










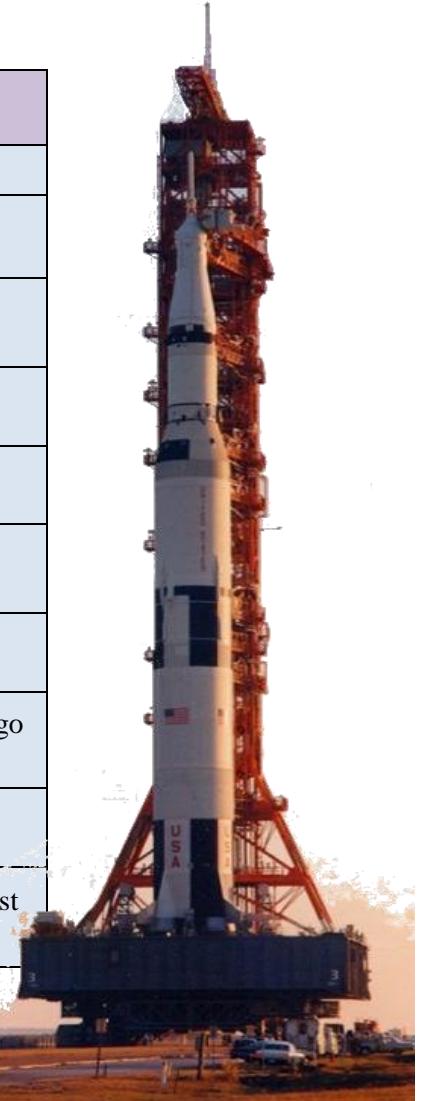
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THE SPACE RACE

The competition between the US and USSR was not just limited to Earth. In 1957, the superpowers began a space race. The Soviet Union stunned the world by launching the world's first satellite into space. They sent Sputnik into orbit and around the earth in 1957, where it remained in space until 1958. American scientists raced to launch a satellite themselves. Congress set aside billions of dollars for space research. Once both the Soviet Union and the United States had launched their own satellites into space, the race to send a man into space began. In 1961, the Soviet Union sent Yuri Gagarin into space to orbit the earth. The Americans lagged behind because the rockets that carried US satellites were smaller and less powerful. Despite this, in 1961 President Kennedy pledged to put an American on the moon by the end of the decade. The early Soviet lead in the space race disappeared, as American scientists and engineers found ways to improve rocket design, construction and testing.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPACE RACE

Date	Country	Event
Oct. 4, 1957		USSR launches Sputnik 1
Nov. 3, 1957		USSR launches Sputnik 2, which carried the first dog (Laika) into orbit
Jan. 31, 1958		Explorer 1, first American satellite is launched
Oct. 1, 1958		NASA is formed
April 12, 1961		Yuri Gagarin becomes the first man in space
May 5, 1961		Alan Shepard becomes the first American in space
May 25, 1961		President JFK addresses Congress – challenges nation to go to the moon before the end of the decade
Feb. 20, 1962		John Glenn orbits the earth 3 times
July 20, 1969		Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin become the first men to walk on the moon.



1. When did the space race begin?
2. What was Sputnik?
3. What country took the early lead in the space race and why?
4. When did the US launch its first satellite? What was it called?
5. Who was the first man in space? When?
6. Who were the first men to walk on the moon?