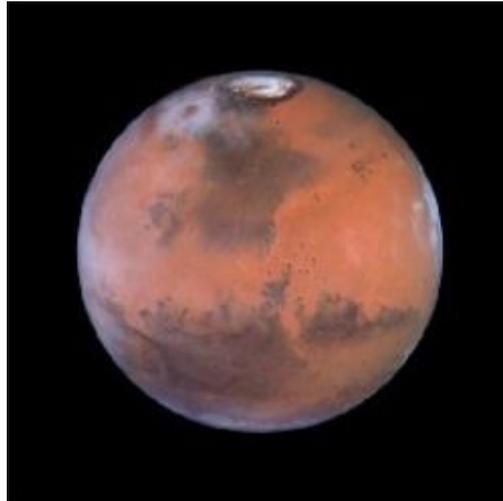


3, 2, 1... Blast Off!



NASA

Now you can take a trip to Mars without ever leaving Earth.

A kid reporter journeyed to Mars aboard Disney's new space ride. Find out how close her ride was to the real thing.

Weekly Reader kid reporter Sonia Mia Diaz blasted into space. This 10-year-old from Florida was on a journey to Mars.

Sonia Mia rocketed to Mars aboard a new ride called Mission: SPACE. She experienced the ride during its opening week at Walt Disney World's Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida.

After her mission, Sonia Mia interviewed Sue Bryan, one of the ride's creators. Sonia Mia learned that Disney worked closely with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to develop the new space attraction. The ride lets people experience what a trip to Mars might be like in the future.

A Space Adventure

On her journey, Sonia Mia never actually left the ground. The ride gives people the feeling of blasting off and traveling through space. "We really wanted people to feel as close as they could to what it's like to be an astronaut," said Bryan.

Sonia Mia read quotes about space exploration as she waited in line. Information about space history fills the attraction. There is even a moon car called a lunar rover on loan from a museum.

An Intense Liftoff

Before boarding the shuttle, Sonia Mia and three other riders were given different roles for the mission. Those roles included commander, pilot, navigator, and engineer.

Sonia Mia was assigned to be the engineer. In real life, Sally Ride, the first U.S. woman in space, performed the same role.

After Sonia Mia strapped herself in, the shuttle moved into launch position. The countdown began, and the shuttle blasted off! During the mission, Sonia Mia and her team used buttons and joysticks to perform the tasks associated with their roles. The ride lasted about 4 minutes.

The mission was as intense as Sonia Mia had hoped. What was her favorite part? The liftoff! "I liked the intensity of the blastoff and the air pressure on my face," she said.

A Realistic Ride?

So how did the ride live up to a real space shuttle mission? Weekly Reader caught up with NASA astronaut Winston Scott to ask him that question.

Scott launched into space on two shuttle flights. He tested out Mission: SPACE and gave it a big thumbs up. "It's a thrill a minute," he said.

Although no astronauts have been to Mars yet, Scott said the ride's liftoff was realistic. The feeling of moving up the launch pad and being forced back into your seat were similar to those felt on a shuttle.

However, he points out, there are differences. In an actual launch, astronauts feel about three times the force of **gravity**. Gravity is the force that pulls things toward Earth.

The blastoff on the ride was also shorter than an actual liftoff. And, he said, riders don't experience weightlessness. On a real space shuttle, astronauts become weightless because there is no gravity.

For many people, the ride brings to mind the courage of space explorers. As Sonia Mia pointed out, "Going on the ride made me think about how brave astronauts are."

Interview With an Imagineer

Sonia Mia Diaz interviewed Sue Bryan, one of the forces behind Mission: SPACE. Here's what Sonia Mia learned.

Sonia Mia: What is an Imagineer?

Sue Bryan: Imagineers are people who work for Disney.

In general, Imagineering is about storytelling. We build attractions that put people who visit our parks into different worlds and stories. We also use technology to tell stories.

Sonia Mia: What was your role in creating the ride?

Bryan: I'm the senior show producer, which is like being a movie director. A movie director guides people and directs the show, including the lighting, music, artists, and motion you experience on the ride.

Sonia Mia: Where did your team get the inspiration for Mission: SPACE?

Bryan: People have always had an interest in space. The time and technology were right to create this new space attraction. We worked closely with NASA to develop the science and technology behind the attraction. No one has ever put people into a ride system like this before.

Sonia Mia: Before the ride, I was warned not to move my head or close my eyes because of motion sickness. I didn't feel sick, but might a person if he or she does those things?

