

Solar System Historical Milestones in North America

Solar System History · Practice Test · 18 Questions

1. Which North American observatory was the first to confirm the existence of Pluto in 1930?

- A) Lowell Observatory
- B) Mount Wilson Observatory
- C) Palomar Observatory
- D) Yerkes Observatory

2. In 1962, the Mariner 2 mission was the first to successfully conduct a flyby of another planet. What was that planet?

- A) Mars
- B) Venus
- C) Mercury
- D) Jupiter

3. Which American spacecraft was the first to achieve a soft landing on the surface of Mars in 1976?

- A) Viking 1
- B) Pathfinder
- C) Curiosity
- D) Spirit

4. The first American to orbit the Earth, John Glenn, flew in which spacecraft in 1962?

- A) Gemini 3
- B) Freedom 7
- C) Friendship 7
- D) Liberty Bell 7

5. In 1989, the Voyager 2 spacecraft provided the first close-up images of which planet's rings and moons?

- A) Uranus
- B) Neptune
- C) Saturn
- D) Jupiter

6. Which mission launched from Cape Canaveral in 1977 carried a 'Golden Record' containing sounds and images of Earth?

- A) Pioneer 10
- B) Voyager 1
- C) Voyager 2
- D) Pioneer 11

7. What was the name of the first U.S. space station, launched into orbit in 1973?

- A) Skylab
- B) Salyut
- C) Mir
- D) International Space Station

8. In 1997, the Mars Pathfinder mission deployed which first-ever successful robotic rover on the Martian surface?

- A) Opportunity
- B) Sojourner
- C) Curiosity
- D) Perseverance

9. Which American astronomer is credited with the 1929 discovery that the universe is expanding?

- A) Percival Lowell
- B) Edwin Hubble
- C) Carl Sagan
- D) Clyde Tombaugh

10. What was the primary goal of the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) launched by NASA in 2009?

- A) Mapping lunar resources
- B) Testing fusion engines
- C) Searching for Martian water
- D) Monitoring solar flares

11. The 1965 Mariner 4 mission was significant for providing the first close-up images of which planet's cratered surface?

- A) Venus
- B) Mars
- C) Mercury
- D) Moon

12. Which U.S. satellite, launched in 1958, discovered the Van Allen radiation belts surrounding Earth?

- A) Explorer 1
- B) Vanguard 1
- C) Sputnik 1
- D) Telstar 1

13. In 1973, which probe became the first spacecraft to traverse the asteroid belt and visit Jupiter?

- A) Pioneer 10
- B) Pioneer 11
- C) Voyager 1
- D) Voyager 2

14. Which space telescope, launched in 1990 from the Space Shuttle Discovery, fundamentally changed our understanding of the solar system's scale?

- A) Spitzer
- B) Hubble
- C) Chandra
- D) Kepler

15. In 1967, which mission resulted in the tragic fire that led to major safety redesigns of the Command Module?

- A) Apollo 1
- B) Apollo 7
- C) Apollo 11
- D) Gemini 8

16. Which planet was discovered by William Herschel in 1781, though later identified as a solar system component by North American scientists?

- A) Neptune
- B) Uranus
- C) Saturn
- D) Pluto

17. The 'Messenger' mission was the first American spacecraft to orbit which planet, starting in 2011?

- A) Mercury
- B) Venus
- C) Mars
- D) Saturn

18. In 1969, the Apollo 11 mission landed on the Moon. Which specific lunar region did they touch down in?

- A) Sea of Tranquility
- B) Ocean of Storms
- C) Sea of Serenity
- D) Sea of Clouds