A Giant Leap: Neil Armstrong and the Moon Landing

Learning objective: To understand the historical significance of the 1969 moon landing and the role of Neil Armstrong.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below. Ensure you use full sentences where required.

In 1969, the world watched in awe as the Apollo 11 mission achieved what many thought was impossible: landing humans on the Moon. Neil Armstrong, an American test pilot and astronaut, led the mission alongside Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins. As the lunar module, named the Eagle, touched down on the dusty surface of the Sea of Tranquillity, Armstrong radioed back to Earth, 'The Eagle has landed.' When he stepped off the ladder and onto the lunar surface, he famously described it as 'one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.' This momentous event marked the height of the Space Race, a time of intense competition in space exploration. Back on Earth, millions of people gathered around television sets to witness the grainy, black-and-white images. For Ellie, our elephant friend who loves history, this event represents a pivotal moment in human achievement, showing how courage and clever engineering can overcome the laws of gravity. Armstrong's calm leadership during the final, tense moments of the descent ensured that the mission was a success, forever changing how humanity viewed its place in the universe.

Word bank: astronaut · lunar · milestone · spacecraft · exploration · gravity

1. What was the name of the lunar module that Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin used to land on the Moon? (1 mark)

2. Identify two people who accompanied Neil Armstrong on the Apollo 11 mission. (2 marks)

3. Why might the author describe the moon landing as a 'giant leap for mankind' rather than just a scientific experiment? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, what can you infer about the technology available in 1969 compared to today? (2 marks)

5. Do you think the Moon landing was the most important event of the 20th century? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene showing the lunar module Eagle resting on the grey, cratered surface of the Moon, with Earth visible as a small blue marble in the dark sky above.

Extension challenge: Research the 'Space Race'. Create a timeline of three other significant events in space exploration that happened between 1957 and 1975.