Multimedia Primary Source Discussion Set
The Space Race

URL: [https://americanarchive.org/primary_source_sets/space-race/](https://americanarchive.org/primary_source_sets/space-race/)

Teaching Tips
As a collection, this set of sources provides a broad history of how federal and state authorities have tried to curtail drug use, abuse, and trafficking. These audio and video clips document the circumstances that led President Nixon to launch the war on drugs, which law enforcement took up at every level of government. These sources demonstrate a range of opinions about the measures used in the war on drugs, and they provide testimonies about how enforcement of anti-drug policies affected different populations, especially along lines of race and class.

Background Information
Before engaging with this resource set, students should be familiar with the following:
- Forms of political dissent and counterculture movements of the 1960s, including various people’s rights movements (civil rights, gay rights, women’s liberation, Black Power), the student movement, anti-war movement, the rise of beat culture and hippies, and the rise of suburbs and resulting urban decay
- U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War

Essential Question
What was the significance of the space race in U.S. history?

General Discussion Questions
- What is the relationship between the Cold War and the U.S. space program?
- How did the U.S. respond to the push for military superiority in space?
- What national priorities are reflected in how the U.S. space program developed?
Classroom Activities

1) Ask students to watch and listen to the following sources:
   - Military Possibilities of the Space Shuttle (1981)
How do these different sources present the value of space exploration? What were perceptions of the relationship between the U.S. space program and U.S. strength and security? What motivated the United States and Soviet Union to “race” when it came to space exploration?

2) Ask students to watch the following sources:
   - Russian Progress in Science (1960)
   - The Space Race and Higher Education (1958)
Based on these two sources, how has education figured into space exploration? What types of education were considered necessary within the context of the Cold War? What resources did the United States and Soviet Union put toward education within the context of the Space Race? Are effects of the relationship between education and the space race apparent in U.S. education today?

3) Ask students to watch the following source:
   - The Space Race and Higher Education (1958)
   - NASA Astronauts and U.S. Culture (2019)
   - Civil Rights Activists Protest Apollo 11 (2019)
What did the space race signal about national priorities, values, or ideals? In the United States, whose interests has space exploration served?

Related Resources

- NASA Stem Engagement: Race to Space: Lesson Plans/Activities (NASA.gov)
- History in a Nutshell: The Space Race (PBS)
- To the Moon Interviews (AAPB)

Citation
