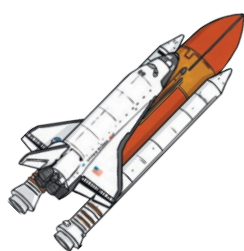


# Mae Jemison

When Space Shuttle Endeavour began its second space mission on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1992, one of its passengers was Mae Jemison. That space flight lasted over 190 hours and made her the first African-American woman in space.

## Early Life

Mae Jemison grew up in Chicago with parents who supported her curiosity and interest in science. At an early age, she knew she wanted to be a scientist and took it for granted that she would one day travel to space. She was a teenager at the time of the Apollo space missions and watched the first moon landings, noting that there were no women astronauts at that time. Jemison recalls being annoyed by this and being inspired to succeed in her dream of going to space by Martin Luther King Jr. In addition to her interest in science, Jemison was also a talented dancer and even considered becoming a professional dancer before settling on a career as a doctor. After doing well at high school, the future astronaut studied chemical engineering at Stanford University in California before completing her postgraduate medical training in 1981.



## Did You Know?

As a child, Jemison expected that people would be travelling to space as often as they drive to work by now!

## Career at NASA

After qualifying as a doctor, Mae Jemison worked as a doctor with the Peace Corps. She looked after the health of volunteers working in the African countries Liberia and Sierra Leone. A few years later, inspired by Sally Ride (the first American woman in space) and Star Trek's Lieutenant Uhura, she applied to join NASA. In 1987, she was one of 15 candidates to be selected from a field of around 2000. Initially, she worked at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, working on software systems and launch support for space missions. After five years with NASA, she flew on the Space Shuttle Endeavour as a mission specialist. The flight lasted for eight days and orbited the Earth 127 times! During the flight, Jemison conducted bone cell research experiments. A few months later, in March 1993, Jemison left NASA to work at a university and pursue her own interests in science.

**Did You Know?**

Mae Jemison was the first real astronaut to appear on Star Trek!

**Life after NASA**

Jemison is particularly interested in the use of science and engineering in our daily lives and established her own company, The Jemison Group, to work in this area. She also promotes science education and runs an international science camp for teenagers called The Earth We Share. The camp challenges young people to think about current problems around the world. In 2001, she published a memoir of her life aimed at children and has also written a series of books about space for children.

**Did You Know?**

Lego have produced a mini figure of Mae Jemison!

# Questions

1. What was Mae Jemison's significant achievement?

- The first woman to land on the Moon
- The first female fighter pilot
- The longest space mission
- The first African-American woman in space

2. How old was Mae Jemison when Neil Armstrong first landed on the Moon?

- 21
- A baby
- A teenager
- 65

3. What were her two main interests and talents at school?

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4. What was Mae Jemison's first job after her medical training?

- A doctor in the Peace Corps
- An accident and emergency doctor
- A GP
- A surgeon

5. Name two things she worked on whilst at NASA.

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6. What was special about Mae Jemison's appearance on Star Trek?

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# Questions

7. When did Mae Jemison publish her memoirs?

1998

2001

2011

2000

8. Which popular children's toy includes a figure of Mae Jemison?

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# Answers

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**Her two interests and talents were science and dancing.**

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- A doctor in the Peace Corps**
- An accident and emergency doctor
- A GP
- A surgeon

5. Name two things she worked on whilst at NASA.

**Any two of: software systems, launch support or mission specialist conducting experiments during her space flight.**

6. What was special about Mae Jemison's appearance on Star Trek?

**She was the first real astronaut to appear on the show.**

7. When did Mae Jemison publish her memoirs?

- 1998
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# Answers

8. Which popular children's toy includes a figure of Mae Jemison?

**Lego made a mini figure of her in 2017.**