

Astronauts



An astronaut is a spacecraft crew member. Soviet Russia's Yuri Gagarin became the world's first spaceman when he flew around the planet as an astronaut in the Vostok spaceship satellite.

John Glenn was the first American to orbit the Earth. Perhaps the most famous astronauts are Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong, the first men to

land on the Moon.

A cosmonaut is the Russian term for a spacecraft crew member. The longest flight duration by two individuals was that of Vladimir Titov and Musa Manarov, who spent 366 days in the space station Mir (Dec 1987-Dec 1988). Valentina Tereshkov was the first woman to fly in space.



Astronauts now regularly visit space in orbit above the Earth. The Russians have been sending astronauts to stay on their space station Mir until recently. Astronauts make regular trips into orbit aboard the Space Shuttle.

In the past, space suits were tailor-made for each astronaut, a time-consuming and costly process. The Shuttle space suit is manufactured in small, medium, and large sizes and can be worn by men or women. The suit comes with an upper and lower torso equivalent to a shirt and trousers. Each piece snaps together with sealing rings. A life-support system is built into the upper torso. Previous pressure suits had separate life support systems which had to be connected to the suits.

The Shuttle space suit is lighter, more durable, and easier to move about in than previous space suits. When an astronaut has to work outside the spacecraft, the Shuttle suit is used for extravehicular activity.



An astronaut needs a space suit to protect them from the extreme



temperatures (hot and cold) and from the lack of pressure from the atmosphere. Without their suit they would die very quickly and horribly. The space suit contains everything they need to survive, it includes its own power and air systems as well as cooling systems and protection from micro meteoroids. Each one costs around a million dollars.