

The Ride Stuff

One small step for a woman, one giant leap for womankind! Astronaut Sally Ride became the first American woman to **voyage**, or travel, to space. She made the journey on June 18, 1983. *WR News* student reporter Leah Meador talked with Ride about her starring role in NASA's history.



NASA
Sally Ride checks in with
NASA from the space
shuttle in 1983.

Leah Meador: How did you feel when you were going into space?

Sally Ride: I was unbelievably excited. There is no amusement park ride even close to the experience of flying into space.

LM: What inspired you to become an astronaut?

SR: I was always interested in science from the time that I was in second or third grade. Science was always my favorite subject.

LM: What did it mean to you to be the first U.S. woman to go into space?

SR: It meant a lot to me to be [a] role model ... for young girls who wanted to be astronauts.

LM: Who is the person that supported you the most while you were trying to become an astronaut?

SR: My high school science teacher. She was a good teacher, but what was really important to me is that she helped me build my confidence ... She helped me believe in myself.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Which statement best describes Sally Ride?

- A first American woman scientist
- B first woman space traveler
- C first space traveler
- D first American woman space traveler

2. In what order are the questions and answers written?

- A in chronological order, from her infancy to adulthood
- B in order of importance
- C in order of the problem, then the solution
- D in no particular order

3. Which of the following answers support the statement: "Sally Ride's experience during her school years set her on a path to become an astronaut."

- A Sally Ride was the first American woman to go into space and she loved the subject of science.
- B Sally Ride's favorite subject was science and her science teacher helped Sally build her confidence.
- C Sally Ride is a role model and she studied extremely hard to be an astronaut.
- D Sally Ride spoke to a student reporter and she made a historic achievement.

4. The author writes that Sally Ride had a "**starring** role" in NASA's history.

Why did the author most likely choose the term **starring**?

- A because Sally Ride studied stars for NASA
- B because Sally Ride had an important role in NASA's history
- C because Sally Ride had a career as an actress at one point
- D because Sally Ride was extremely bright, like a star

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A women who achieve "firsts"
- B space travel for women
- C the first American female space traveler
- D the future of American space travel

6. How, specifically, did Sally Ride's high school science teacher help her? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

7. Explain what the author means in the first sentence: "One small step for a woman, one giant leap for womankind!"

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Sally Ride was the first American woman to go to space; _____, she became a role model for young girls who wanted to be astronauts.

- A next
- B as a result
- C finally
- D on the other hand

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

On June 18, 1983, astronaut Sally Ride became the first American woman to voyage, or travel, in space.

Who? astronaut Sally Ride

(did) What? _____

Where? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** leap (noun): large step, jump.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 740

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines, or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: In “The Ride Stuff,” the author introduces the reader to Sally Ride, the first American woman to travel to space. After a short introduction, a student reporter asks Ride several questions about the inspiration, support, and emotions she associates with her historic achievement.

1. Which statement best describes Sally Ride?
 - A first American woman scientist
 - B first woman space traveler
 - C first space traveler
 - D **first American woman space traveler**
2. In what order are the questions and answers written?
 - A in chronological order, from her infancy to adulthood
 - B in order of importance
 - C in order of the problem, then the solution
 - D **in no particular order**
3. Which of the following answers support the statement: “Sally Ride’s experience during her school years set her on a path to become an astronaut.”
 - A Sally Ride was the first American woman to go into space and she loved the subject of science.
 - B **Sally Ride’s favorite subject was science and her science teacher helped Sally build her confidence.**
 - C Sally Ride is a role model and she studied extremely hard to be an astronaut.
 - D Sally Ride spoke to a student reporter and she made a historic achievement.
4. The author writes that Sally Ride had a “**starring** role” in NASA’s history. Why did the author most likely choose the term **starring**?
 - A because Sally Ride studied stars for NASA
 - B **because Sally Ride had an important role in NASA’s history**
 - C because Sally Ride had a career as an actress at one point
 - D because Sally Ride was extremely bright, like a star
5. What is this passage mostly about?
 - A women who achieve “firsts”
 - B space travel for women
 - C **the first American female space traveler**
 - D the future of American space travel
6. How, specifically, did Sally Ride’s high school science teacher help her? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Suggested answer: Sally Ride’s high school science teacher helped Sally Ride build her confidence. Sally Ride says that the teacher “helped [her] believe in [herself].”

7. Explain what the author means in the first sentence: "One small step for a woman, one giant leap for womankind!"

Suggested answer: The author means that although Sally Ride's accomplishment may have been just a small step for her, it signified a giant step forward for women all over the world. Because she travelled to space, she confirmed for women everywhere that they can do whatever they put their mind to. Previously, only men had traveled to space.

Students may note that this is a modification of the famous phrase uttered by Neil Armstrong during the moon landing in 1969, "that's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." However, that knowledge is not essential in order to ascertain the meaning of the author's words.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Sally Ride was the first American woman to go to space; _____, she became a role model for young girls who wanted to be astronauts.

- A next
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9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

On June 18, 1983, astronaut Sally Ride became the first American woman to voyage, or travel, in space.

Who? astronaut Sally Ride

(did) What? **became the first American woman to voyage, or travel**

Where? **in space**

When? **on June 18, 1983**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** leap (*noun*): large step, jump.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.