

Neil Armstrong | Lesson Plan

What was the Space Race and why is competition important whether we win or lose?

Students will examine the implications of America's participation in the Space Race. Through astronaut Neil Armstrong's viewpoint, they will understand the importance of learning from failure on the way to victory.

Learning Objectives:

- Examine America's involvement and success in the Space Race.
- Investigate Neil Armstrong's experience as a pilot, astronaut, and teacher.
- Evaluate the importance of competition as a gateway to success.
- Understand that in any competition, losing can be as important as winning.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Competition:** A contest between rivals.
- **Astronaut:** A person trained to travel into outer space.
- **Lunar Module:** Part of a space vehicle designed to carry astronauts from the command module to the moon's surface and back.
- **Communism:** A form of government in which individual citizens can own nothing on their own. The government owns and controls factories, farms, and natural resources.
- **Global influence:** A country's ability to shape and impact events, policies, and cultures worldwide.
- **Space Race:** A competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to develop space technologies.

Educational Standards: CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.W.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, America, Perseverance

What You'll Need

- Video: *Neil Armstrong: The First Man to Walk on the Moon* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Neil Armstrong: The First Man to Walk on the Moon* (Click [Here](#))
- Picture of Neil Armstrong
- Crayons or colored pencils

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Initiate a short discussion about the definition and importance of competition.



2. Divide students into two large teams.
3. Explain that students will be challenged to solve several simple word problems. The class will have a competition to see which team can state the correct answers first.
4. Instruct teams to shout out the answer when they know it.
5. Read the following problems aloud, giving teams one point for each correct answer:
 - Neil Armstrong was born in 1930. He walked on the moon in 1969. How old was he when he walked on the moon? (39 years old)
 - The lunar module touched down on the moon's surface on July 20, 1969, at 4:17 p.m. ET. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon on July 20, 1969, at 10:51 p.m. ET. How much time passed between the moon landing and the time Armstrong walked on the moon? (6 hours 34 minutes)
 - The Apollo 11 Spacecraft launched from Cape Kennedy on July 16, 1969, and returned to Earth on July 21, 1969. How long was the journey? (5 days)
6. Name one team as the "winner." Then, turn your focus to the "losing" team. Ask students what they think can be gained from losing a competition. Write students' thoughts on the board. Answers could include motivation to improve, learning from mistakes, and an increased interest in the subject.
7. Explain that the class will watch a video about American astronaut Neil Armstrong to learn more about the importance of competition. Show the students pictures of him. Activate prior knowledge by asking what they already know about him.
8. Display the worksheet and distribute individual copies to students.
9. Read over the worksheet as a class so students know what to listen for during the video.

Watch and Complete: (15 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Pause throughout the video to allow students to complete answers and notes on the worksheet. Assist as needed.

Wrap-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Allow students several minutes to complete the worksheet independently.
2. Invite students to share their illustrations and captions for the snapshot activity on the worksheet.
3. Conclude by restating that win or lose, competition is an important step toward overall success. Remind students that by studying Neil Armstrong's inspiring journey and the intense rivalry of the Space Race, they should understand the vital lesson of how healthy competition drives innovation and progress. Just as Armstrong's historic moon landing exemplified the pinnacle of human achievement, so does embracing competition encourage young minds to reach for the stars and push beyond their limits, fostering a spirit of excellence and ambition in all their endeavors.
4. Collect the worksheet as a formative assessment or participation grade.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.