


The New

Throughout history, we have been fascinated by the unknown. Hundreds of years ago sea-faring explorers set off in their ships to discover unknown lands across the seas. They discovered 'new worlds' and different ways of life. In more recent times, our need to explore has taken us on new voyages of discovery. . .



Space History Table

The first flight into space took place over 40 years ago. Since then, scientists have worked hard to explore space and find ways of living there. This table shows key dates in the history of space exploration.

1961	The first man in space: <i>Yuri Gagarin</i>	Flight time 2 hours
1963	First woman in space: <i>Valentina Tereshkova</i>	Flight time 3 days
1969	First men on the moon: <i>Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin</i>	Duration 1 week
1973	The first space station: <i>Skylab</i>	Astronauts in space for several months
1976	Space probes: <i>Viking 1</i> and <i>Viking 2</i> land on Mars	Months of unmanned exploration
1986	Largest space station, <i>Mir</i> , launched	Some astronauts work in space for over a year
1991	The first British astronaut, <i>Helen Sharman</i> , visited <i>Mir</i>	Helen spends a week on the space station
 2001	<i>International Space Station (ISS)</i> launched	Astronauts from all over the world can live and work in space for months at a time

Explorers

Helen Sharman

Helen Sharman is the first British astronaut. Here are some of the things she said about the time she spent on Mir performing scientific experiments and experiencing the unique feeling of being in a 'new world'.

"Inside an orbiting spacecraft you feel weightless. Because you're travelling so fast, you're pulled towards the Earth as it curves away below you. It's as though you're constantly falling round the Earth. Wonderful!

We go into space because of the useful things we can find out there, but no astronaut ever tires of just looking out of the window. If you look towards the Earth you see vast oceans of rich blue, sprinkled with snow white clouds that are so bright with reflected sunlight that it hurts your eyes to look at them for long. Deserts are brick-red, crossed with sandy coloured roads that seem to have neither beginnings nor ends. If you look away from Earth into space, you see millions and millions of stars that seem to go on forever."

