

## The business of space

It is 40 years since man landed on the moon. Should we restart the dreams of space exploration – or are any such ventures just a huge waste of time and money?

1 Practise saying the following figures.

14 <sup>th</sup>	40 <sup>th</sup>	11	13	30	six	\$24 bn	\$150bn	12,000	400,000	0.9%	5%
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2 Scan the first two paragraphs in the article and replace the missing figures. Use the figures in exercise one. There are two extra figures.

**Man, moon and Mars** We are currently celebrating the (1) ..... anniversary of the Apollo (2) ..... mission. It's hard to believe in this age of technological advances that mankind's greatest achievement happened before many of today's whizz-kids were even born. Where is the 'can-do' spirit of John F Kennedy's era, when commitment and motivation drove the space exploration project forward. Is it time to go back to go where "no man has gone before: space - the final frontier"? Some people question the value of space travel when we have so many problems here on earth, while others see space exploration as a vital part of human endeavour, the human spirit. Those against space exploration are seen as too risk-averse. Space is a risky business; the near-disaster of the Apollo (3) ..... mission is an example of that. Worse, lives have been lost.

The Apollo programme ran from 1961 to 1975 and landed humans on the moon (4) ..... times. The whole lunar programme is estimated to have cost over (5) .....! That's

equivalent to (6) ..... in today's money. In fact, the 1960s space programme cost around (7) ..... of the national budget. The current figure stands at a mere (8) ..... of the US budget. Some (9) ..... people were involved in the Apollo programme, which also involved around (10) ..... companies.

Space remains the great challenges for mankind; for many, the dream lives on. In the US, a review of NASA's manned space flight programme is underway. Britain has just ended its long-time ban on space flights and is now prepared to fund astronaut training. Scientists, pilots, engineers and other suitable candidates can apply to the European Space Agency (ESA). They are expected to make their first journeys to the International Space station, although many question the value of maintaining the Space station. What happens now: should untold billions of dollars be invested to send a manned flight to Mars? Or is that money better spent improving life here on earth?

3 Read the whole article. Summarise the key points in each paragraph.

4 Identify the following words in the article from their definitions below.

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|---|---------------|
| (a) an important piece of work that a person has to do for a large organization     | (paragraph 1) |
| (b) a particular thing that you have managed to do which is difficult and rewarding | (paragraph 1) |
| (c) the amount of money a person or organization has to spend on something          | (paragraph 2) |
| (d) to provide the money for something that costs a lot                             | (paragraph 3) |
| (e) official announcement that someone is not allowed to do something               | (paragraph 3) |

Definitions from or adapted from the Macmillan English Dictionary <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

5 Do the task in small groups and be ready to report back your ideas to the class.

You are a member of an advisory board, asked to give recommendations to the ESA on the future of the space programme. Agree on your choice of strategy (A-D). Be ready to justify your decision.

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| A. Cancel the space programme entirely         | B. Maintain space programme at current level |
| C. Increase the budget for the space programme | D. Increase the budget significantly         |