Bryan: That could happen if you move your head, because of the technology used to create the ride. We give those recommendations because we want people to feel most comfortable. Some people can move their heads, and it doesn't bother them at all.

Sonia Mia: How many times have you been on Mission: SPACE?

Bryan: At last count, I've ridden it more than 400 times!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Disney and NASA developed the ride Mission: SPACE. What does the ride let people experience?

- A. what the first trip to the moon was like
- B. what a trip to the moon might be like in the future
- C. what a trip to Mars might be like in the future
- D. what trips to Mars were like many years ago

2. Astronaut Winston Scott compares and contrasts the ride Mission: SPACE with a real space shuttle mission. According to Scott, how is Mission: SPACE similar to a real space shuttle mission?

- A. The feeling of moving up the launch pad is similar on the ride and on a space shuttle.
- B. The blast off lasts the same amount of time on the ride and on a space shuttle.
- C. Three times the force of gravity is felt in a launch both on the ride and on a space shuttle.
- D. The feeling of weightlessness in space is similar on the ride and on a space shuttle.

3. Mission: SPACE was designed to give people a realistic experience of traveling through space like an astronaut. Which information from the passage best supports this conclusion?

- A. People never actually leave the ground during the ride Mission: SPACE.
- B. Sue Bryan claims no one has ever put people into a ride system like Mission: SPACE before.
- C. Mission: SPACE gives people the feeling of blasting off and traveling through space.
- D. Mission: SPACE does not allow people to feel as though they are weightless.

4. Based on the information in the passage, what sort of tasks did Sonia Mia most likely perform during the ride Mission: SPACE?

- A. She most likely performed tasks associated with a commander.
- B. She most likely performed tasks associated with an engineer.
- C. She most likely performed tasks associated with a pilot.
- D. She most likely performed tasks associated with a navigator.

5. What is this passage mainly about?

- A. a museum
- B. a roller coaster
- C. a computer
- D. a space ride

6. Read the following sentence: "During the mission, Sonia Mia and her team used buttons and joysticks to perform the tasks **associated** with their roles."

As used in the passage, what does the word "**associated**" most nearly mean?

- A. removed
- B. invented
- C. developed
- D. connected

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ there are some similarities between the ride Mission: SPACE and a real space shuttle mission, there are also some differences.

- A. Because
- B. Although
- C. However
- D. Finally

8. What differences between ride Mission: SPACE and a real space shuttle mission does NASA astronaut Winston Scott point out?

9. The ride Mission: SPACE can help people understand what it is like to be an astronaut. Use information from the passage to support this conclusion.

10. Sue Bryan, the senior show producer of the ride Mission: SPACE, says that she and other Disney workers "build attractions that put people who visit our parks into different worlds and stories."

Explain how the ride Mission: SPACE puts people into "different worlds and stories." Use information from the passage to support your answer.

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8. What differences between ride Mission: SPACE and a real space shuttle mission does NASA astronaut Winston Scott point out?

The differences Scott points out include: In an actual launch, astronauts feel about three times the force of gravity. The blastoff on the ride is shorter than an actual liftoff. On a real space shuttle, astronauts become weightless but the riders on Mission: SPACE don't experience weightlessness.

9. The ride Mission: SPACE can help people understand what it is like to be an astronaut. Use information from the passage to support this conclusion.

Answers may vary as long as they are supported by the passage. For

example, students may note that riders are assigned roles of astronauts and tasks associated with these roles to perform during the ride. This may help people understand some of the different responsibilities astronauts have during a space shuttle mission.

10. Sue Bryan, the senior show producer of the ride Mission: SPACE, says that she and other Disney workers "build attractions that put people who visit our parks into different worlds and stories."

Explain how the ride Mission: SPACE puts people into "different worlds and stories." Use information from the passage to support your answer.

Answers may vary and should be supported by the passage. For example, students may explain that riders of Mission: SPACE get to experience what traveling through outer space would be like. Most people would consider outer space to be a "different world" or a place they have not experienced. Furthermore, students may explain that riders of Mission: SPACE experience what it is like to be an astronaut, as they travel through space, perform different tasks associated with different roles astronauts have, and learn what it's like to be on a space shuttle. They gain an appreciation for the stories and experiences of astronauts, as Sonia Mia noted, "going on the ride made me think about how brave astronauts are." Thus, the ride gives people a taste of "different worlds and stories" connected to space.