



Lesson: Alan Shepard's Space Exploration

(To follow Amplify CKLA 1, Knowledge 6, Lesson 6)

At a Glance

In this lesson, students expand on their growing knowledge of space exploration by learning about New Hampshire-born astronaut Alan Shepard, who was the first American in space.

Primary Focus Objectives

- Students discuss a historic photograph.
- Students will read and place statements along a timeline.
- Students will write about where they would like to travel in space.

Formative Assessment

- Timeline activity
- Space journey response

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media

Materials

- Focus Text: [Alan Shepard Suited Up](#)
- Optional Focus Text: [Moose on the Loose, Unit 15, Learn It! "Post-War NH," page 8](#)
- Timeline template
- Timeline cards
- My Space Journey worksheet
- Optional: [Draw Your Own Comic: Space Travel](#)

Time Needed

One or two 30-40 minutes class sessions

Learning Activity

1. **Focus Text: Alan Shepard Suited Up.** Project or distribute copies of the image and its caption. Begin by discussing what students observe about the photograph. Read the caption together and discuss why Alan Shepard's journey was important. *(10 minutes)*
2. **Make a timeline.** Give students the timeline template. Talk about how the years are organized. Distribute the card worksheet and support students as they cut out cards and arrange them on the timeline. As a whole group, review the cards aloud in order. *(15 minutes)*
3. **My Space Journey.** Talk with students about the different reasons Alan Shepard went into space. Ask them to think about what they would want to explore in space. Distribute the worksheet and give them time to write about and illustrate their thinking. *(20 minutes)*



Educator Rationale and Answer Guide

Connection to Amplify

This lesson expands upon the learning objectives in Amplify Grade 1, Knowledge 6, Lesson 6: History of Space Exploration and Astronauts, by making connections to the life and space journeys of New Hampshire-born astronaut, Alan Shepard. Shepard is especially important to the history of space exploration because he was the first American to go into outer space. Students develop historical thinking skills in this lesson by examining a timeline, reading non-fiction text and placing events in chronological order. Students also develop their historical thinking skills by examining photographs and writing about what their own space journey might be like based on what they have learned.

Focus Text: Alan Shepard Suited Up

Students may observe that the spacesuit Shepard is wearing is different from modern spacesuits. After reading or listening to the caption, students should understand that Shepard was from Derry, New Hampshire, was a test pilot, and that he spent just over 15 minutes in space. Consider also reading aloud, or with reading groups, page 8 of Unit 15: Learn It! "Post War NH." The details on that page are used for the timeline activity, including information accessed in the clickable biography.

Make a timeline

The cards each have a year, which should help students place them along the timeline. Students will need to determine how close to each decade on the timeline to place each card. Explain to students they can place the cards above or below the line and draw a line to the spot on the line where they think the exact year is located. After reading through the cards, talk about the different reasons why Shepard went to space: his first mission was to prove that humans could go out to space and return. His second mission was to prove that humans could land and walk on the moon and return.

This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson across two class sessions.

My Space Journey

Responses will vary but encourage students to explain what, where, and why they would make that particular journey. Consider using the Draw Your Own Comic activity for students who are still developing writing skills.

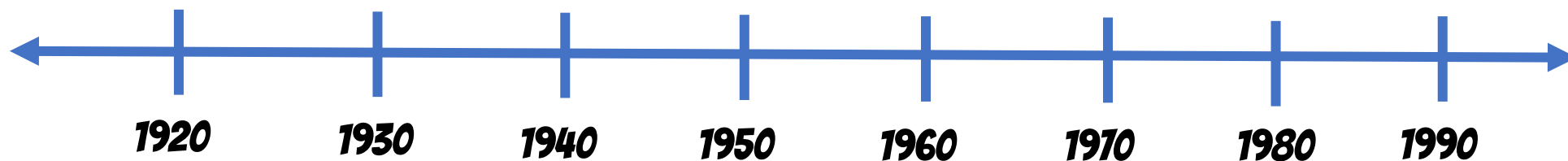


Focus Text: Alan Shepard Suited Up

Alan Shepard was the first American in space. He was from Derry, New Hampshire, and had served in World War Two as a test pilot. He was chosen to be one of the first group of American astronauts, known as the Mercury Project. On May 5, 1961, he spent 15 minutes and 28 seconds in space.

Image source: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), 1961.





