

To The Moon! - Apollo 11

The first men on the Moon were Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin of the US Apollo 11 mission who landed on the Moon on 21 July 1969. As Armstrong set foot on the Moon, he said: "This is a small step for a man, a giant leap for mankind".

The ambitious Apollo project sent 27 astronauts to the Moon between 1968 and 1972. Twelve of them landed on the surface. During the last three Apollo missions, more than 50 tonnes of men and equipment were transported from Earth to the lunar bases at Hadley Rille, Cayley Plain and Taurus Littrow. A total of 381.7 kg of rock samples were brought back.



The astronauts found the Moon a barren and forbidding place. Because there is no atmosphere, the sky is permanently black and starry, even during lunar daytime. The surface is very dry. Any water would immediately boil off into the vacuum of space. The temperature at night drops to -180°C , so cold that the air would liquefy. During the lunar day, the surface can get as hot as 120°C .

Many scientific experiments were done during the Apollo missions. In one astronauts used a length of aluminium foil to trap particles streaming from the Sun in what is called the 'Solar Wind'. Long after the last Apollo



astronauts left the Moon, the experimental stations they set up and left behind kept working.

When the astronauts had finished their mission on the Moon, they re-entered the lunar lander (above) and blasted off into space to dock with the orbiting module (right). They then headed back towards Earth and dropped through the atmosphere to parachute into the sea.

