

# Astronauts

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Informational Performance Task

### Task:

Your class is creating a magazine about interesting jobs people do. Each person has been assigned to learn about a different job. Your assignment is to learn about what it is like to be an astronaut. You have found two sources about being an astronaut.

After you have looked at these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then, go back and read the sources carefully so you will have the information you will need to answer the questions and write an informational article.

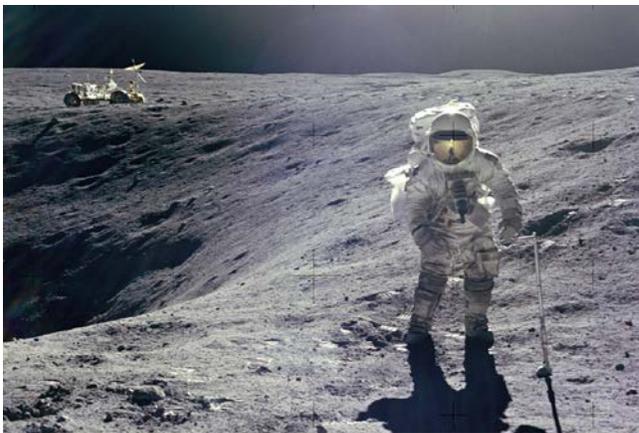
In Part 2, you will write an informational article using information you have read.

### Directions for beginning:

You will now look at two sources. You can look at either of the sources as often as you like.

### Research Questions:

After looking at the sources, use the rest of the time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the information you have read and looked at, which should help you write your informational article.



Practice Test, May 2013

## What is an Astronaut?

By Talia Yee

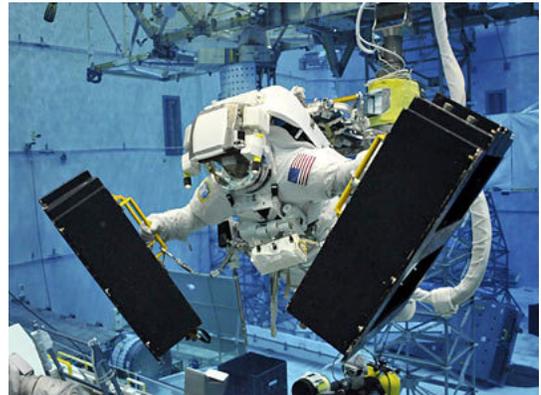


Have you ever thought about what it is like in space? Astronauts are people who go out into space. Being an astronaut is an exciting job. Astronauts can see the Earth from space. They can see how it is round, like a ball. They can look down and see clouds, land, and water. They can even see the Moon up close. Astronauts get the chance to see more stars than you or I have ever seen.

Being an astronaut may be exciting, but it is not an easy job. A person who wants to be an astronaut has to study for years. There are many things an astronaut must learn to do before going into space for the first time.

Astronauts train for hundreds of hours. There are three different levels of training they must pass before leaving for space. During their training, they learn about science and space. They also learn medical skills so they can keep each other healthy and safe when they are in space. Astronauts learn about what life is like on the International Space Station (ISS) and they also practice riding in special vehicles that are meant just for space. They even take classes in scuba diving! The feeling in their suits underwater is very similar to walking in space. A very important thing astronauts must also learn is how to work together as a team. Each person has a special job to do as part of the team.

Since there are different kinds of astronauts who have different kinds of jobs, some of the training they get is also different. Some astronauts learn about how to put things together and become very good at fixing things. They go to space to fix things on spaceships. Some astronauts are pilots who know how to fly airplanes. They have to study how to fly and steer a spaceship. They train for many hours to learn how to turn it, how to make it go faster and slower, and how to guide it through space. Some astronauts are leaders.



They are in charge of all the people on the ship. They make sure that everybody is doing the right job. Other astronauts learn mostly about science. They go into space to learn how living things change when they are in space.

When astronauts are in a spaceship that is moving around Earth, they can feel as though they don't weigh anything. They can float. This is because the spaceship is in constant free fall around Earth, which means that it is quickly dropping as it moves around Earth. When something is in free fall, it can feel as though it is weightless and floating. Many astronauts say that it is fun to float around the inside of a spaceship.

Other objects in the spaceship also can float, so astronauts can lift and move heavy things easily.

Feeling weightless is fun, but being in space is work for astronauts. Astronauts must be healthy and eat right. They have to exercise and be in good shape. Astronauts get to have many adventures. But they work hard, too.

