

# Space School



**In September, NASA welcomed new astronaut candidates. Before they can travel to space, they have a lot to learn.**

**LEXILE:** 970L

**SCIENCE (NGSS) STANDARD:** Earth's Place in the Universe

**COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS:** RI.6-8.1, RI.6-8.3, SL.6-8.1, W.6-8.8

## ENGAGE THE READER

Ask anyone who'd like to be an astronaut to raise a hand. Call on volunteers to say why or why not. Tell students that new astronaut candidates were chosen in September. Ask how they think someone becomes an astronaut. What are the qualifications? Share NASA's qualifications with the class at [ti.me/AstronautQualifications](https://ti.me/AstronautQualifications) before reading about the new astronaut class. Is there anything surprising on that list? What things might rule an applicant out? Discuss why students think each of the qualifications and disqualifications is necessary.

## QUESTIONS FOR CLOSE READING AND DISCUSSION

- Why are the 10 newcomers referred to as "candidates" and not astronauts?
- What kinds of things will the astronaut candidates learn in training? Why are these skills important?
- What personality traits do you think someone needs to be a good astronaut? Explain.

## EXTEND LEARNING

Bring the class back together and have a conversation about what astronaut candidates must learn before they become astronauts. What's the purpose of each skill? Work as a class to make a list of the types of missions these astronauts might take part in. What might they have to do on these trips?

As a class, come up with a space mission that could take place in the next decade. Describe where the astronauts will go and what they'll do on the mission. Then group students and tell them they'll be choosing a team of four from the new astronaut class for this mission. There will be a commander, or leader, responsible for communications with Mission Control and for making decisions. There will be a pilot responsible for flying the spacecraft. There will be two mission specialists, who'll maintain spacecraft equipment and complete the mission tasks that the class comes up with. Groups can use the descriptions of the candidates at [ti.me/astonautCandidates](https://ti.me/astonautCandidates) to make their decisions. Have groups compare their choices when they're done.

## COVER STORY QUIZ + ANSWER KEY

The cover quiz can be found on page 2 of this guide.  
To create a digital quiz, you can use our template [here](#).

- 1. C** (RI.4) **2. A** (RI.6) **3. C** (RI.1) **4. D** (RI.2) **5. D** (RI.1)  
**6. B** (RI.1) **7. Answers will vary.** (W.3)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use this week's cover story, "Space School," to answer the questions below. For questions 1–6, circle the letter next to the best answer. If you need more space to write your response to question 7, use the back of this page.

<p><b>1.</b> Which word can replace <i>candidate</i> in this article?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. scientist</li><li>B. administrator</li><li>C. trainee</li><li>D. astronaut</li></ul>	<p><b>4.</b> Which detail would not be included in a summary of the article?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. There were 10 newcomers accepted into NASA's Astronaut Candidate Program.</li><li>B. Candidates will train for two years to learn what it takes to travel to space.</li><li>C. After graduation, the 2025 class will join NASA's astronaut corps.</li><li>D. Rebecca Lawler was interested in watching aircraft as a kid.</li></ul>
<p><b>2.</b> What does Rebecca Lawler think about training?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. She's enjoying it.</li><li>B. It's very hard.</li><li>C. It will help her get to Mars one day.</li><li>D. She doesn't have too much to learn.</li></ul>	<p><b>5.</b> What are some things the astronaut candidates might do after graduation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. drive rovers on the moon</li><li>B. conduct research at the International Space Station</li><li>C. spacewalks</li><li>D. all of the above</li></ul>
<p><b>3.</b> What do candidates Adam Fuhrmann and Rebecca Lawler have in common?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. They were hurricane hunters.</li><li>B. They're scientists.</li><li>C. They served in the military.</li><li>D. They grew up in Texas.</li></ul>	<p><b>6.</b> After reading the article, you can tell that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. NASA astronaut candidates need pilot experience.</li><li>B. NASA astronaut candidates come from many different academic and professional backgrounds.</li><li>C. all NASA astronauts have been in the military.</li><li>D. anyone can become an astronaut.</li></ul>

**7.** Write a diary entry from the point of view of an astronaut in training.

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