



Worksheet 1. Reading: *Journals from Space* by Astronaut Sunita Williams

Read the passage based on excerpts from the journals of Sunita Williams as she orbited in space for six months in 2006-2007. Then review the glossary and complete the exercises that follow it.

1 The trip into space was quite a jolt! We had been lying on our backs, and the vehicle had
2 been vibrating for four hours when the main engines started. We were thinking, "We are
3 really going to go this time!" We were rumbling and shaking pretty significantly when the
4 blast of the rocket boosters launched us right off the pad. We had lifted off!

5 We accelerated very quickly. Our stomachs were really feeling bad, and it took a little effort
6 to breathe out. But then, once the rocket boosters turned off, the ride became much
7 smoother as we accelerated through the thinning atmosphere. Then everything got quiet.
8 My pen started to float and my arms started to float. Our brains and our bodies took some
9 time to adjust, about six hours....

10 I was looking out the window during the night and noticed the moon seemed bigger. It is
11 simply incredible to be able to see the craters of the moon and the dark and light spots on
12 it. It won't be the last time I see the moon in its full glory, but I'm not sure when I will see
13 it again so clearly....

14 It looks like it is going to storm over the Gulf of Mexico! We are seeing some pretty thick,
15 dark clouds in that area... Over the South Atlantic, we've been hunting for icebergs and even
16 found some. There is a big one that we have been tracking and monitoring its break up. It
17 broke off of Antarctica two years ago and is about 35 km (14 miles) long. We think about
18 what is happening to Antarctica....

19 For the last two weeks, I have been getting used to living here and to understanding how
20 everything works. I finally feel settled. Now it is really necessary to make sure that we are
21 in tip-top shape for our spacewalks coming up in February! That will be the true test of how
22 well we have been doing up here....

23 We work out daily. We lift weights each day and then run or walk one day and cycle on the
24 alternate days. We weigh ourselves to make sure we aren't losing weight. I really have been
25 eating more than I do on Earth to make sure I don't lose too much weight. I have lost a
26 couple of kilograms (four pounds) already, although I am certainly not trying to.



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27 We don't walk around up here—we float around in our socks or bare feet, something like
28 flying. This morning I flew down to the kitchen to get my bag of coffee. Everything was
29 quiet. The others were still sleeping and the lights were off. It was so peaceful. I know this
30 won't last for long—the control centers will call on the radio, everyone will be up and
32 running around, sending e-mails and photos, and getting ready for the week's work....

Glossary

Line 1 *quite a* — used before a noun to emphasize that something is very good, large, interesting, etc.
Line 3 *pretty* — not a little, very
Line 4 *rocket boosters* — extra engines to set a vehicle in motion
Line 4 *launched*—sent spacecraft into the sky
Line 4 *lifted off* — left the ground and went into the air

Sunita Williams getting ready to walk in space
(NASA photo)



Comprehension practice

Check all the statements that are true, according to the reading.

1. Sunita Williams describes her impressions of life in space.
2. The entry into space was quiet and smooth.
3. The astronauts' bodies adjusted to the conditions in space immediately.
4. Sunita walked on the moon.
5. The astronauts saw icebergs in the South Atlantic Ocean.
6. The astronauts are preparing to take spacewalks.
7. The astronauts work out every day to get into very good shape.
8. Sunita is worried about gaining too much weight.
9. The astronauts walk around in special shoes.
10. After a few quiet moments in the morning, everyone will be very busy soon.