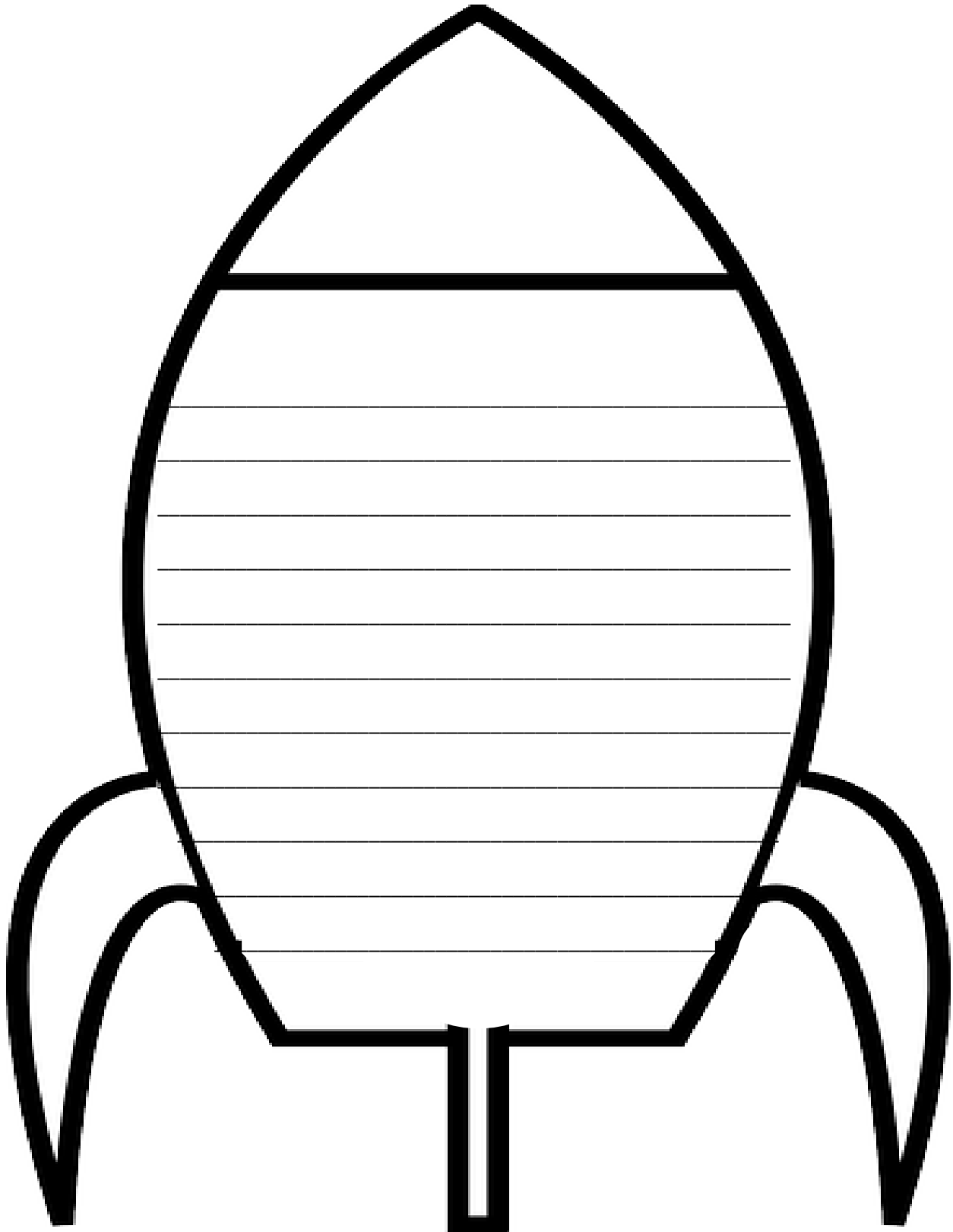


Alan Shepard Timeline Cards

Alan Shepard was born in 1923 . He grew up in Derry, New Hampshire.	Alan Shepard served in the Navy in 1944 and 1945 during World War II.
Alan Shepard graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy. He became a test pilot in 1950 .	Alan Shepard was selected to be in the first group of American astronauts in 1959 .
In 1961 , Alan Shepard flew 116 miles above Earth's surface. He was the first American to fly into outer space.	In 1971 , Alan Shepard led the Apollo 14 mission. He landed on the moon.
Alan Shepard died in 1998 .	



My Space Journey



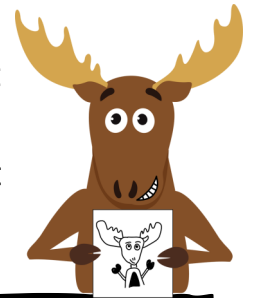


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DRAW YOUR OWN COMIC: SPACE TRAVEL

During the 1950s and 1960s, the United States made a big effort to explore outer space. Alan Shepard, the first American to travel into space, was even from New Hampshire! He made two important trips into space: one when he went 116 miles above the earth and one when he traveled all the way to the moon.

Imagine you are a crew member on Alan Shepard's journey to the moon. Draw a comic strip about what you experience on that trip. What does the spaceship look like? What job do you have on the ship? How many other people are on the ship with you? When you arrive on the moon, will you get a chance to walk on it?





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