

Take a Tour of a Spaceship

What's it like to live inside a rocket that is zooming high above the Earth?
Read on to find out!

Rockets once took astronauts to the moon. Now the U.S. is preparing to go back to the moon, and even to Mars. While traveling through space, the astronauts will need to work, eat, and sleep in tight quarters. The high-tech spacecraft that blasts them into space is specially built to keep them safe as they complete their mission and return home.

Inside a spacecraft, you might see:

FOLDAWAY SEATS There are four seats in the spaceship: the commander and pilot sit in the front row facing a control panel. Two more astronauts sit directly behind them. They are strapped in on their backs for blastoff, and the seats fold away once they're in orbit so they have more room.

CONTROL PANEL How do astronauts drive the spaceship? By computer, mostly. With the help of touch-screen monitors, they direct the ship, monitor its electrical systems, and communicate with Earth.

DOCKING HATCH Astronauts wiggle into the spaceship through an opening at the top, the same hatch they use to let robot landers out to explore the moon or Mars. The hatch also helps the ship dock onto a larger space station.

HAND CONTROLLERS The crew uses these to pilot the ship once they're in space.

SLEEPING BAGS Astronauts sleep inside sleeping bags, which they attach to the wall to keep themselves from floating into each other while they snooze! In



Astronauts working in an Orion test module.

space, they can sleep straight up or upside down—because they are floating in almost no gravity (called microgravity).

PERSONAL HYGIENE KIT It includes a hairbrush (even though your hair will stick straight up in microgravity) and a toothbrush. Toothpaste is so thick that it sticks to a toothbrush in space, but water comes out of a hose in bubbles that astronauts catch with their mouths!

SPACE TOILET The toilet is a small camping-style unit with a privacy curtain. At its side is a hose with a funnel at the end for collecting urine. Both have suction to move the waste away.

TRASH CANS Astronauts have chores in space, and that includes taking out the garbage. They use a lot of wet wipes to clean both themselves and the spaceship.

VIDEO CAMERA It lets astronauts chat with people back on Earth, including their family and friends!



Name _____

Use Diagrams to Explore Space

Readers use text and visuals to understand something new. Look at the diagram and write captions to describe the highlighted items. Refer to the text passage if you need help.

