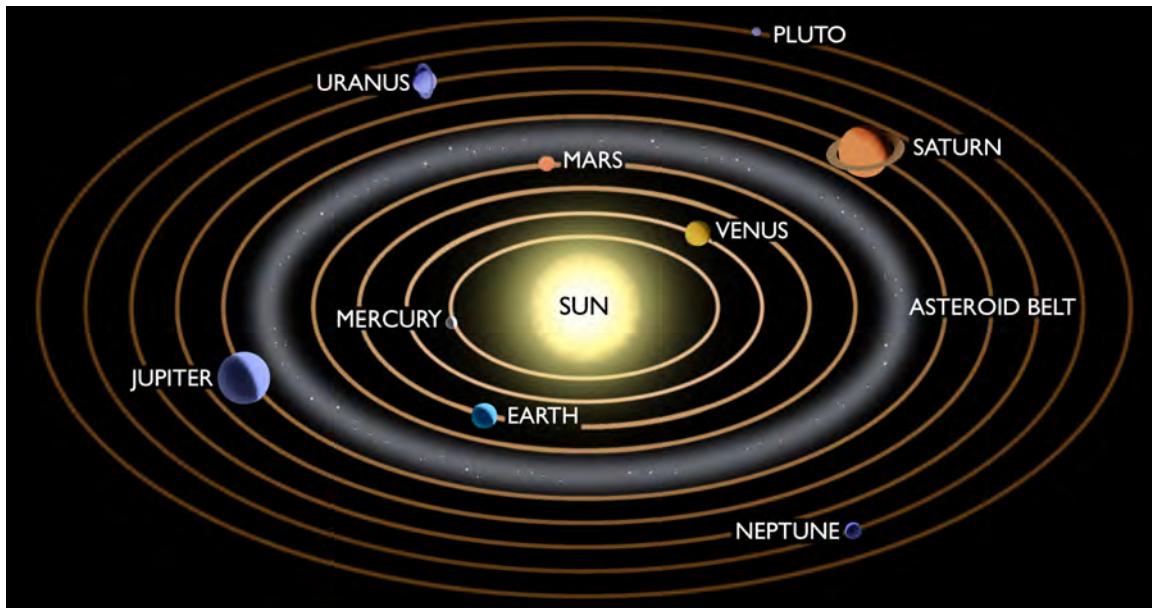
8 What is meant by the sentence 'Considering what they had been through, the crew returned in excellent condition'?

9 Why do you think the astronauts had not seen that a panel was missing until the Service Module was released into space?

Section C

Imagine you are on a space mission and something goes wrong. Write a short newspaper account telling what happened.

The Solar System



The solar system consists of the sun and everything which moves around the sun. This includes the nine major planets and their satellites. The planets orbit the sun. Our sun is one of millions of stars. Stars are made of burning gases.

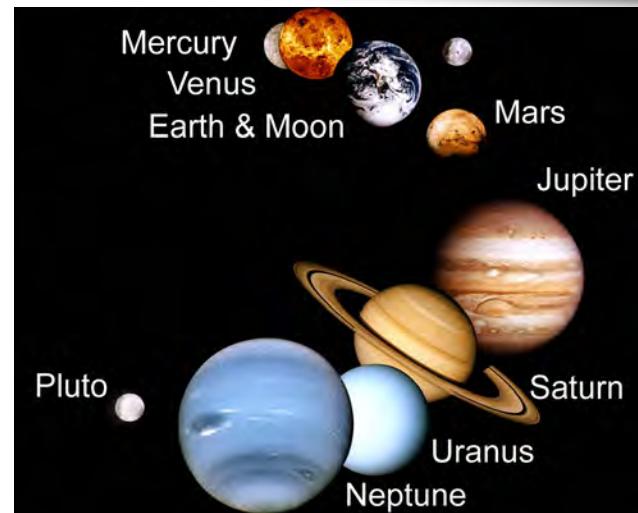
A satellite is the name given to an object that goes around, or orbits, a larger object such as a planet. The earth's only natural satellite is called the Moon. The earth also has many man-made satellites such as the International Space Station. The man-made satellites were put into orbit around the Earth using rockets or the Space Shuttle.

Nine planets orbit our sun. They are Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Mercury is the planet nearest to the sun. Pluto is furthest away. Mercury is the smallest planet. Venus is similar in size to the earth. Neptune, Saturn and Uranus are larger than the earth. Other objects found in the solar system are asteroids, comets and meteors.

Recently, Pluto was renamed a 'Dwarf Planet'.

Amazing Solar System Facts

- The solar system formed around 4.6 billion years ago.
- Venus is the hottest planet in our solar system with a surface temperature of over 450 degrees centigrade.
- Saturn isn't the only ringed planet. Other gas giants such as Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune also have rings, but they are less obvious.
- Footprints left behind by astronauts on the moon will stay there forever, as there is no wind to blow them away.
- Halley's Comet was last seen in the inner Solar System in 1986. It will be visible again from Earth in 2061.
- Many scientists believe that an asteroid impact caused the extinction of the dinosaurs around 65 million years ago.
- The first man made object sent into space was a satellite named Sputnik.



The Solar System

Section A

Choose the best word or group of words to fit the passage and put a ring around your choice.

The solar system consists of the sun and everything that moves around it. This includes

1 **seven** **eight** **nine** **ten**

major planets and their

2 **moons.** **satellites.** **rings.** **seas.**

Our sun is a

3 **planet** **star** **moon** **meteorite**

made of burning gases. A satellite is the name given to an object that

4 **orbits** **circles** **flies about** **rotates**

a larger object. The earth's only natural satellite is

5 **the moon.** **the sun.** **Mars.** **Saturn.**

Man-made satellites were put into orbit using

6 **space ships** **rockets** **catapults** **planes**

or the Space Shuttle.

Section B

1 Fill in the table: **Solar System Facts**

When was the Solar System formed?	
Hottest planet?	
Planets with rings?	
Halley's comet next seen from earth?	
First man made object sent into space?	

2 Name the nine planets in our solar system.

3 What does the word 'orbit' mean?

4 What are stars made of?

5 What is the difference between a natural satellite and a man-made satellite?

6 Which planets are larger than the earth?

7 Name three objects found in our solar system other than planets, moons and the sun.

8 What do some scientists believe caused the destruction of dinosaurs on the earth?

Section C

Research which planets in our solar system have moons and record your results in a table.