

American History: Celestial Connections

American History · Answer Key · 12 Questions

1. Which U.S. President, known for his interest in science and astronomy, signed into law the bill that established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)?

A) Dwight D. Eisenhower

- B) John F. Kennedy
- C) Lyndon B. Johnson
- D) Richard Nixon

2. The first American to orbit the Earth was John Glenn. In what year did this historic flight occur aboard the Friendship 7 mission?

- A) 1959
- B) 1961
- C) 1962**
- D) 1963

3. Before the establishment of NASA, the precursor agency responsible for early U.S. space efforts was part of which branch of the military?

- A) United States Navy
- B) United States Army**
- C) United States Air Force
- D) United States Marine Corps

4. What celestial body was the primary target of the Apollo 11 mission, marking the first human landing on another world?

- A) Mars
- B) The Moon**
- C) Venus
- D) Jupiter

5. The Hubble Space Telescope, a joint project involving NASA and the European Space Agency, was launched into low Earth orbit in which decade?

- A) 1970s
- B) 1980s
- C) 1990s**
- D) 2000s

6. Which American President famously challenged the nation to land a man on the Moon and return him safely to Earth before the end of the 1960s?

- A) Dwight D. Eisenhower
- B) John F. Kennedy**
- C) Lyndon B. Johnson
- D) Richard Nixon

7. The Voyager 1 spacecraft, launched by NASA in 1977, is the first human-made object to enter interstellar space. What is its current approximate distance from the Sun, in astronomical units (AU)?

- A) 25 AU
- B) 50 AU
- C) 100 AU**
- D) 200 AU

8. The Mariner 10 mission, the first to visit Mercury, was a program of which American space agency?

- A) NASA**
- B) ARPA
- C) Bell Labs
- D) Lockheed Martin

9. In the context of American space history, what does the acronym 'Sputnik' refer to, which spurred significant American efforts in space?

- A) A type of rocket engine
- B) The first artificial Earth satellite**
- C) A planetary landing probe
- D) A lunar module design

10. The 'Great Comet of 1811', visible to the naked eye for many months, was observed and documented by American scientists, including those associated with which early scientific institution?

- A) The Smithsonian Institution
- B) The American Philosophical Society**
- C) The National Academy of Sciences
- D) The Lowell Observatory

11. Which American planetarium, opened in 1935, was the first of its kind in the United States and played a significant role in public astronomy education?

A) Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles

B) Adler Planetarium, Chicago

C) Hayden Planetarium, New York City

D) Morehead Planetarium, Chapel Hill

12. The 'Scout' program represented a series of early, low-cost American sounding rockets and small launch vehicles. What was one of the primary scientific objectives of early Scout missions?

A) Testing atmospheric re-entry

B) Launching artificial satellites

C) Studying solar flares

D) Mapping the surface of Mars