



Honoring the Spirit of America

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“Patriotism and Explorers”

How Pioneers On New Frontiers Inspire Patriotism

Grades: 6 –8
Science
Social Studies

Objective

- 1 Explore the history of space travel.
- 2 Identify some of benefits of space travel.
- 3 Weigh the monetary and human costs of space travel and analyze whether it is worth the risks.

Character Education Words

- Courage
- Citizenship
- Patriotism

Teacher’s Overview

- 1 The students will research and analyze the space program in the last twenty years.
- 2 They will debate the costs of space travel and determine whether it is worth the risks.
- 3 The students will gain a greater appreciation for the sacrifices made for scientific research and environmental security for our world.

Introduction

Students will watch a clip of the history of the space race
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1y6TnhR6EXs> or any other website with a short clip will work)

Activities

1. Discuss with the students the benefits of space travel to science and to the

environment. Give students the chance to explain why their groups voted for or against space travel. Make a Venn diagram illustrated below showing the results of the groups.

2. Discuss the loss of the Columbia astronauts (<http://www.nasa.gov/columbia/home/index.html>). Print out handouts for each student. Have them pick and read about one astronaut and answer the following questions: what was their name? Education? Race? Why did they want to be an astronaut?
3. Discuss the original NASA crew that went to the moon verses the crew of Columbia. What were the racial differences? What were the mission differences?
4. Pass out articles promoting/dissuading people to support space exploration (http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/exploration/main/griffin_why_explore.html) (<http://www.cagw.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8992>)
5. Have students discuss in small groups the pros/cons to space travel

Individual Practice/Reflection

Do you believe that those who have died in pursuit of space exploration should be called American patriots? Why or why not?

Do you think space travel is worth the risk of lives? Why or why not?

Assessment

Give students points for their analytic reasoning for their responses.