## **Source # 2**

### **Life in Space**

By Aaron Higgins

Many people say they want to be an astronaut, but do they know what it is really like? Because astronauts have to know many things, they spend many years studying. They go to school for 12 years. Then they go to college for four years. After that, they have to study for at least two more years. That is 18 years of school in total! Some astronauts spend even more time studying. After all that time in school, they still have to do special training to learn how to live in space.

When astronauts are in space, they feel weightless. They can float. This sounds like fun, but it is not that simple. The human body is used to being on Earth. Some people stay out in space for months. A lot of strange things happen to the body when it feels weightless and floats for that long.

Astronauts sometimes feel sick in space. It takes a few days for them to get used to feeling weightless and being able to float.

Being in space also changes how blood flows in the body. In space, more blood flows to the astronauts' heads. Their faces get puffy. Their necks get bigger. At the same time, less blood flows to their legs making them skinny. They call this condition "bird legs."

The heart is a muscle. It pumps blood around the body. The heart does not have to work as hard to pump blood in space. A muscle that does not work hard gets weaker and smaller. Astronauts' other muscle and their bones can get weaker too, because they do not have to work as hard to move the astronaut's body.

Astronauts have to do exercises when they are in space so they do not get too weak. They use big rubber bands. They attach them to the walls of the space ship and hook them over their shoulders. Then they bend their knees and press against them to make their legs stronger.

When astronauts come back from space, they feel weak. It takes time for them to get used to being on the ground again.

1. Explain why it is hard to be an astronaut. Give three reasons, using information from both sources. Be sure to tell which source you used for each reason.

2. Which source best tells how feeling “as though they are floating in space” affects the astronauts? Explain your answer by giving two examples from that source.

3. Which topic can be found in both sources?

- a. Astronauts train to do different kinds of jobs in space
- b. Astronauts have a special view of the Moon and Earth
- c. It is important for astronauts to get plenty of exercise
- d. Floating in space can have strange effects on astronauts

## **Student Directions for Part 2**

You will now look at your sources, take notes and plan, draft, revise and edit your article. You may use your notes and go back to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your informational article will be scored; then begin your work.

### **Your assignment:**

Your class is creating a magazine about interesting jobs people do. Each person has been assigned to write about a different job.

Your assignment is to write an informational article that is several paragraphs long that will help the students in your class know what the job of an astronaut is like. The magazine will be read by the students in your class, parents and your teacher.

Make sure to have a main idea, clearly organize your article and support your main idea with details from the sources using your own words. Be sure to develop your ideas clearly.

### **REMEMBER: A well-written informational article:**

- Has a clear main idea
- Is well-organized and stays on the topic
- Has an introduction and conclusion
- Uses transitions
- Uses details from the sources to support your main idea
- Develops ideas clearly
- Uses clear language
- Follows rules of writing (spelling, punctuation, and grammar)

**Now begin your work on your informational article.** Manage your time carefully so that you can:

1. plan your article.
2. write your article.
3. revise and edit the final draft of your article.

For Part 2, you are being asked to write an article that is several paragraphs long.

**Informative-Explanatory Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-5)**

Score	Purpose/Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions
4	<p><b>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained, and consistently and purposefully focused:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea of a topic is clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response clearly and effectively elaborates ideas, using precise language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehensive evidence from sources is integrated; references are relevant and specific</li> <li>effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques*</li> <li>vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>effective, appropriate style enhances content</li> </ul>	<p align="center">2</p> <p><b>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea of a topic is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response adequately elaborates ideas, employing a mix of precise and more general language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate evidence from sources is integrated; some references may be general</li> <li>adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> <li>vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>generally appropriate style is evident</li> </ul>	<p align="center">1</p> <p><b>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea of a topic may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes uneven or limited use of sources, facts, and details. The response elaborates ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some evidence from sources may be weakly integrated, imprecise, or repetitive; references may be vague</li> <li>weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques; development may consist primarily of source summary</li> <li>vocabulary use is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style</li> </ul>	<p align="center">0</p> <p><b>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the topic but may provide little or no focus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose, audience, or task</li> <li>few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>introduction and/or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details. The response is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence from the source material is minimal or irrelevant; references may be absent or incorrectly used</li> <li>minimal, if any, use of elaborative techniques</li> <li>vocabulary is limited or ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>little or no evidence of appropriate style</li> </ul>	<p align="center">NS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> </ul> <p>• (Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>
NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>	<p>*Elaborative techniques may include the use of personal experiences that support the controlling idea.</p> <p><b>Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, August 26, 2013</b>                      Reformatted by Instructional Services, Multnomah Education Service District</p>