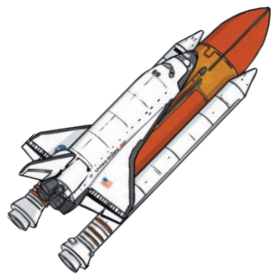


Mae Jemison

When Space Shuttle Endeavour began its second space mission on 12th September 1992, one of its six passengers was Mae Jemison. That space flight lasted over 190 hours (8 days) 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. She says they were excellent scientists because they were always asking questions. At an early age, she knew she wanted to be a scientist and had a fascination with stars and space, just like many children at that time. A teenager at the time of the Apollo Space missions, she watched the first moon landings, taking it for granted that she would one day go to space. Despite her excitement at the landings, Jemison recalls being annoyed by the fact that there were no women astronauts. Realising there was no good reason for this and encouraged by Martin Luther King Jr. and his famous 'I have a dream' speech, she felt inspired to succeed in her dream of becoming an astronaut. In addition to her interest in science, Jemison was also a talented dancer and even considered becoming professional before settling on a career as a doctor. Graduating from high school aged just 16, the future astronaut studied chemical engineering at Stanford University in California before completing her postgraduate medical degree in 1981.



Did You Know?

As a child, Jemison expected that by now, people would be travelling to space as often as they drive to work! Now, she is principal of 100 Year Starship which aims to make travel beyond our solar system possible within a hundred years.

Career at NASA

After completing her medical training, Mae Jemison worked as a doctor with the Peace Corps looking 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. Her application was delayed by the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster in 1986 but, undeterred, she reapplied and in 1987, was one of 15 candidates to be selected from a field of around 2000. Initially, she worked

at 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 playing Lieutenant Palmer!

Life after NASA

Jemison has a special interest 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 is also active in promoting science education and runs an international science camp for teenagers called The Earth We Share. This four week residential programme challenges young people to think about current problems around the world. In 2001, she published a well-received memoir of her life aimed at children and has also written a series of books about space for children.

Did You Know?

In 2017, Lego announced that a mini figure of Mae Jamison would be one of a set of Women of NASA set!

Questions

1. Name two facts about Mae Jemison's space mission.

a) _____

b) _____

2. What does Mae Jemison say makes a good scientist?

3. What did Mae Jemison notice when watching the Apollo moon landings?

There were no female astronauts.

There were no young astronauts.

The mission leader was a woman.

All the astronauts were doctors.

4. What is the aim of the 100 Year Starship?

5. Which two people inspired Mae Jemison to apply to NASA?

Martin Luther King Jr and her mum.

Sally Ride and her professor at Stanford University

Sally Ride and Lieutenant Uhura

Her mum and dad.

6. What delayed Mae Jemison's application to NASA?

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

Questions

8. Link the statements to 'true' or 'false'. If a statement is false, write the correct statement.

Mae Jemison left NASA in 1987.

Only 15 people applied to work at NASA.

Mae Jemison was a talented dancer.

Mae Jemison went to university when she was 18.

The Space Mission orbited the earth 127 times.

true

false

Corrected statements:

9. What is the name of the residential science camp Mae Jemison set up?

- The World Around Us
- Share Our World
- The Earth and Space
- The World We Share

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

Answers

1. Name two facts about Mae Jemison's space mission.

Any two from: it began on 12th September 1992, it lasted 8 days (190 hours), it had 6 passengers, it was aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour, it orbited the earth 127 times.

2. What does Mae Jemison say makes a good scientist?

Somebody who asks lots of questions makes a good scientist.

3. What did Mae Jemison notice when watching the Apollo moon landings?



There were no female astronauts.



There were no young astronauts.



The mission leader was a woman.



All the astronauts were doctors.

4. What is the aim of the 100 Year Starship?

Its aim is to make travel beyond our solar system possible within a hundred years.

5. Which two people inspired Mae Jemison to apply to NASA?



Martin Luther King Jr and her mum.



Sally Ride and her professor at Stanford University



Sally Ride and Lieutenant Uhura



Her mum and dad.

6. What delayed Mae Jemison's application to NASA?

The Challenger Space Shuttle disaster in 1986 caused the delay.

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

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

Answers

8. Link the statements to 'true' or 'false'. If a statement is false, write the correct statement.

Mae Jemison left NASA in 1987.	true
Only 15 people applied to work at NASA.	
Mae Jemison was a talented dancer.	false
Mae Jemison went to university when she was 18.	
The Space Mission orbited the earth 127 times.	

Corrected statements:

Mae Jemison left NASA in 1993/Mae Jemison joined NASA in 1987, Over 2000 people applied to work at NASA and only 15 were selected, Mae Jemison went to university when she was 16.

9. What is the name of the residential science camp Mae Jemison set up?

- The World Around Us
- Share Our World
- The Earth and Space
- The World We Share**

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

Lego made a mini figure of her in 2017.